

November 28, 2010
First Sunday of Advent

First Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 122:1-9
Second Reading: Romans 13:11-14

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for NOV 23, 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.

December 5, 2010
2nd Sunday of Advent

First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17
Second Reading: Romans 15:4-9:
Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for DEC 5, 2nd Advent: Isa 11.1-10, Rm 15.4-9; MT 3.1-12
HE SHALL JUDGE THE POOR WITH JUSTICE. HE SHALL STRIKE
THE RUTHLESS WITH THE ROD OF HIS MOUTH!
'You brood of vipers! Who told you to flee the wrath to come?
Give some evidence that you mean to reform!'

DURING THE DAY: Be generous & just with the poor--what better evidence that you mean to reform? From God's perspective, charity *is* justice!

ABOUT PRAYER: Growth in the practice of prayer--oneness with God--simplifies the virtuous life. Oneness in God fulfills the oneness of his will in the union of his people; barriers cease to exist.

December 12, 2010
Third Sunday of Advent

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 146:6-10
Second Reading: James 5:7-10
Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for Dec 12, 3rd. Advent: Isa 35.1-6,10; James 5.7-10, MT 24:37-44

HERE IS YOUR GOD! HE COMES TO SAVE YOU! THE EYES OF
THE BLIND WILL BE OPENED, THE EARS OF THE DEAF
CLEARED, THE TONGUES OF THE DUMB SING!

'Go tell John what you hear & see: The blind see, cripples walk,
lepers are cured, the deaf hear, dead are raised to
life, & the poor have the gospel preached to them.'

During the day : Look around you with eyes of faith, listen to others with perception of spirit; then be God's instrument & speak trustworthy truth.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer absorbs the deficiencies of others, channel of God's healing grace. Prayer is the mutual communication of the wisdom of the weak & the humility of the strong.

December 19, 2010
4th Sunday of Advent

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 24:1-6
Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7
Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for Dec 19, 4th Advent: Isa 7.10-14; Rm 1.1-7; MT 1.18-24

O HOUSE OF DAVID IS IT NOT ENOUGH TO WEARY PEOPLE?
MUST YOU WEARY GOD AS WELL? THE VIRGIN SHALL BEAR
A SON, & NAME HIM EMMANUEL!

'Joseph, don't be afraid to take your wife into your home
It is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived.'

DURING THE DAY: Don't be wearisome. Don't pester others to make *your* decisions. Do what you think is right-let the others fret.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer re-incarnates Christ in each one of us, the Spirit at work conforming our attitudes & values to His, & the Body of Christ matures.

December 26, 2010

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

First Reading: Sirac 3:2-6, 12-14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 128:1-5

Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-21

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for DEC 26, Holy Family: Sirac 3.2-6; Col 3.12-21; MT 3.13-15, 19-23

WHOEVER REVERES HIS FATHER WILL LIVE A LONG LIFE. HE WHO
OBEYS HIS FATHER BRINGS COMFORT TO HIS MOTHER.

'Rise, Joseph, take the child & his mother & go to the land of Israel.'

They went, & lived in a town called Nazareth.

DURING THE DAY: It's never too late to be loyal to your parents. If dead, pray for/to them; if living, call them up & say 'thanks.' Don't hold grudges; you'll be spending all eternity with your Creator-- & them, your co-creators!

ABOUT PRAYER: Be it with parents or children, family prayer is indispensable, the only way to be sure the weld with divinity is secure. Practice it.

January 2, 2011

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13

Second Reading: Ephesians 3:2-6

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for JAN 2, Epiphany: Isa 60.1-6; Eph 3.2-6; MT 2.1-12

RISE UP IN SPLENDOR, JERUSALEM! UPON YOU THE LORD
SHINES, OVER YOU APPEARS HIS GLORY.

'And you, Bethlehem, from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people, Israel.'

During the day: Spend some time reflecting on the beauty of God's creation all around; look at people as they pass you on the street--see the peace & happiness that most possess & are possessed by. Let the Lord shine on you, too.

ABOUT PRAYER: Let your prayer be always that of a child; for God, that's what you are. He is never unaware of his responsibility for your needs. Let him care for them his way. Pray to God as both Father *and* Mother; he/she's both.

January 9, 2011

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

First Reading: Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 29:1-4, 9-10

Second Reading: Acts 10:34-38

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for JAN 9, Baptism of the Lord: Isa 42.1-7; Acts 10:34-38; Mt 3:13-17

THUS SAYS THE LORD: 'I HAVE CALLED YOU FOR THE VICTORY
OF JUSTICE, A LIGHT FOR THE NATIONS.'

Jesus was baptized, came up from the water, & a voice came from the heavens,
saying, 'This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.'

During the day: Be just; & even when not active, be pleased with the victory of justice. The poor have only God to champion their cause; be on his side, if not always on theirs.

ABOUT PRAYER: The one baptism of us all entitles each to hear the inner voice that says, 'you are my child!' & the pleasure that comes from pleasing It is relished in prayer!

January 16, 2011

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 49:3,5-6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 40:2-4, 7-10

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

Gospel: John 1:29-34

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for JAN 16, 2nd of yr: Isa 49. 3-6; 1Cor 1.1-3; JN 1.29-34

THE LORD SAID TO ME, 'IT IS TOO LITTLE FOR YOU TO BE MY SERVANT.

I WILL MAKE YOU A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS THAT MY SALVATION
MAY REACH THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

When John caught sight of Jesus, he exclaimed: 'Look there! The lamb of God who takes
away the sin of the world. I saw the Spirit descend like a dove, & it came to rest of him.'

DURING THE DAY: Don't sell yourself short; no matter how insignificant your good example, it's a service to God that helps move others closer to him. Neither you nor they may be aware if it, but his grace is spontaneous, flowing always.

ABOUT PRAYER: The first prayer of the day gives it back to him, to use as he would. The last prayer of the day looks the day over, to see just what he did with it. Such daily prayer habituates one to see things from God's perspective--slowly one becomes more God- & less self-centered.

January 23, 2011

First Reading: Isaiah 8:23-9:3-1

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 27:1, 4, 13-14

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for JAN 23, 3rd of yr: Isa 8.23-9.3; 1Cor 1.10-13, 17; MT 4.12-23

UPON THOSE WHO DWELT IN THE LAND OF GLOOM, A LIGHT HAS SHONE.

YOU HAVE BROUGHT THEM ABUNDANT JOY & GREAT REJOICING!

From that time on Jesus began to proclaim this theme: 'Reform your lives. The Kingdom of God is at hand.'

DURING THE DAY: Don't walk around in a cloud of gloom; it's contagious. When you get up in the morning, say to gloom, 'Not today! Back off! I've got things to do today, & they have nothing to do with you!' You'll be amazed how quickly it lifts!

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the will helping the mind govern the emotions; God gives us mind & freedom to govern our lives, not be dictated to by feelings & appetites. Prayer is his & their medium.

January 30, 2011

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Zephaniah 2:3. 12-13

Responsorial Psalm: Palms 146:6-10

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for Jan 30, 4th of yr: Zep 2.3, 3.12-13; 1Cor 1.26-31; MT 5.1-12

SHARE YOUR BREAD WITH THE HUNGRY. SHELTER THE OPPRESSED & HOMELESS. CLOTHE THE NAKED WHEN YOU SEE THEM. THEN LIGHT WILL RISE FOR YOU IN THE DARKNESS.

'You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men so that they may see the goodness of your acts, & give praise to your heavenly Father.'

DURING THE DAY: Don't be bashful about being good, just don't be ostentatious. You do it for the good of another, not yourself. God sees it, & is pleased. Those impressed with your humility as well as your generosity, will praise God.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer keeps one sensitive to the needs of others; likewise, prayer ponders simultaneously what one can do about it. Prayer, itself the minimum, so reacts; other possibilities enacted soon thereafter.

February 6, 2011
Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 58:7-10
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 112:4-9
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5
Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for FEB 6, 5th of yr: Isa 58.7-10; 1Cor 2.1-5; MT 5.38-48
SHARE YOUR BREAD WITH THE HUNGRY, & LIGHT SHALL RISE
FOR YOU IN THE DARKNESS, GLOOM BECOME FOR YOU LIKE MIDDAY.
'You are the light of the world! Your light must shine before others
that they may see your good deeds & glorify your heavenly Father!'

During the day: Reflect the light that shines on you, moon to God's eternal Sun. Everything you are & have he's giving you to pass on to others. Be generous.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer relieves the gloom, opens the curtains & basks in God's sunshine; weary from serving the material & spiritual needs of others, prayer renews, sends one back to work refreshed. With God's energy.

February 13, 2011 corrupted file (not available)

February 20, 2011
Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 103:1-4, 8, 10, 12-13
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:16-23
Gospel: Matthew 5:38-48

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for FEB 20, 7th of yr: Lev 19.1-2,17-18; 1Cor 3.16-23; MT 5.38-48
BE HOLY, FOR I THE LORD AM HOLY. TAKE NO REVENGE & CHERISH NO GRUDGE.
YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. I AM THE LORD.

"Offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other.
Give to the one who asks of you; do not turn your back on one who borrows."

During the day: Don't be just good; be holy. That's the whole purpose of existence: be the best you can, not by human standards, but by God's. His infinite power, wisdom & love are at your disposal; the more you take, the greater his glory.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer distinguishes what's compatible between God's designs & your appetites. You're designed to serve the needs of others; your fulfillment comes from filling these. Neither pleasant nor rational; but holy.

February 27, 2011
Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 49:14-15
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 62: 2-3,6-9
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5
Gospel: Matthew 6: 24-34

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for FEB 27, 8th of yr: Isa 49.14-15; 1Cor 4.1-5; MT 6.24-34
ZION SAID, 'THE LORD HAS FORGOTTEN ME!' 'CAN A MOTHER FORGET HER
INFANT? EVEN SHOULD SHE FORGET, I WILL NEVER FORGET YOU!'

'O weak in faith! Stop worrying about 'what are we to eat, what are we to wear?' Your Father
knows all that you need; seek first his Kingdom, & all these things will be given besides.'

During the day: Concentrate on what you're doing, & do it well. Enjoy it; it's the happiness of the moment. Make other concerns get in line; their turn will come. Till it does, grace isn't there, even to think about them.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is tuning in the Word of God, the Eternal Word, creating, & the Incarnate Word renewing. Prayer participates, willing whatever the divine designer has in mind.

March 6, 2011

Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Deuteronomy 11: 18, 26-28, 32

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 31:2-4, 17, 25

Second Reading: Romans 3:21-25, 28

Gospel: Matthew 7:21-27

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for MAR 6, 9th of yr: Dt 11.18,26-28; Rms 3.21-25,28; MT 7,1-27
MOSES TOLD THE PEOPLE, 'I SET BEFORE YOU A BLESSING & A CURSE:
A BLESSING FOR OBEYING THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD WHICH
I ENJOIN ON YOU TODAY; A CURSE IF YOU DO NOT.'**

**'Everyone who listens to these words of mine & acts on them will be like a
wise man who built his house on rock. Everyone who listens & doesn't act
of them will be like a fool who built his house on sand!**

During the day: Don't be a fool: take wise men's words seriously, especially if they speak with God's own authority. The One who made you knows what's best for you & what is most to your advantage; don't try to second guess him.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the blessing of those who learn to listen & obey. Prayer authenticates the love motivating the command, then wills the Will of the Lover, no curse feared.

March 13, 2011 File corrupted

March 27, 2011
Third Sunday of Lent

First Reading: Exodus 17:3-7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 95:1-2, 6-9
Second Reading: Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
Gospel: John 4:5-42

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for MARCH 27, 3rd of yr: Exod 17.3-7; Rm 5.1-2,5-8; JN 4.5-42
THE PEOPLE GRUMBLED AGAINST MOSES: 'WHY DID YOU MAKE US LEAVE
EGYPT? JUST TO HAVE US DIE HERE OF THIRST?' THE LORD SAID TO MOSES,
'STRIKE THE ROCK & WATER WILL FLOW FOR THE PEOPLE TO DRINK.'

During the day: Don't die of thirst! Not likely, from lack of water; but quite possible, from neglect of grace. Physical death an inevitable certainty, no need to run the risk of eternal death: Living Water is yours for the asking. Drink up!

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the fountain of youth; you need but trust. Spiritual thirst can only be sated by God, prayer the normal medium. Practiced as regularly as eating & drinking & sleeping, the dreams come true!

March 27, 2011

First Reading: Exodus 17:3-7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 95:1-2, 6-9
Second Reading: Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
John 4:5-42

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for MARCH 27, 3rd of yr: Exod 17.3-7; Rm 5.1-2,5-8; JN 4.5-42
THE PEOPLE GRUMBLED AGAINST MOSES: 'WHY DID YOU MAKE US LEAVE
EGYPT? JUST TO HAVE US DIE HERE OF THIRST?' THE LORD SAID TO MOSES,
'STRIKE THE ROCK & WATER WILL FLOW FOR THE PEOPLE TO DRINK.'

During the day: Don't die of thirst! Not likely, from lack of water; but quite possible, from neglect of grace. Physical death an inevitable certainty, no need to run the risk of eternal death: Living Water is yours for the asking. Drink up!

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the fountain of youth; you need but trust. Spiritual thirst can only be sated by God, prayer the normal medium. Practiced as regularly as eating & drinking & sleeping, the dreams come true!

April 3, 2011
Fourth Sunday of Lent

First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 23
Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14
Gospel: John 9:1-41

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for APRIL 3, 4th 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 THE LORD LOOKS INTO THE HEART.

The [once blind] man answered, 'God doesn't listen to sinners;
but if one is devout & does his will, he listens to him.'

During the day: Be a good listener--learn to listen to the heart; words may disguise truth, but can't hide it. Your integrity recognizes it, even in its shadow.

ABOUT PRAYER: Authentic prayer--*listening* to God--transcends space & time, hones sensitivity to truth, discerns nuances, predicates consequences. Prayer guides the blind & sees what sight doesn't.

April 3, 2011

First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 23
Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14
Gospel: John 9:1-41

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for APRIL 3, 4th 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 THE LORD LOOKS INTO THE HEART.

The [once blind] man answered, 'God doesn't listen to sinners;
but if one is devout & does his will, he listens to him.'

During the day: Be a good listener--learn to listen to the heart; words may disguise truth, but can't hide it. Your integrity recognizes it, even in its shadow.

ABOUT PRAYER: Authentic prayer--*listening* to God--transcends space & time, hones sensitivity to truth, discerns nuances, predicates consequences. Prayer guides the blind & sees what sight doesn't.

April 10, 2011
Fifth Sunday of Lent

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:12-14
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 130:1-8
Second Reading: Romans 8:8-11
Gospel: John 11:1-45

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for APRIL 10, 5th Lent: Ezk 37.12-14; Rm 8.8-11; JN 11,1-45
O MY PEOPLE, YOU SHALL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD, WHEN
I OPEN YOUR GRAVES & HAVE YOU RISE FROM THEM!
'Father, I thank you for hearing me, so that this crowd may
believe that you sent me. Lazarus, come out!

During the day: Be aware of your dead zones: fears; doubts; prejudices; vices; selfishness. See them for what they are, unrealized potentialities awaiting resurrection. Their Creator Redeemer waits.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is attentive harmonizing with the Eternal Word that's creating you & the Incarnate Word that's renewing you. Its will imposed by Neither--yours, though, is indispensable.

April 17, 2011
Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

At the Procession with Palms: Matthew 21:1-11
At the Mass: Isaiah 50:4-7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 22:8-9, 17-20, 23-24
Second Reading: Philippians 2:6-11
Gospel: Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for APRIL 17, Palm Sunday: Isa 50.4-7; Phil 2.6-11; MT 26.14-27.66
THE LORD GOD IS MY HELP, I AM NOT DISGRACED. I HAVE
SET MY FACE LIKE FLINT, I SHALL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME.
'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.'

During the day: When a situation goes from bad to worse, don't sweat it, just adjust. God's in charge & expects you to fulfill his will, not your own. Focus on doing the best you can.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer blends faith, hope & charity: God exists; we're his. God loves us; we trust him. God uses us; we're available, aware the love for others that grows through sacrifice & suffering is channel of his own.

April 24, 2011
Easter Sunday
Solemnity of the Resurrection of The Lord
The Mass of Easter Day

First Reading: Acts 10” 34a, 37-43

Second Reading: Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

Gospel: John 20: 1-9 OR Matthew 28:1-10 or (at an afternoon Mass) Luke 24:13-35

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for APRIL 24, Easter: Acts 10.34,37-43; Col 3.1-4; JN 20.1-9

**THEY PUT HIM TO DEATH BY HANGING HIM ON A TREE: THIS
MAN GOD RAISED ON THE THIRD DAY.**

They did not yet understand that he had to rise from the dead.

During the day: Don't relive yesterday; don't prelive tomorrow--just live today! Live it as though it were your last. Live it to be proud of it in the hereafter!

ABOUT PRAYER: Take death to prayer. Imagine your own. Whatever the in-time circumstances you dress it in, it's not the beginning of the end, it's the end of the beginning!

May 1, 2011

2nd Easter Sunday

First Reading: Acts 2:42-47

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Gospel: John 20:19-31

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for MAY 1, 2nd Easter: Acts 2.42-47; 1Peter 1.3-9; JN 20.19-31

**THESE REMAINED FAITHFUL TO THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES, TO THE
BROTHERHOOD, TO THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD, & TO THE PRAYERS.**

'You believe, Thomas, because you have seen. Blest are they who have not seen, & believe.'

During the day: Have faith in yourself; God does, & expects the same of you. If you don't, his grace can't be as effective. Self-confidence rooted in the power of divine love is not sustained by success nor defeated by failure--it thrives either way.

ABOUT PRAYER: Easter is prayer's annual battery-charger, reminding us we're still on the battlefield, even though Christ has

May 8, 2011
3rd Easter Sunday

First Reading: Acts 2:14, 22-33
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-11
Reading: 1 Peter 1:17-21
Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for May 8, 3rd Easter: Acts 2.14,22-28; 1Peter1.17-21 LK 24.13-35
**GOD FREED HIM FROM DEATH'S BITTER PANGS, & RAISED HIM UP AGAIN,
FOR IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT DEATH SHOULD KEEP ITS HOLD ON HIM.
'Did not the Messiah have to undergo all this, so as to enter into his glory?' Their
eyes were opened, & they recognized him.**

During the day: Don't let death have a hold on you. Recognize your dead zones, & pump life into them! You have a purpose & a destiny – God'll make it happen, if you *do* your part; He can't do it without you.

ABOUT PRAYER: Christian prayer keeps its gaze on Jesus. We don't always recognize him in persons & situations, but prayer spent contemplating his gospel recorded words & actions provides insights that bring him to life in our own little corner of the world.

May 15, 2011
4th Easter Sunday

First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 36-41
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23
Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:20b-25
Gospel: John 10:1-10

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for MAY 15, 4th Easter: Acts 2.14,36-41; 1Peter2.20-25; JN 10.1-10
**'WHAT MUST WE DO, BROTHERS?' 'REFORM & BE BAPTIZED,
THEN YOU WILL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.'
'I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be safe. He will go in &
out & find pasture. I came that they might have life, & have it to the full.'**

During the day: Avoid mediocrity. Keep ideals high, & keep improving. Be humble enough to recognize your faults, sensible enough to regret them, courageous enough to correct them. Success is guaranteed--in the next life, if not in this.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer practices communion with the Risen Lord--in & out, feeling more alive with each visit. It's his idea, & prayer helps us do it his way.

May 22, 2011
5th Easter Sunday

First Reading: Acts 6:1-7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19
Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-9
Gospel: John 14:1-12

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for MAY 22, 5th of Easter: Acts 6.1-7; 1Pt 2.4-9; JN 14.1-12
THOSE WHO SPOKE GREEK COMPLAINED THEIR WIDOWS WERE BEING
NEGLECTED. THE TWELVE SAID, 'FIND SEVEN MEN DEEPLY SPIRITUAL
& PRUDENT, & WE SHALL APPOINT THEM TO THIS TASK.'

'If you really knew me, you would know my Father also. Whoever has seen me has
seen the Father also. It is the Father who lives in me accomplishing his works.'

During the day: Don't neglect the widows & orphans--they're God's favorites! Unselfishness puts others first, & priority goes to those most in need. Check your list from time to time; keep yourself at the bottom.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer matures sensitivity to God's priorities. Prayer measures one's own accordance, arouses discontent with discord, urges commitment. Hopefully, the will agrees, & so adjusts.

May 29, 2011
6th Easter Sunday

First Reading: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 66:1-7, 16, 20
Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:15-18
Gospel: John 14:15-21

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for MAY 29, 6th Easter: Acts 8.5-8,14-17; 1Pt 3.15-18; JN 14.15-21

PHILLIP WENT DOWN TO SAMARIA & PROCLAIMED THE MESSIAH. THE CROWDS
ATTENDED CLOSELY TO WHAT HE HAD TO SAY. THE REJOICING ROSE TO FEVER PITCH.
'He who obeys my commandments loves me; he who loves me will be loved by my Father. I too will love him,
& reveal myself to him.'

During the day: When another's joy is at fever pitch, plug into it--we work best when we're happy. When down, don't make decisions; look around you, see the happiness of others. It's contagious.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer prompts obedience to loving authority. It expresses trust that the other knows what's best for you, wills the will of the other--nothing like working together to get to know the other better.

June 5, 2011
7th Easter Sunday

First Reading: Acts 1:12-14
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 27:1, 4, 7-8
Second Reading: 1 Peter 4:13-16
Gospel: John 17:1-11a

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for JUNE 5, Ascension: Acts 1.1-11; Eph 1.17-23; MT 28.16-20
IN THE TIME AFTER HIS SUFFERING, HE SHOWED THEM IN MANY
CONVINCING WAYS THAT HE WAS ALIVE, APPEARING TO
THEM & SPEAKING TO THEM ABOUT THE REIGN OF GOD.
'Know that I am with you always, until the end of the world.'

During the day: Revive your spirits, in spite of the suffering you've been through or going through. Let others learn from your example to trust in the Lord. There's value in suffering; discover it & exploit it.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is relaxing, not in the feeling of Christ's presence, but in the fact. The Son is the Eternal Word creating, the Incarnate Word redeeming. You can't get away from his presence.

June 12, 2011
Pentecost

First Reading: Acts 2:1-11
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13
Gospel: John 20:19-23

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for June 12, Pentecost: Acts 2.1-11; 1Cor 12.3-7, 12-13; JN 20.19-23
ALL WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEY SPOKE IN FOREIGN TONGUES,
& MADE BOLD PROCLAMATION AS THE SPIRIT PROMPTED THEM.
'Peace be with you. as the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

During the day: Be bold in the practice of your faith. Let the integrity of your behavior be the channel of God's grace; if the heart & mind of the other are open, it will do the rest.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer cultivates the will's generous desire to serve, with Christ's own power, the needs of others rather than your own. You take care of the other; Christ will take care of you.

June 19, 2011

First Reading: Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9

Responsorial Psalm: Daniel 3:52-56

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Gospel: John 3:16-18

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for JUNE 19, Holy Trinity: Ex 34.4-9; 2Cor 13.11-13; JN 3.16-18

HAVING COME DOWN IN A CLOUD, THE LORD CRIED OUT, 'THE LORD, A MERCIFUL & GRACIOUS GOD, SLOW TO ANGER, & RICH IN KINDNESS & FIDELITY.'

God did not send his son in to the world to condemn the world but
that the world might be saved through him

During the day: For a moment, put aside your problems & worries, & just relax in all the goodness God is showering on you: your home, your family, your health, your job, your friends; plus the other things you take for granted: sunshine & rain, the air you breathe, the food you eat, the clothes you wear. Let gratitude be the mother of trust.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer looks in the inner mirror & acknowledges the good & the bad. Prayer shares the experience with Christ, who sees it all, too, even more clearly. He doesn't love you less for the bad, he loves you more, anxious to be the good friend who helps you improve. Let him.

June 26, 2011

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

First Reading: Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

Gospel: John 6:51-58

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for JUNE 26, Body of Christ: Dt 8.2-3,14-16; 1Cor 10.16-17; JN 6.51-58

MOSES TOLD THE PEOPLE, 'NOT BY BREAD ALONE DOES MAN LIVE,
BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT COMES FORTH FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD.'

"Just as the Father who sent me has life, & I have life because of the Father, so the man
who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven.

During the day: Live life, the right way, to the fullest. Work to achieve the goals you've set for yourself. Review your priorities from time to time, that they be in harmony with God's; a will in harmony with his can't go wrong.

ABOUT PRAYER: Like everyone else, Jesus nourishes his body in a way that guarantees good health. A living cell in that body, his the responsibility to nourish *you!* Count on it, & do your part--go to the table at mealtime!

July 3, 2011
Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Zechariah 9:9-10
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145:1-2, 8-11, 13-14
Second Reading: Romans 8:9, 11-13
Gospel: Matthew 11:25-30

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for JULY 3, 14th of yr: Zac 9.9-10; Rms 8.9-13; MT 11.25-30
REJOICE, O DAUGHTER OF JERUSALEM! YOUR KING SHALL COME TO YOU
RIDING ON AN ASS. HE WARRIOR'S BOW SHALL BE BANISHED, HE SHALL
PROCLAIM PEACE TO ALL NATIONS.'

'Come to me, all who are weary & find life burdensome, & I will refresh you.
Take my yoke upon you; learn that I am gentle & humble of heart.

During the day: Practice peace. Begin with keeping your own heart at peace; you can't make situations fit you, you have to accommodate yourself to them. Able to, you enable others to do likewise. Peace begins within.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is docility to the Spirit forming in one the attitudes It & Mary formed in Jesus; prayer is willing what the Spirit is doing, forming Christ in each of us. Living truth & goodness with integrity works wonders.

July 10, 2011

First Reading: Isaiah 55:10-11
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 65:10-14
Second Reading: Romans 8:19-23
Gospel: Matthew 13:1-23

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for JULY 10, 15th of yr: Is 55.10-11; Rm 8.18-23; MT 13.1-23
JUST AS FROM THE HEAVENS RAIN COMES DOWN, WATERS THE
EARTH & MAKES IT FERTILE, SO SHALL MY WORD GO FORTH & SHALL
NOT RETURN TO ME VOID, BUT SHALL DO MY WILL.

'One day a farmer went out sowing; Part of it landed on good soil & yielded grain at a hundred- or sixty- or thirty-fold. What was sown on good soil is the man who hears the message & takes it in.'

During the day: Speak prudently & justly; your words can do a lot of good, or a lot of harm. Pay attention to what you're saying, & the effect it's having on others. God holds you accountable.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer rests in the images of Christ's parables. They are inspired words that reveal some simple truth about God he wants to share with us. Don't be distracted by details; keep the mind & heart open to whatever God wants to communicate. That's prayer.

July 17, 2011
Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Wisdom 12:13, 16-19
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10, 16-16
Second Reading: Romans 8:26-27
Gospel: Matthew 13:24-33

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for JULY 17, 16th of yr: Wis 12.13,16-19; 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
'Do you want us to go & pull up the weeds?' 'No, pull up the weeds & you might
take the wheat, too. Let them grow together until the harvest; then collect
the weeds to burn, & gather the wheat into my barn.'

During the day: Don't be too quick to pull up the weeds. Situations develop due to peoples 'interaction; even if your opinion isn't followed, leave it on the table & keep your cool. The harvest is fruit of the common effort of all.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer helps one adjust to the divine perspective. Prayer looks at the *whole* picture, as God does; rather than judge. One considers with honesty the other's position, corrects it kindly, if necessary.

July 24, 2011
Seventeenth Sunday

First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12
Responsorial Psalm: 119:57,72, 76-77, 127-130
Second Reading: Romans 8:28-30
Gospel: Matthew 13:44-52

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for JULY 24, 17th of yr: 1Kings 3.5-12; Rms 8.28-30; MT 13.44-52
'LORD MY GOD, YOU HAVE MADE ME KING! BUT I AM A MERE YOUTH, NOT
KNOWING HOW TO ACT. GIVE YOUR SERVANT AN UNDERSTANDING
HEART TO JUDGE YOUR PEOPLE & DISTINGUISH RIGHT FROM WRONG.'

'Every scribe who is learned in the reign of God is like the head of a
household who can bring from his store both the new & the old'.

During the day: Don't throw the old away just because you've got the new. Age doesn't determine quality. What is good in the old enriches the new; traditions guarantee continuity of values & maintain maturity of growth.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer recognizes the frailty of human judgment, & invokes the divine. Prayer *senses* the difference, submits to the lights communicated; prayer makes one wise.

July 31, 2011

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-3

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145:8-9, 15-18

Second Reading: Romans 8:35, 37-39

Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for JULY 31, 18th of yr: Is 55.1-3; Rms 8.35-39; MY 14.13-21

HEED ME & YOU SHALL EAT WELL. COME TO ME, THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE. 'Given them something to eat yourselves.' 'We have nothing to eat but 5 loaves & 2 fish.' He blessed & broke them & gave them to his disciples. All those present ate their fill.

During the day:

Eat well, for the right reason: your health depends on it. Spiritual health supposes regard for physical health--doing God's will requires care of the instrument, all of it. He made you to use you, for your own good & the good of others. Make him proud!

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer shifts gears to the *real* dimension of life, God's life in us. Prayer acknowledges the essential necessity of eating the body of Christ & drinking his blood--it's his way of nourishing us as living members of himself.

August 7, 2011

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: 1 Kings:19:9a, 11-13a

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 85:9-14

Second Reading: Romans 9:1-5

Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

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.

August 14, 2011

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 56:1,6-7

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 67:2-3, 5-6, 7

Second Reading: Romans 11:13-15, 29-32

Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for AUG 14, 20th of yr: Is 56.1,6-7; Rm 11.13-15,29-32; MT 15.21-28
OBSERVE WHAT IS RIGHT, DO WHAT IS JUST. THESE I WILL BRING
TO THE HOLY MOUNTAIN & MAKE JOYFUL IN MY HOUSE OF PRAYER. .
'Lord, even the dogs eat the leavings that fall from the master's tables.'
'Woman, you have great faith! Your wish will come to pass.'

During the day: Use objective norms to decide what is right & just. The common good overrides your personal concerns. In service to another, you make his will your own, unless it be unjust & wrong.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is one of the common denominators of the here & hereafter: God is, & I am his, now & forever. He loves me, & I trust him; he uses me, & I'm available.

August 21, 2011

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 22:19-23

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 138:1-3, 6, 8

Second Reading: Romans 11:33-36

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for AUG 21, 21st of yr: Is 22.15,19-23; Rm 11.33-36; MT 16.13-20
I WILL SUMMON MY SERVANT ELIAKIM, I WILL PLACE THE KEY OF
DAVID ON HIS SHOULDER; WHEN HE OPENS, NON ONE SHALL SHUT,
WHEN HE SHUTS, NO ONE SHALL OPEN.
'Who do you say that I am?' 'You are the Messiah, Son of the living God!'
'Blest are you, Simon son of John! No mere man has revealed this to you,
but my heavenly Father.'

During the day: Be careful whom you shut the door on; your authority is to help, not hinder. Keep an open heart & mind to everyone. You're in God's service, not you own.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer transcends the purely human, invokes & projects the divine. Through prayer, human thoughts & actions instrumentally execute the divine will. Prayer recognizes the Christ, & you become a child of God.

August 28, 2011
Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Jeremiah 20:7-9
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 63:2-6, 8-9
Second Reading: Romans 12:1-2
Gospel: Matthew 16:21-24

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for AUG 28, 22nd of yr: Jer 20.7-9; Rm 12.1-2; MT 16.21-27
YOU DUPED ME, LORD, & I LET MYSELF BE DUPED; I SAY TO MYSELF I WILL
SPEAK HIS NAME NO MORE. BUT THEN IT BECOMES LIFE FIRE BURNING IN
MY HEART. I GROW WEARY HOLDING IT IN; I CANNOT ENDURE IT!
Jesus indicated that he must go to Jerusalem, suffer greatly, be put to death, & raised on the third day. '
The Son of Man will come in his Father's glory & repay each man according to his conduct.'

During the day: Don't resist allowing the Lord to 'dupe' you. If you settle for human praise & comfort, security & success, that's all you'll get. But if you remain open to what God expects of you, fulfillment will be eternal.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the escape valve in tragedy & suffering, disillusion & despair. Prayer asks the 'why', & gets the 'what': courage, hope, grace to trust there's a purpose, & patience to await it's fulfillment.

September 4, 2011
Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Ezekiel 33:7-9
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 95:1-2, 6-9
Second Reading: Romans 13:8-10
Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for SEPT 4, 23rd of yr: Ez 33.7-9; Rm 13.8-10; MT 18.15-20
IF I TELL THE WICKED MAN HE SHALL DIE & YOU DO NOT SPEAK OUT TO
DISSUADE HIM FROM HIS WAY, HE SHALL DIE FOR HIS GUILT.
BUT I WILL HOLD YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS DEATH.
'If your brother should commit some wrong against you, go & point out his fault.
If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.
Whatever you declare loosed on earth shall be held loosed in heaven.'

During the day: Take the conduct of others a little more seriously. Be generous in your encouragement, prudent in your manner of correction--wait for a favorable occasion but do it.

ABOUT PRAYER: Pray people. Willing what's best for them, talk with God about their problems. Ask what you can do, & be available. He'll use you, when you least expect it--grace is spontaneous. You may not even see it working nor know its results; but he won't lose the opportunity.

September 11, 2011
Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Sirach 27:30-28:7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 103:1-4, 9-12
Second Reading: Romans 14:7-9
Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for SEPT 11, 24TH OF YR: `Sirac 27.30-28.7; Rm 14.7-9; MT 18.21-35
THE VENGEFUL WILL SUFFER THE LORD'S VENGEANCE,
FOR HE REMEMBERS THEIR SINS IN DETAIL.

'I canceled your entire debt when you pleaded with me. Should you
not have dealt mercifully with your fellow servant, as I did with you?'

During the day: Don't so much ponder your past sins feeling guilty; rather, be aware of your sinfulness & prepare for tomorrow. The past, if acknowledged, is forgiven; the will to cooperate with God's graces of correction is what matters.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer pleads with God for forgiveness, which is not to be presumed. Forgiveness isn't just pardoning the offense, but willingness to suffer its consequences & help the offender to improve--as Christ does! Prayer directs us to do likewise with each other.

September 18, 2011

First Reading: Isaiah 55:6-9
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18
Second Reading: Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a
Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16a

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for SEPT 18, 25th of yr: Is 55.6-9; Phil 1.20-24,27 MT 20.1-16
AS HIGH AS THE HEAVENS ARE ABOVE THE EARTH, SO HIGH ARE MY WAYS ABOVE YOUR WAYS,
MY THOUGHTS ABOVE YOUR THOUGHTS, SAYS THE LORD.

'You agreed to the usual wage; take your pay & go home. I give this man hired last the same as you;
am I not free to do as I want with my money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

During the day: Keep your thoughts humble; your ways will follow suit. Grow in wisdom, not so much from your own experience as from being open to God's perspective; he's revealing to you, if you're paying attention.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer melds personal values & attitudes with those of Christ. Personal reactions, subdued, are subordinated to the divine. Prayer matures our life in Christ.

September 25, 2011
Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Ezekiel 18: 25-28
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 25:4-5, 8-10, 14
Second Reading: Philippians 2:1-5
Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for SEPT 25, 26th of yr: Ez 18.25-28; Phil 2.1-11; MT 21.28-32
YOU SAY, 'THE LORD'S WAY IS NOT FAIR!' IF A WICKED MAN,
TURNING FROM HIS WICKEDNESS DOES WHAT IS RIGHT & JUST,
HE SHALL PRESERVE HIS LIFE.

'When John came preaching a way of holiness, you put no faith in him; the tax collectors & prostitutes did. Even when you saw that, you did not repent.'

During the day: Consider the honest people you know, how quickly they admit their mistakes. Learn a lesson & do likewise. Find your peace in doing what's right, & don't resist the desire to correct yourself when doing wrong.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is struggling with God for what's fair. Prayer witnesses the chaos of which one it the victim, pleads for relief. God's answer is at times simply the grace of endurance.

October 2, 2011
Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 5:1-7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 80:9,12-16, 19-20
Second Reading: Philippians 4:6-9
Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre
Reflections for OCT 2, 27th of yr: Is 5.1-7; Phil 4. 6-9; MT 21.33-43
MY FRIEND HAD A VINEYARD ON A FERTILE HILLSIDE; HE LOOKED FOR A CROP
OF GRAPES, BUT WHAT YIELDED WERE WILD GRAPES. THE VINEYARD OF THE
LORD IS THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, & THE MEN OF JUDAH HIS CHERISHED PLANT!
'WHAT MORE WAS THERE TO DO THAT I HAD NOT DONE?'

'A property owner planted a vineyard & leased it out to tenants. ..They seized his son & killed him!
Have you never read in the Scriptures, *the stone which the builders rejected has become the keystone of the structure?*'

During the day: Don't trifle with the Lord's designs. He made you; he knows the gifts he's given you; he knows the purpose of each. It's yours to discern & fulfill accordingly. Just pay attention.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the indispensable effort to keep God tuned-in. Busy with the responsibilities he's assigned you, your attention may usually be elsewhere; but a prayerful attitude keep you alert to his signals. Practiced prayer keeps you on course.

October 9, 2011

First Reading: Isaiah 25:6-10a

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 23

Second Reading: Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for OCT 9, 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 OF RICH FOOD & CHOICE WINES.

HE WILL DESTROY DEATH FOREVER. ON THAT DAY IT WILL BE SAID,

'BEHOLD OUR GOD, TO WHOM WE LOOKED TO SAVE US!'

'The reign of God may be likened to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. Some ignored the invitation & went their way. The king said to the servants, "The banquet is ready, but those invited were unfit. Go into the byways & invite anyone you come upon."

This filled the wedding hall with banqueters.'

During the day: Don't ignore God's gifts. Recall that *all* is gift: existence, life, health, loved ones, all you are & have. Gifts express the love of the Giver, who wills what's truly good for you. Your gratitude is the way you use them to fulfill your destiny. It puts a smile on his face.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer discerns God's purpose. Curious, it ponders alternatives, not with self-interest, but focusing God's perspective. As the habit forms, one slowly becomes more God-centered than self-centered; destiny fulfilled.

October 16, 2011

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 96:1, 3-5, 7-10

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b

Gospel: Matthew 22:15-21

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for OCT 16, 29th of yr: Is 45. 1,4-6; 1Thess 1.1-5; MT 22.15-21

I AM THE LORD, & THERE IS NO OTHER. THERE IS NO GOD BESIDES ME.

'Give to Cesar what is Cesar's. but give to God what is God's.'

During the day: Be creative by being created--it didn't happen, it's happening! 'I AM', he says; and so are you! Outside of time, his 'NOW!' is eternal. His—your 'now'--is a free & unique, co-creative contribution to his masterpiece!

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer--communion with God--is as outside of time as He is. Prayer is the eternal dimension of our existence. His love--'in time' offered & accepted--communicates the life that survives death & never ends.

October 23, 2011

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Exodus 22:20-26

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 18:2-4, 47.51

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10

Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for OCT 23, 30th of yr: Ex 22.20-26; 1 Thess 1.5-10; MT 22.34-40

YOU SHALL NOT OPPRESS AN ALIEN; NOR WRONG ANY

WIDOW OR ORPHAN. I WILL SURELY HEAR THEIR CRY

'Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, & with all your mind!

This is the greatest & first commandment. The second, love your neighbor as yourself.'

During the day: Be careful how you treat people; courtesy is never wasted. It's *your* behavior--not their's--you should be concerned about. You're accountable to God; they are, too--not to you.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer's the best expression of the love of the heart, the soul & the mind. Pleasing to God, it earns you his graces: to be a loving brother to others.

October 30, 2011

Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Malachi 1:14b-2:2b. 8-10

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 131:1-3

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:7b-9, 13

Gospel: Matthew 23:1-12

Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre

Reflections for OCT 30, 31st of yr: Mal 1.14-2.2,8-10; 1Thess 2.7-9,13; MT 23.1-12

HAVE WE NOT ALL THE ONE FATHER? HAS NOT THE ONE GOD CREATED US?

WHY THEN DO WE BREAK FAITH WITH EACH OTHER?

The greatest among you will be the one who serves the rest. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; whoever humbles himself will be exalted.'

During the day: Be of service. No one's in orbit around you; you're the one in orbit, around whomever you're dealing with. You are created to serve; serving each other, we're humbled by being served. What fulfills us is our service to others.

ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer puts us in communion with Christ, & Jesus puts us in communion with the Father & with each other; prayer reminds us he 'didn't come to be served, but to serve.'