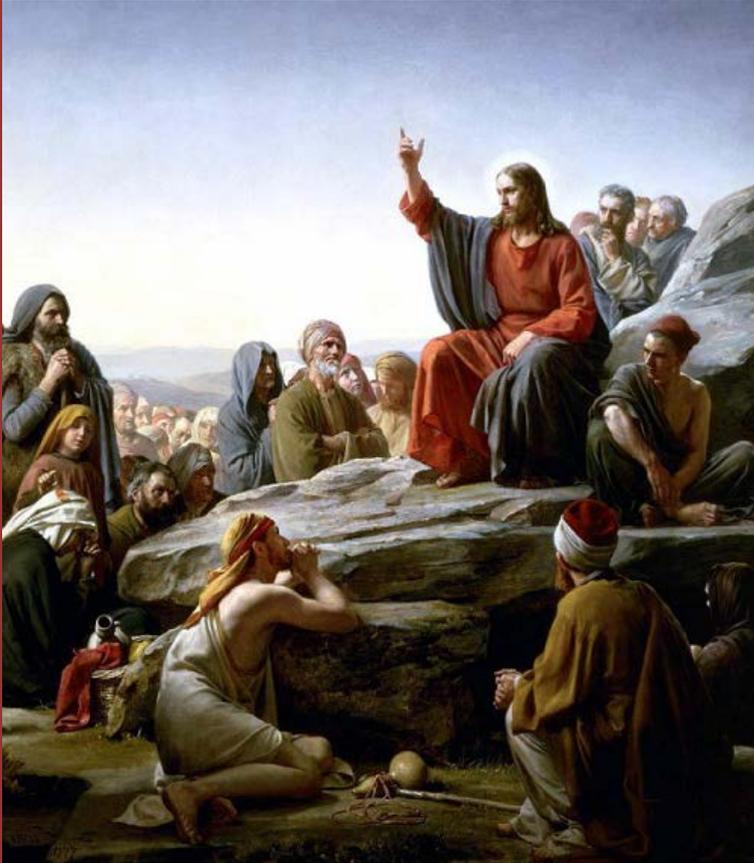


Kingdom of God



"Set your hearts on Your Heavenly Father's Kingdom first, and on His Righteousness, and all other things will be given you."

Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:33)

All glory, praise and thanks is Yours: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit One God as it was in the beginning, now and for ever.

Amen and Amen. Alleluia. 

“Son/Daughter, when you aspire to serve God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare your soul for temptation. Humble your heart, and endure: incline your ear, and receive the words of understanding: and make not haste in the time of clouds. Wait on God with patience: join yourself to God, and endure, that your life may be increased in the latter end. Take all that shall be brought upon you: and in your sorrow endure, and in your humiliation keep patience. For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.

Believe God, and He will recover you: and direct your way, and trust in Him.

Keep His fear, and grow old therein. You that fear the Lord, wait for His mercy: and go not aside from Him, lest you fall. You that fear the Lord, believe him: and your reward shall not be made void. You that fear the Lord, hope in Him: and mercy shall come to you for your delight. You that fear the Lord, love Him, and your hearts shall be enlightened. My children behold the generations of men: and know you that no one have hoped in the Lord, and have been confounded. For who have continued in His commandment, and have been forsaken? or who have called upon Him, and He despised him? For God is compassionate and merciful, and will forgive sins in the day of tribulation: and He is a protector to all that seek Him in truth. Woe to them that are of a double heart and to wicked lips, and to the hands that do evil, and to the sinner that tread on the earth two ways. Woe to them that are fainthearted, who believe not God: and therefore they shall not be protected by Him. Woe to them that have lost patience, and that have forsaken the right ways, and have gone aside into crooked ways. And what will they do, when the Lord shall begin to examine? They that fear the Lord, will not be incredulous to His word: and they that love Him, will keep His way. They that fear the Lord, will seek after the things that are well pleasing to Him: and they that love Him, shall be filled with His law. They that fear the Lord, will prepare their hearts, and in His sight will sanctify their souls. They that fear the Lord, keep His Commandments, and will have patience even until His visitation, saying: If we do not penance, we shall fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men. For according to His greatness, so also is His mercy with Him.”

Ecclesiasticus 2:1-21

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Introduction

The aim of this book is to understand what it requires to be an heir of God's Kingdom; a kingdom that is not a piece of land rather than a state of the heart within each one of us (Luke 17:20-21, Mark 12:28-34); a state that will lead the person to be a member in the 'Kingdom of Service' (Matthew 20:1-33).

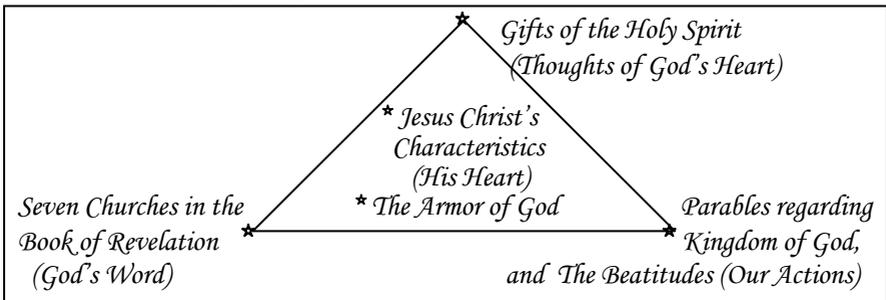
To understand the Kingdom of God, we need first to know God, and knowing God comes from knowing Jesus Christ: "The Faithful Witness". By understanding His Words we will be able to understand God's Kingdom and through the Holy Spirit we become part of the One Body belonging to God.

This book establishes a link between the Seven free Gifts of The Holy Spirit (i.e. God's Seven Eyes (Zechariah 3:9, 4:10) that filled the heart of Jesus Christ (Revelation 5:6)), the Seven parables that Jesus Christ used to explain the Kingdom of God and the seven churches that Jesus Christ hold in His Hand and have addressed His speech to through Saint John the Apostle in his revelation.

If we ask ourselves whom did Jesus Christ bless in the Beatitudes during His Sermon on the mount, what shall we get for an answer? Do they have any relation with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

God in His Wisdom know that a blind person cannot lead a blind person, in addition He know that we need to be armoured with the Armor of God in order to fight evil and reach safely our destination. So, what is the link between the seven free gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Armor of God?

The aim of this book is to make us realize that when we pray to our Heavenly Father asking Him "Your Kingdom Come", then it means we are asking Him to send to us His Holy Spirit and fill our hearts with His free gifts so that we become good workers in His Field to serve others; i.e., we are asking Him to include us in His Kingdom of Service.



"Dear Lord, please open our eyes to Your Presence; fill our hearts with Your Gifts and make us worthy to call You 'Our Father' from the bottom of our hearts and proclaim Your Holy Name. Amen."

Kingdom of God

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The Faithful Witness

(Reflection on Jesus Christ Life, Acts, Isaiah 40:25-31 & 41:13-20, Psalm 103, Matthew 11:28-30, John 12:44-50, 14:1-31, and St. Paul's 1st letter to Timothy 6:11-19)

O God, if I asked You: “What makes You most sad and gives You most pain: To see a heart of a son, whom You’ve held on your shoulder, hardened even seeing the tears in his mother’s eyes, and another doesn’t talk to his relative thus treating trespassing against him by unforgiving and Your kindness with ingratitude, OR to see a hard heart who hasn’t heard about You and doesn’t know Your Mercy and he worships another God?? In these days, I’ve heard that there are so many mothers who suffer and mourn because their children have stayed away from them and from Your Table, and their hearts are broken and filled with sadness. I wonder if You are hurt and Your Heart is broken for seeing Your child stay away from You?? Who would mourn Your suffering and pain as a result of that??”

YES, You are sad (not angry) and in some kind of unseen pain. The Faithful Witness whom You sent to show us Your Love & Mercy had also been a witness for Your Feelings: Happy and pleased with us when we do Your Will, and sad and in pain/sorrow when we walk away from You and do not do Your Will. A pain similar to scourging on the body which hurts a lot (cannot be described by words). A pain similar to the pain of a mother losing her child to death, a pain similar to the pain of parents when their children stand in their face and want to force their decisions on them, disrespecting and disobeying them. This sadness was felt in the parables of the lost sheep and the lost penny that were told by Your Witness. An unseen sadness/sorrow (out of love and care that will result in doing the utmost of one’s effort to cure) that was transformed into pleasure and happiness when they were found, and when Your Witness did Your Will. A pain (sadness/sorrow) that does not last forever because happiness will conquer as the lost lamb and the penny will be found.

Actually, The Faithful Witness was a witness to You, in “Body” and “Spirit”, with human acts and spiritual acts, showing us Who You Are:

- Holy God.
 - * In Body: Through (1) the angel’s Annunciation words to His Virgin Mother before His birth, (2) His Zeal to You and Your Holy Place, (3) His Holiness and Righteousness (Anyone who has seen Him, has seen the Father (John 14:9)).
 - * In Spirit/Soul: Through the Revelation to John the Evangelist and the words/hymn of the Angels & Saints in Heaven

- Holy Omnipotent.

* In Body:

1. His power over people:

- a. Through His call to His disciples as they obeyed Him instantly without hesitation (His power was in the love in His eyes [reflecting the love in His Heart for us] that attracted whoever followed Him),
- b. Through the miracles He performed to cure people and even raise the dead (their bodies are under His command), and
- c. Through the way people treated Him (welcoming Him with joy and respect of a King and of an undoubted provider of their requests), whether when they came to greet Him when He was born (Magi & shepherds), or later on when people asked Him to have mercy on them and fulfill their needs, as they knelt and asked with full trust. In addition, even the baby (John the Baptist) inside his mother's womb knelt before Him with joy when He was in His Mother Virgin Mary's womb when she visited his mother Elizabeth.

2. His power over evil spirits whom he rebuked from innocent people.

3. His power over nature: the trees (His miracle with the fig tree), water and weather (Calming the storm: His miracle on the boat). As an undoubted teacher, He said that if people have faith then they can move even mountains.

* In Spirit: Filled with the Holy Spirit He defeated the devil for 40 days and throughout his life (as He had the option to give His life to God or hold it back, but He obeyed God's will), in addition He defeated death through His Resurrection.

- Holy Immortal God.

* In Body: (1) Through His Word & The Holy Eucharist, His Resurrection, and (2) through the words of the prophets regarding The Messiah, The Son of God.

* In Spirit/Soul: Through His Resurrection and The Holy Eucharist.

The Faithful Witness in showing:

- ✓ God's Virtues: Love, Mercy, wisdom, humility, meekness, ..., etc.
- ✓ God's Kingdom and eternal life after physical death

He bore witness to You as "God, the Creator, to be glorified" and as well as "God, Holy Father full of Love & Mercy" by:

1. Becoming the example of God's children who imitate their Father [see the example of the Good Samaritan]. In His own words while talking to us, He ask us to go to Him and He will:

1. Feed the hungry [The food of the soul is 'His Word and working on it by having His power' (i.e. doing God's Will) & The Holy Eucharist: Jesus' Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity (i.e. Bread of Life)].

2. Provide water for the thirsty [The water for the soul is The Holy Spirit].
3. Provide shelter for the stranger [He prepared a place for us in His Father's House].
4. Put clothes on the naked [He remove the shame from a sinner when facing God, and dress him with the gown of holiness].
5. Look after the sick [He took on himself our sins and cured us].
6. Visit the prisoner [He came for the sinners and the lost sheep].
7. Give strength/rest to the weary [He is God's Love to us and our salvation].
8. Counsel the people who mourn [He is the Way, the Truth and Life].
9. Show, prepare, enlighten and become the way to God's Kingdom.

In order to be witnesses to God (i.e. His Children), we need to do the same with others (i.e. if God do the above for our souls'/bodily needs from Heaven and while He was on earth, then we, as human, need to do the same for human/spiritual needs of others (i.e. be His students and learn from Him: ..., it is enough for the student to be like his teacher, ... (Matthew 10:24-25)). Jesus Christ also do this because He love us, and accordingly we love whom God loves: His Creation). Imitating Jesus Christ in action in the world is a kind of acknowledging Him by deeds before men. Jesus Christ is Son of God and He called us His Children (John 13:33, Mark10:24). As Son of Man (a symbol for all human beings), He showed us how we can become perfect and not blame human nature for our misbehavior and laziness and encouraged all people that they can perform the miracles He did if they have faith. Faithful people would strive for giving themselves to do the above for the needy out of love (the love that Jesus Christ asked us to do: To love one another as He loved us: To give oneself as a sacrifice to others).

2. Living the Holy Virtues of the Holy Spirit given to Him by the Father:
 1. Humble Spirit (Jesus was a servant to others while He is the King) [God is so humble to accept taking our human nature and live with us]
 2. Love God wholeheartedly, including mourning God's sadness/sorrow and acting accordingly (do anything to please God and bring back the lost children) [also, with Jesus Christ, God has changed our spiritual mourning into happiness]
 3. Meek [Accepting God's Will by submitting Himself to God]
 4. Hungry and thirsty for righteousness
 5. Merciful: provider of people's needs/requests and forgiver through His sacrifice
 6. Pure in Heart
 7. Peacemaker (preaching the good news, forgiving sins and planting seeds of love in our hearts to God and to others)
 8. Persecuted because of righteousness
 9. Accept insult, persecution and falsely evil sayings for the sake of God (endurance)

Jesus Christ never judged but proclaimed the Kingdom of God, was obedient to His Father till death to please Him, and became God's Love & Mercy on earth for the entire world. So is the church (the assembly of faithful people baptized by the Water and the Holy Spirit), they don't condemn but their duty is to teach and make people understand Jesus' teachings to do God's will. The church does this out of her love to One God: The Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit.

The acts that come out from our hearts are to be made towards others' needs (needs of body and soul) according to the Love of God. As Jesus Christ was the Faithful Witness so He sent His followers to be witnesses to God's Love & Mercy (to imitate Him as Children of God). He came to show us God's Holiness and Divinity and His will to make us God's Children and be perfect (Transfer our weak humanity (that was developed when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and became under the control of the devil/evil spirits) into divinity and conquer sin) and become the light to others on earth as He is. As witnesses, we will be able to show God to others through our speech, thoughts and deeds; through our new heart of flesh.

Another witness who sealed in the hearts of the faithful God's image is the Holy Spirit who is known as 'The Paraclete' [The One who sealed God's happiness and gave Him comfort, and gave our souls the peace by the 'Power of God's Love and Gifts' and comfort through the Holy Bible]. The Holy Spirit, Who was sent to Jesus Christ's disciples by the Father, showed them where their treasure is, so their hearts stick there. He gave them all that they need to testify to the Truth that leads us to eternal life. He attached their hearts with Jesus Christ's Sacred Heart who became their lamp that lightened for them the darkness so that they, in turn, will enlighten to all. They started to see things through this Sacred Heart ("The eye is the lamp of the body") that hold all the love and mercy for every one of us (Ezekiel 36:26-27). The Holy Spirit made them commemorate God's Law, speak things that come from the Sacred Heart and preach, with wisdom, God's Love & Mercy for all. The Holy Spirit made them clean as all their actions comes from such Heart, as Jesus Christ said. With the Power of the Holy Spirit, the Word was written so that we will also believe without seeing, and keep the pleasure and happiness in God's Heart forever.

Who would know the Father better than His Son "Jesus Christ" and His Holy Spirit?

According to the Book of Revelation:11, Jesus Christ, being the "Two Witnesses" [where Jesus Christ explained in the Holy Bible (John 8:12-19) how His Word is the Truth and is witnessed by His work and by The Father, so it is considered that there are Two Witnesses when He talks, though one Witness is unseen] has preached (through His Body and Holy Spirit with complete harmony as One: Not as any human being where the Spirit is willing but the body is weak; because He is Divine) for 1260 days. After His death, He was lifted up under the eyes of so

many; witnessing for God in the Cloud, and for life after death. Though Jesus Christ did not stop the rain from falling (as Elijah), or strike the earth with every kind of plague (as Moses), but He had the power to do so [The Transfiguration with Moses and Elijah (Matthew 17:1-5)]. Jesus Christ was not buried inside the earth but was put in a tomb guarded by soldiers, as it was not meant for His relatives/friends to take Him and bury Him freely.

Jesus Christ was a prophet and He fulfilled all previous prophecies. He prophesized that His Disciples will be fishermen for people, as they will testify for Him and build up the Kingdom of God. He himself has caught fish and they will catch the rest as a result of His work: This prophecy was made when 12 baskets of pieces of bread and fish were collected after He fed the people who came to listen to Him (Matthew 14:15-20) [the basket here is a Disciple/Apostle and the fish and bread in it are the Faithful people who listened to them (more or less they form a tribe), ate the meal with them in remembrance of Jesus Christ as He told them, and God dwelt among them (i.e. baptized with water and the Holy Spirit)]. Each of these 12 disciples will have a kingdom, sit on a throne and judge a tribe of Israel (Luke 22:28-30) (Note: Jesus Christ cannot say/assign that if He have only human nature, but He is completely Divine as well. Remember as a human He had no power to say who will be sitting on His right hand side and on His left hand side in His Kingdom). They are also the 12 stars on the crown (Mary Mother of God, Mother of the Faithful, Queen of the Church) of the Woman (Church of the Faithful) who was clothed with the sun in the Revelation, and gave birth with the pain of the martyrs. He also prophesized that there would be Seven Churches (When He performed the miracle on the mountain and after He fed the people who were with Him in His time: His disciples gathered 7 baskets filled with bread (Matthew 15:32-37) [The basket here is the church; each basket contains people with similar deeds/heart]). This prophecy was shown to John in the Revelation. Every Christian should examine himself/herself and ask himself/herself how do I benefit from Jesus Christ's Word and what He had to say to the seven churches in order to be part of the 'One Church: New Jerusalem'. These churches were built on the Word that was spread by the twelve main disciples (Looking at the sequence of the miracles of feeding the crowd, we see that the first miracle was the collection of the twelve baskets and then followed by the other miracle after some time). The Seven Churches that collectively reflect on the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (i.e. God's Kingdom and Righteousness) that are found in fullness in Jesus Christ (Is 11:1-3):

1. '**Wisdom**' that gives the heart to distinguish between God's fearing spirits' teachings and the evil spirits' false teachings, and transfer words into actions to serve the poor in spirit.
2. '**Understanding**' of God's Love and Mercy; trust in it; and reflect it to others through actions and perseverance even to the point of sacrificing oneself for God and others.

3. **‘Counsel’** that is based on God’s Word and Love not on our own desires; that is based on God’s Protection rather than on human help; that is based on complete surrender to God’s Will and staying faithful to Him.
4. **‘Fortitude’** that will make us work for God with zeal and without fear from other people’s beliefs; a zeal that will make us not only have fear for our souls (love ourselves) but also for all creatures on earth with a true belief that salvation is for all and working on that no matter what; a zeal that will make us work hard to bring the good news of salvation to the end of the earth.
5. **‘Knowledge’** of God with humbleness knowing that knowing God can come only if we are humble, thirsty and always strive to drink from the Living Water and never say or feel that we are ‘Full’; to keep our hearts on fire with God without reaching the stage of a lukewarm heart that lives thinking that we are above sinning; a knowledge of God through Jesus Christ.
6. **‘Piety’** through God’s Divine Providence that can stand against any hardship and at the time of trials even the ones that might lead to death of soul as Jesus Christ can wash all sins and even raise the dead.
7. **‘Fear of the Lord’** that will make us love God wholeheartedly without hypocrisy and perform all loving, merciful, faithful and just actions that will reflect God’s Holiness to others (Ecclesiasticus 1:11-25, 25:6).

The Followers of Jesus Christ are described in John 17:6-8, 20-21. Jesus Christ talking with His Father about His Disciples, and for who will believe in Him through their message, He said: *“For I gave them the words You gave Me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that You sent Me.”* (i.e., the words He said were coming from His Father and they obeyed with love). Jesus Christ described his followers to be like a wise man who built his house on rock (Matthew 7:24). His followers are the Children of God who call God: ‘Father’ from their hearts. A Follower is a person who sees the needs of himself and others (body & soul) and acknowledging the power of Jesus Christ (Lord and God), asks for help with full trust. A Follower is the one who has God’s Spirit dwelling in him (i.e., God’s love and His Gifts: saltiness) so he becomes the light and the salt of the earth (Colossians 1:3-14, 4:2-6). As Jesus Christ, a follower will do for others what they can’t do for themselves. In short: A Follower (i.e. a member of Jesus’ family: a mother, a brother, a sister (Matthew 12:46-50)) of Jesus Christ is the one who does what Jesus Christ command (listens to the Word and acts on it) (John 15:14, James 1:22-25). Even the Will of God, The Father, is to: *“Listen to Him”* (Mark 9:7).

O God, Your Word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Your instructions are my eternal heritage; they are the joy of my heart. I devote myself to obeying your statutes, their recompense is eternal (Psalm 119:105, 111-112). Please open my eyes, ears, mouth and hands and strengthen my legs to please You. Amen.

The Lover ... The Teacher

(Reflection on First and Second Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy, Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians, Psalm 1, Psalm 19, and Psalm 33)

When we love someone, we start memorizing every single word that he speaks; and when we want to understand someone, we start analyzing every single word that he speaks. With Jesus Christ, some people start loving Him and then this love will lead them to look forward to understanding Him, others start with wanting to understand Him which hopefully will lead them to loving Him.

Among the things that we need to search for in order to understand Jesus Christ is 'What were His first words to people?' and 'What are His last words?'

In Matthew's Gospel [Righteousness], the first words spoken by Jesus Christ were: *"It is fitting that we should, in this way, **do all that rightness demands.**"* (Matthew 3:15), and His last words were: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time."* (Matthew 28:18-20). So, Jesus Christ came to do everything that is in God's Plan for us, and through His actions He teach us how rightness is fulfilled in all aspects:

- Forgiveness of Sins: Through Baptism of Water and Holy Spirit first (Forgiving original sin and other sins at the time of baptism), and second through baptism of Blood and Holy Spirit (Crucifixion of the Lamb that led to the Holy Eucharist) for the forgiveness of all sins.
- Loving The Father: Through surrendering to The Father's Will and obedience to all His commands till death including proclaiming the gospel.
- Love and Mercy of the Father: Through doing for others what they cannot do themselves, i.e. His sacrifice on the cross for the forgiveness of sins and curing souls.
- Thirst and Hunger for the Living Water and Bread (Righteousness): Through listening to the written Word and burning it in the heart, and having the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist into our hearts.
- Meekness and Humbleness: Through pleasing God above all things where heavenly riches are the desire of the heart, thus accepting whatever God provide and do His Will.

In Mark's Gospel [Repentance], the first words spoken by Jesus Christ were: *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel."* (Mark 1:15), and His last words were: *"Go out to the whole world; proclaim the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will be associated with believers: in My Name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick who will recover."* (Mark 16:15-18). So, Jesus Christ came so that He and His followers will be the light to the blind and sick souls to bring them salvation and everlasting life in Heaven in the presence of God; He came for the harsh-heart people and asked them to repent, wash their hearts and tender it towards the needy to live in harmony in one Kingdom: The Kingdom of God where there is no existence for sinners; He came to tell us that in His Name all evil spirits are rebuked and cast out so there is no need to be afraid of what might happen if we sin, just put all our trust in Him, repent and follow Him.

In Luke's Gospel [God's Promise], the first words spoken by Jesus Christ were: *"Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"* (Luke 2:49), and His last words were: *"So it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in His Name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all nations, beginning with Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this. And now I am sending upon you what the Father has promised. Stay in the city, then, until you are clothed with the power from on high."* (Luke 24:46-49). So, Jesus is God's Christ who came to fulfill God's promise to us (all nations) in the manner indicated in the Old Testament for our salvation. There was no power that stood in the way of His accomplishment as it is God's will because God love us and He want us to be clothed (i.e., our hearts are filled with God's Love that is poured by the Holy Spirit) with the power of His love to be His followers and witnesses. Jesus Christ came so that man-kind will love God and become nearer to Him; and on earth, to find Him in the Temple where He exist in the Word and the Holy Eucharist.

In John's Gospel [God's Love & Mercy], the first words spoken by Jesus Christ were: *"What do you want?"* (John 1:38), and His last words were: *"If I want him to stay behind till I come, what does it matter to you? You are to follow Me."* (John 21:22). So, Jesus Christ came to tell us that He would like to provide us with all our needs, and at the same time He want us to know that all we need is **to have the desire to follow Him** and do so without looking at other people's actions; He came to call us to be God's Children as He is, at the same time He is the One who can make us God's Children (i.e., by loving Him, listening to Him,

working for Him and be the light and shepherd to others to show God's Love and Mercy to them).

Throughout the written Gospel, Jesus Christ want us to know God and come nearer to Him by becoming like Him: Holy. In Luke 12, Jesus Christ teach everyone how to be His friend and not to fear any evil spirit as long as their belts are done up and their lamps are lit; as long as their purse for the journey contains God's Word and Love. In a special gift to Saint John, the Apostle, in a revelation, Jesus Christ spoke to us (Followers of Jesus Christ, living at anytime any place from any nation; all the people of the New Jerusalem who form the whole Body of Jesus Christ (Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians)) through the seven churches where the pure heart of each one is a symbol for one of His own characteristics [collectively form the basis of God's Kingdom] and a gift that He can give as a grace through the Holy Spirit to each one of us (we need to examine ourselves, repent and ask for the grace that we lack). Preaching from Patmos to the seven cities on the facing shore of the island is like Jesus Christ preaching from the boat to the people gathered on the shore in front of Him; amazing is what He said at the first time to the people on the shore, as He is repeating it again but in different words; amazing that His message is to tell people to make sure that they hear with their heart the Word of God, understand it, and yield the harvest through perseverance (Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:4-15).



The churches in the seven cities and what gift either it has or lacks are:

Church Of Ephesus [Wisdom: *The importance of understanding God's Word from the heart* (The parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:4-9, 19-23))]: This church has a discerning heart and does not accept false teachings, and used to work hard with perseverance to spread the Word of God and proclaim the salvation for all through Jesus Christ. They love God but they forgot the basis of Jesus Christ Mission and that is to give hand for the needy, to love and forgive their enemies, i.e. to help the poor [who has a spiritual poverty] of all nations without the fear of anyone (Galatians 2:1-14), to put God's love before anything else. This church has part of God's Wisdom but lacks real love to other souls who belong to God as He live among all souls as God the most merciful (Luke 6:27-38).

Church Of Smyrna [Understanding: *The element that will keep the hearts faithful without despair* (The parable of the good seed and the darnel (Matthew 13:24-30))]: This church is spiritually rich and really understands God's love and

mercy that was clarified and took on a new meaning with the incarnation of the Word of God that existed from the beginning. This church, to be victorious, needed to empower itself with God's Word and the understanding that through repentance and Jesus Christ's Body and Blood that sins can be forgiven so that sinners can have life and never die. This church though the evil spirits can affect them and make them forget God for a short period but it is through their loyalty and faith in God's Love that they will repent and God will reign again in their heart and they will be part of God's Kingdom. This is the church of the sinners and the people who are weary and worried; the church that is represented by the boat that was swamped by the waves but through the faith and trust in Jesus Christ will reach safely to the shore (i.e. eternal life with the Glory of God) (Matthew 8:23-27). Through faith they understand that each one of them can act as Jesus Christ; a servant to others in cleansing and helping them with a gentle and humble spirit (Galatians 6:1-2).

Church Of Pergamum [Counsel: *The food that will allow small souls to grow to be teachers to others* (The parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32))]: This church listen, believe and follow God's Word and Love (i.e. the two edges of the sword (Ephesians 6:17) (Isaiah 2:1-5)): Jesus Christ the One who will come to judge the world and need to be feared. This fear (the Beginning of Wisdom (Sirach 1:12)) should not allow them to have a double-face hypocritical heart otherwise they will be punished as they will be wicked in God's Eyes. Their actions should be based on God's Love and the desire to please Him, as they mourn His sadness, by their complete surrender to His Will without justifying their acts according to their own will, which is led by Satan, even at a time of hardship. This church is guided by Jesus Christ, and by its actions can become a faithful witness to Him and good counselor to anyone in time of trial and to the non-believers.

Church Of Thyatira [Fortitude: *The yeast that is mixed with God's Love and Word given to us by Moses, The Prophets, and Jesus Christ* (The parable of the yeast (Matthew 13:33))]: This church, like Their Leader (i.e. Jesus Christ), walk the pilgrim on earth with courage, strength, endurance, patience and perseverance but they lack the zeal to His and their Father as they accept Satan's work to be done without taking any action or care for other people's souls. Their zeal to God would have power against these evil spirits that aim to destroy souls and take them away from God's Kingdom; their zealous love will make them light to others as Jesus Christ was to them. People, who want to stay away from this church, i.e. adhere to false teachings, will live in darkness forever.

Church Of Sardis [Knowledge: *The core of our wealth* (The parable of the treasure (Matthew 13:44))]: To say that we know God is not enough without actual actions that reflect this knowledge. This church might think that they know

and love God, but without actions or adhering to what He say is like loving someone vaguely and not wholeheartedly. Their heart has no real feelings of love towards God and His Word; as a result they cannot distinguish God's Word so they do things only according to their desire. This situation can be a result of feeling fullness in knowing God so their hearts stop seeking Him, and with pride the feeling of being sinless can conquer the mind. Hearts need always to be humble (i.e. a poor spirit) in the knowledge of God, and since no one know The Father better than The Son, then people need to come nearer to Jesus Christ, listen to Him and work on His Word with a steadfast heart. Feeling richness and not using the gifts given by God can cause eternal death (Ephesians 2:1-10, Luke 12:13-21).

Church Of Philadelphia [Piety: *The precious jewel we need to wear* (The parable of the pearl (Matthew 13:45-46))]: The house that God build can never be destroyed, and he who walk always with God in this faith and depending only on God's Holy Providence, i.e. God's Word and Love, can never be put to eternal shame and his sins (enemies) will die cause the One who raised the dead will make him live forever. Trusting that Jesus Christ "God's Word, God's Love and Mercy, God's Light, God's Heart: The Eye of God's Wisdom" have opened wide for us the narrow gate of the New Jerusalem will bring a new birth into our hearts and lead us to strive to live a life in faithfulness and devoutness to become God's Children and be perfect as He is. For people who put all their trust in Jesus Christ and surrender totally to Him, at times of trials He will come and save them [Our Lord's Prayer]. At times of trials which can vary from listening to false teachings or sinning or having a certain hardship in life, our trust in Jesus Christ and putting our heavy burden on Him (including our sins as He is our Salvation) will save us.

Church Of Laodicea [Fear of the Lord: *The distinguisher between the upright from the wicked* (The parable of the dragnet (Matthew 13:47-50))]: This church represents the souls that are born from flesh not from Spirit though they think that they are born from Spirit (they have self-righteousness) as they are blind from seeing the truth and their inner-self by their self-confidence of what they know and their self-indulgence, i.e. a materialistic earthly soul. They lack the fear of the Lord and have no consideration of God's Word though He is the Amen, The Truth and through Him they were created. Somehow, they are similar to the souls of church of Sardis. Souls of this church have a proud, arrogant and self-important behavior that needs to be adjusted and reminded that God exist, He is the Creator of all beings, and have asked His people to look after each other in pure tenderness, meekness and humbleness. They need to move away from their own thinking and look again at Jesus Christ's actions on earth and imitate the true riches that His Spirit have; imitate His actions that witnessed to God's Love, Goodness, Mercifulness and Justice; imitate His actions that witnessed that God is Holy.

On the cross, Jesus Christ said that He is thirsty, actually He is thirsty for all souls of the seven churches (i.e. all souls) and do not want any soul to be thrown outside His Kingdom; He want them to listen to what He had to say to the seven churches and try to purify themselves for God's sake. At the same time, as Son of Man, He understand the thirst of the people to His Father and is asking them to come and drink from Him, The Living Water that is given by God, freely (1 Corinthians 10:4, Revelation 22:16-22); The Living Water that Jesus Christ indicated to the Samaritan woman that He have and would give to anyone who is thirsty so that he will never thirst again (John 4:10-14); The Living Water that is held by the man who would lead us to Our Father's House where we will have our Passover Meal (Luke 22:7-13).

Near the cross, there are two kinds of people: (1) The people who have insulted, scourged and crucified Jesus Christ, and (2) The people who have washed away His Sacred Blood after His death as preparation for His burial. Though at that instant of crucifixion these two kinds were different people, but nowadays we understand that it is very rare to see someone live in holiness all his/her life, but rather we move from an innocent heart (at childhood) to live an earthly life (as of the people of Church of Laodicea or Sardis), and it is through God's Providence including (but not limited to) the people who have wisdom, understanding and knowledge to proclaim God's Love and Mercy to others (as of the people of church of Ephesus and Philadelphia) that we start to understand how to come nearer to Jesus Christ (Who descended from Heaven to earth) and buy from Him Heavenly gold; all what we need in our life: His Love with total obedience to God our Father and His redeeming love to all people (Psalm 19). This transformation happens in so many steps depending on the people surrounding us and on our faith, so at a certain stage we can be a soul of any of the seven churches (Ephesians 4, 5, 6). With true repentance and perseverance in Faith, we (parents, children, priests, missionary, people in power, etc.) move from the side of the people who crucified Jesus Christ to the people who wash His wounds and build/restore His Body. Keeping God's Law and Commandments and observing them will show others our understanding and wisdom (Deuteronomy 4:6).

In some cases, when we sin, a fear shadows our heart and makes us stray away from God whether by neglecting Him or by having self-righteousness. This fear can be compared to our feelings when while on a road, a thief comes and steals our bag that has all our money and papers that show our identity, e.g. our passport, our picture and our address; then after a short time, another fear will arise as we will be scared that the thief will come to our house to harm us even more; we will live in a fear that will make us hide our face so that he will not recognize us among the crowd in any street or any place, and we will end up

living in darkness away from every other person and away from the light. This is what Satan does to us; once we commit a sin, our fear makes us prefer to stay in darkness and consider that darkness as light. This is also what 'Individual Freedom' does to our soul; our fear to evangelize or even to follow God's Word, especially if the consequences are losing friends or martyrdom, making us stay in darkness forgetting that all power was given to Jesus Christ and He is the light that all people should not be scared to live in as He is God's Love to us and He love us. We accept blindness, but which blindness? Let it be the blindness that is caused by having Jesus Christ's Hands on our eyes. Yes, Jesus Christ is the Hand of God that cover our eyes and we, trusting Him fully, allow Him and His Word to be our eyes that will lead us into eternal happiness, eternal life with God in His Glory (Psalms 2, 23 and 27).

In the Old Testament, many were filled with God's graces (i.e. Gifts of the Holy Spirit) and used to invoke God in all their needs and in order to be able to stand in front of evil plots. An example of these people is Queen Esther who asked God to give her courage (Esther 4:17r-17z) to stand in front of sinning and overcome her fear of disobeying God.



My Lord, Your crown of thorns is a crown of flowers with beautiful aroma as the aroma of the Myrrh on my sinful body. Thank You. Amen.

O God, Heavenly Father, from whom every fatherhood, in heaven or on earth, takes its name, I kneel before You as Saint Paul did and pray to You as Saint Paul prayed for the Ephesians: "In the abundance of Your Glory may You, through Your Holy Spirit, enable us to grow firm in power with regard to our inner self, so that Jesus Christ may live in our hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, we will have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; so that, knowing the love of Jesus Christ, which is beyond knowledge, we may be filled with the utter fullness of You.

Glory be to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to God from generation to generation in the church and in Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen." (Ephesians 3:14-21).

The Power and The Sword

(Reflection on Matthew 4:63 and 6:33)

When you read Jesus Christ Words in Acts 1:8 : “*You will receive Power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses*”, it makes you think: ‘What kind of power does He mean?’. Is it the power that children think exists in a magician’s wand? Or, is it the power of mind over others that adults think exists in the hosts of talk-shows? Or, is it the power of Money? Or, is it the power a soldier has in the field of a battle when he holds a sword in his hand?

In Luke 22:35-38, Jesus Christ asked His disciples to sell their cloak and buy a sword to be prepared for the difficulties that they will face. Is this the weapon that Jesus Christ wanted his disciples to have to give them power in their life to accomplish their mission to proclaim people’s salvation through Christ Jesus, God’s Love and Mercy? Yet, after taking only two swords (not eleven according to their number) and using one of them to cut the ear of a Roman soldier, Jesus Christ Himself cured that soldier indicating that He did not mean that we, His followers, should be equipped with swords for proclaiming God’s Kingdom, rather He meant a sword that will give us the power to persevere to stay faithful; the power to stay obedient to God’s Word till death; the power to sacrifice oneself for the sake of God’s Glory; the power to stand against Satan and sin and defeat the death of the soul; the power to belong and be part of a big body; the power to be humble, admit mistakes and repent; the power to proclaim God’s Gospel without fear; the power to forgive your enemies and pray for them; the power to serve others joyfully with a generous heart and all our might (Isaiah 2:1-5).

What is this sword that will give us this kind of power? What does the Holy Spirit pour in us, in our heart, soul and mind that will give us such power? What is our actual battle in life?

The theme of World Youth Day 2008 that gathered the Pope Benedict the XVI with the youth in Sydney, July 15th-20th 2008, was the message in Jesus Christ Words said in Acts 1:8. If it happened that you were there, then you would have noticed that there is POWER that is not derived from magic, nor is it a control over minds when someone of authority speaks. No, it was a power that is felt in every heart that was in WYD2008 or participated in any kind of functions that led to the beautiful gathering. Yes, the pilgrims attended WYD2008 thirsty to know God and they found Him in the hearts of the people:

- You would see the love of the people (families) and parishes via their hospitality towards any pilgrim inside Australia or in New Zealand.

- You would feel the love of working as a team to organize such an event.
- You would touch the patience when the pilgrims walked slowly to reach their destiny, the meeting place.
- Though the pilgrims were tired you could embrace their happiness to do what they need to do to be part of the Big Family.
- You will be amazed by the number of priests who came to WYD.
- You will be astonished by the humbleness of the Bishops to come to share and teach their knowledge on faith and life with the pilgrims during the Catechesis sessions.
- You will glimpse that power that made people volunteer to make the pilgrims' journey as smooth as it was.

You would understand that all these actions were actually driven and empowered by one thing “**The Love of God that is poured by the Holy Spirit in the people’s heart**” (Romans 5:5) and the people’s commitment towards this love.

Yes, the sword is ‘**God’s Love**’ (i.e., **The Word of God** in word, thought (God’s Wisdom) and action (Isaiah 44:5, Ephesians 6:17)), and the power we obtain when we embrace that love of God as Our Father (that is shown in Jesus Christ’s sacrifice), through the Holy Spirit, will make us committed towards this love (as in the bond between the father and his children) and enable us to use our tongues, mind and body to proclaim the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth to make His Family as big as the universe, a family where God is the Father, and ‘Love’ is the tie between its members; it will enable us to love God above anyone and anything else. In other words, the ‘Love of God’ will empower us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude (strength, patience and endurance), knowledge, piety (holiness), and fear of God. These gifts, in fullness, are The Characteristics of Jesus Christ (His Heart) that keep the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20) in its place on our inner self and make it shine as part of God’s Kingdom and Righteousness, where:

- Wisdom, and Knowledge identify the **Truth** (*the belt around the waist*),
- Holiness spring **uprightness** (*the breastplate*),
- Counsel, Knowledge and Fortitude support **eagerness to proclaim the good news for all** (*the shoes on the feet*),
- Fear of God and Fortitude out of zealous love to God keep a steadfast **Faith** (*the shield*), and
- Understanding of God’s Mercy assure our **salvation** (*the helmet*)

And, all of these gifts will engrave **God’s Love and His Word** (the sword) in our hearts to fight the evil spirits. These gifts will make us conquer our battle in life against sin and we will not choose other Gods (i.e. earthly desires) who are not the Living Water, or dig a well with cracked walls. These gifts will fruit/inspire in

us: Charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity. These acts will reflect God's Love to others and witness to His Holy Name (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Keeping these characteristics in mind (Isaiah 11:1-3), through the Holy Spirit we can see Jesus, Son of Man, to be 'The Truth'; 'The Amen'; 'The Christ; Son of God; Lamb of God'; 'The Word of God'. If we see Him, we will see:

- His White Hair as a symbol of His Wisdom,
- His Burning Eyes that fires love, that fill His Heart, as a symbol of His Understanding and zeal to God,
- His White (Daniel 7:9) or Red (Revelation 19:13) Robe that shines as a symbol of His Holiness and the holiness of everyone who believes in Him that is gained by His death on the cross (where His Voice is a voice of many),
- His Golden Belt on His Waist as a symbol of His Knowledge,
- His Bronze Feet, that are bronze as He is filled with the Holy Spirit (Tongues of Fire; The Chariot of Fire) as a symbol of His Fortitude,
- His Seven Stars (the churches that are under His protection) in His Right Hand as a symbol of His Counsel to all, or we might see His Staff that The Good Shepherd gather His sheep with, and
- His Tongue is like a double-edged sword as a symbol of the effectiveness of His Word and His Love

And, when we have the Fear of God in our hearts, we will see the Crown on His Holy Face that shine as the sun as a symbol of His Majesty (Revelation 1:13-16, Daniel 7:9-10, Daniel 10:6).

How and where do we buy the sword? And, what shall we wear if we have sold our gown to buy this sword? ... Jesus said: "*Ask and you will be given*". We can only pray for righteousness and seek God's Wisdom and Love, i.e. pray for God to give us a discerning heart (to distinguish right from wrong), a fearing heart (to keep God above all things), an understanding heart (to love others with patience by understanding their weaknesses and needs and provide for them what they cannot provide for themselves) and a listening heart (to listen to God's Word and engrave His law in the heart), and everything else will fruit from it. God's gift and grace through the Holy Spirit will clothe us with the gown of holiness instead of the gown that was sold to buy the sword (Revelation 3:18).

Through the Holy Spirit, the followers of Jesus Christ (i.e. priests, parents, missionaries, lay individuals, etc.) will realize that Jesus Christ was The Light on Earth, and they are requested to be the light for others. In Psalm 119, Nun verse no. 105, King David told God: "*Your Word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path*", and of course we know that Jesus Christ is God's Word. Imagine a volunteer who offered to work at night in a big concert event held in a big field

for the purpose of charitable work to collect money for disabled children. The duty of that volunteer was to stay awake all night on a small section of the path, that the attendants would use to go from one block to another, holding a torch towards the ground to indicate to the passers-by that there is a hole in the ground to avoid it and not to fall in it or stumble in their walk. He was showing them the wrong part of the road so that their feet will not tremble and fall; exactly what God's Word do for us. Thinking about this, all priests are also somehow like this volunteer who offered themselves freely to serve us during our pilgrim on earth to indicate to us the wrong spots in our path so we would not fall along the way. We also are requested to hold that torch in the path of others and show them right from wrong so that they will not fall. We hold this torch in our speech, thoughts and actions showing the love of God for others. We hold this torch to be able to work in God's Vine (The Kingdom of Service (Matthew 20)).

Just as in a classroom: we cannot explain a subject to a friend who didn't attend the lesson unless we really understand the subject first, so we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be able to be witnesses to Jesus Christ. And this can be achieved only by **our desire to love God and know Him**; to attach our heart to His Heart, which is achieved by:

- (1) Knowing what He said to us through His Son, which is found in the Holy Bible, and
- (2) Inviting Him into our hearts by going to the Holy Mass to become one with Christ.

In fact, these are the purse and/or haversack (where our money (i.e. heart/actions) for our journey is kept, the money that buys Heavenly Riches from Jesus Christ to armor us against sin and fruit our actions of love) that Jesus Christ asked his disciples/followers to have along with the sword (God's Word) (Luke 22:35-38). In other words we are seeking God's Heart and Its Characteristics to be our armor of God, and are asking Jesus Christ to put our hearts into His.

In life, when someone loves someone and they do not see each other for a period of time, a sense of longing to meet arises in the heart (a desire to see), and when they meet they will say to each other 'I missed you'; these words will make us, as joyful followers of Jesus Christ, say to God as Saint John the Apostle said in his revelation to Jesus Christ: "*Amen; come, Lord Jesus [Marana tha]*" (Revelation 22:20).

And, just like when the rain comes down and we can see the actual colors of the light manifested in the rainbow, so it is when The Living Water, i.e. the Love of God and His Mercy that is given to us freely (Revelation 22:16-21), fills our hearts by the Holy Spirit and we see Jesus Christ 'Our Lord and Our God' in the Holy Eucharist. Without rain, there is no way a rainbow can be seen in the sky;

without Faith (i.e. The Love of God as our Father in our hearts (shown to us in the sacrifice of His Beloved Son)) and trusting His Word including the Words in John 6:26-58 there is no way we can see the King of Kings and be witnesses to Him.



The Sacred Heart of Jesus (God's Word)/Eucharistic Heart of Jesus is
the source of The Armor of God.

*Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in You
Sacred Heart of Jesus protect us*

Through the Holy Spirit, may our love to God and each other grow more and more with the knowledge and complete understanding that will help us to come to true discernment, so that we will be innocent and free of any trace of guilt when the Day of Christ comes, entirely filled with the fruits of uprightness through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God (Philippians 1:9-11).

Heavenly Father, thank You for the Precious Gift You gave us on Christmas Day. A Gift that we have started unwrapping when Your Beloved Son was born, and day after day we come to see its beauty and enjoy the unending springs of Living Water that came out of it; day after day we are amazed and delighted by receiving the promise You gave to Isaiah (41:13-20). As, with faith, we can see in the Holy Eucharist the Transfigured Jesus Christ standing with a bowl of Living Water in His Hands, giving His "Holiness and Love", "Wisdom, Mercy and Divine Providence", "Forgiveness, Counsel and Peace", and "Power over Satan and evil spirits" to each one of us and asking us to give it to others(John 7:37-39).

Our Father in Heaven, how amazing is Your Love for us though we are sinners; how amazing are Your ways in teaching us Your Love; how amazing are Your precepts that Your Holy Spirit imprint in our hearts, unite us and make us Your children; how amazing are Your gifts that purify us, give us a share of Your Holy Spirit and empower us to be Your witnesses on earth. All praise, all blessings and all thanksgiving is Yours: The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit one God. Amen.

Sight/Faith Restoration

In Mark 8:22-26, Bethsaida is a town/village outside the region of Judia. Its people were like a sheep without its shepherd; their acts did not reflect that they knew God as God wanted them to know Him, through Jesus Christ. Spiritually they were considered blind and needed someone to open their eyes to the true faith on the condition that they would not go back to their old habits and beliefs (i.e. go back again to the city and be affected again by the remaining blind people's acts (Luke 10:13)) but rather trust in God and have faith in Him and follow Him. For the blind person, Jesus Christ as the Holy Shepherd opened the eyes of this man in the same two steps that God opened the eyes of the people on earth: (1) Blur-vision which reflects the teachings of the Jew based on the Ten Commandments (which by itself was incomplete faith/righteousness but an introduction to Faith and the Messiah with whom Faith will be completed), and (2) Complete restoration to sight reflecting the Faith in Jesus Christ as the **Son of God** who completed and perfected the law with His teachings, and as the **Messiah** (The Anointed Saviour) who gave Himself as a sacrifice to God (Qorban) for our sins thus showing us God's Love.

When God wanted to restore the faith of the people on earth as it was when He first created it (Adam & Eve without sin), He destroyed all creatures except for a few faithful ones as good seeds to start to multiply and be fruitful with good fruits (Genesis 8:6-13, 20-22). Noah's story, inside the ark waiting for the land to appear again and go back to how it was to be able to live on and start new life again, tells us that he sent the dove twice (where the dove represents the Holy Spirit & Word of God as One), and it was after the second time that the land was restored. The first time Noah sent the dove was a prophetic act of God sending His Word through Moses to His people to believe in God, and the dove coming back is an indication that Moses' message was incomplete and required additional time and Word for the earth to be restored to what it was. The second time, the dove came back with a green olive tree branch (this is a symbol for Jesus Christ: The Evergreen Living (Immortal), Anointed with olive oil (Messiah), Peace Maker, Word of God) and after which the land was restored to how it was when it was created. During the period between the first sending of the dove and the second, the level of the water was reducing reflecting that the teaching of Moses and all the prophets who came after him have effect on earth but not complete and still the land was not ready to be fruitful, until the coming of the Messiah who would come last after the coming of all prophets (Just like a King entering his palace after all his soldiers preparing the way for Him and announcing His coming). And the period Noah waited until he sent the dove a third time and it did not come back, indicates the time required to spread the Word all over the world and the forming of the seven churches (one week: seven days) referred to by Jesus Christ in the Revelation; the seven churches forming God's Kingdom where its citizens have the gifts of the Holy Spirit as heirs of the Kingdom: Wisdom,

Understanding, Fortitude, Counsel, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of God.

The Blind man was not blind from the beginning, so are the people of the earth when they were first created; but due to Satan and sin our eyes became blind and our hearts hardened, and it is God's wisdom to cure us in steps. And we can find in Matthew 5:17-20 a clear indication to these two steps.

In Matthew 6:22-23, Jesus Christ tell us that "*The eye is the lamp of the body*", accordingly a blind person would indicate complete darkness of the whole body; a sinful person. For us to be cured with full restoration of sight, we need to follow Jesus Christ's teaching and see the world through His Sacred Heart and with all the love He have for His Father and for us and act accordingly. Restoration of sight is like bringing back purity to the heart and creation of a new person.

What do we want to see? And, what is the blindness in our eyes?

We want to see the Love of God to us. As followers of Jesus Christ, we believe and have faith in God's love and mercy through Him. Any blindness will be:

1. The hate in the heart; a stubborn heart that denies the existence of God and God's love and mercy to everyone because he does not have it himself,
2. The disapproval in the heart to the will of God that makes us weak at the time of trials, for example time of sickness or even death of a beloved person, and
3. The pride in the heart that denies the good to others.

"Seeing God" is not merely knowing that God is the Creator and that He gave The Ten Commandments to be obeyed. Seeing God is to understand what Jesus Christ meant when He said: "*If you saw Me, you have seen God*"; God as described in Psalm 145; and when we see God in that way, we understand the "Kingdom of God" and act accordingly. To be a citizen of this Kingdom, with the belief that everyone on earth has the same opportunity to become a citizen; we need to consider that they are there and if they needed anything in our capability then we should provide with love. In Matthew 5:1-12 (i.e. The Beatitudes), Jesus Christ blessed everyone who has the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that make him/her humble, meek, share the sorrow of God and others, caring, pure in heart, patient, merciful, peace maker (spiritually; leading others to the peace of soul through Jesus Christ, and bodily), and persevere for the Name of God and Righteousness. In his letter, Saint James advises each one of us that if we lack a gift then we should ask God without doubt and He will provide freely and ungrudgingly (James 1:5) as Jesus Christ said (Matthew 7:7-11). As what Jacob (Israel) did when he saw God and did not die, he did not let Him go without receiving His blessings (Genesis 32:26-30); and as Sons of Israel, God's blessings (the gifts of the Holy Spirit) is all what we need in our life.

Please God, fill our lamp with necessary olive oil to keep the light on during our journey on earth, and embrace our heart to feel the tenderness of Your love till Your Light shines for us forever. Amen.

"Who Do You Say I Am?"

(Reflection on Isaiah 6:1-13, 1 Corinthians 12:28-30, 13:1-13, Matthew 16:13-20, Hebrews 8, 9, 10 and Romans 11:29-36, Luke 14:12-14)

Every person can be seen by the people surrounding him from an angle depending on their position and closeness to that person. Imagining that you are standing in the middle of a circle facing north, and there are 360 persons standing around you forming a circle and looking at you; everyone will see your face from an angle, and the one who would see you exactly as you are will be the one who is standing in front of you face to face.

Where do we stand from the face of Jesus Christ? Do we see Him clearly as Saint Peter the Apostle, inspired by God The Father, saw Him as "*Christ, the Son of the Living God*" (Matthew 16:16), and as Saint Thomas saw and admitted that He is "*My Lord and My God!*" (John 20:28), or see Him from an angle? Jesus asked us to come near Him and not be afraid, to sit in front of Him and listen to Him, and to look deeply into His eyes and feel the love and compassion that comes out of them to know Him. We cannot stand from an angle and say we know Him; it will be a blurred image and knowledge.

Jesus Christ said: "*Search and you will find*" (Luke 11:9-10). As followers of Jesus Christ, we believe that the Holy Bible was written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, accordingly what is written is not a myth or a creation of people's imagination but the Holy Bible is our reference that we should seek to get answers. For example:

- How can we say that what happened to prophet Jonah is a myth, when Jesus Christ mentioned him as an example to compare His resurrection from the dead to Jonah's coming out of the sea-monster's belly (Matthew 12:39-41, Luke 11:29-32)?
- How can we say that Noah did not build the ark or that God did not re-create the face of the earth and washed it with the Flood, or that God did not destroy Sodom with fire and brimstone because of the people's immoral actions after Lot had left it, when Jesus Christ mentioned these events when He was explaining how His second coming will be (Matthew 24:37-39, Luke 17:26-30)?

He, who says that, would be actually questioning the words of Jesus Christ, and then he will believe anything said about Jesus even if it was not correct.

Some people would believe that Jesus Christ had brothers (James, Joseph, Simon and Jude) and sisters (Matthew 12:46, 13:55-56) yet if we read carefully in the Old Testament, Book of Tobit, we will see that Tobias called his wife Sarah 'a sister' just because she was his relative. Jesus' brothers (relatives) were the children of Mary: (1) wife of Clopas, (2) sister (cousin) of Mary mother of Jesus

(John 19:25) and (3) mother of James and Joseph (Matthew 27:56); the same James writer of The Letter of James, brother of Jude writer of The Letter of Jude. Believing that Jesus Christ had brothers would underestimate Jesus' ministry on earth as He has both 'Human' and 'Divine' nature [God loved us and He took our human nature in order for us to share His Divinity], and those people would not understand that His mother, Virgin Mary, was prepared by God to be the Mother of Son of God; Mother of God; to be Holy from birth to be able to embrace His Divinity [No one comes to God and stand in His presence if he is not holy (Exodus 3:4-6)]; and miraculously she was virgin before His birth, during His birth and after His birth. Some would not understand that she or any other saint can pray for us in Heaven to God [they would say we don't need someone to intercede for us and take our prayers to God], yet they themselves can pray for others on earth.

Some would think that the Holy Eucharist is just a symbol and cannot be adored as the "Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity" of Jesus Christ because it will indicate that we are putting another Christ in the Temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4)! They could not realise that this statement indicates the false Messiah(s): who will come after Jesus Christ and teach people false teachings; and who will be blind by the sparkling of fame and gold and try to lead others to blindness (living by the body) and deny God "Yahweh Sabaoth": The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit.

Some people would say that Jesus is only human and was anointed (selected) by God "Yahweh Sabaoth" as any other prophet but with extra-ordinary power to make God known to his people. And for these, one can say: "Who can forgive sins?", or how can He establish "**His Church**" not God's Church if He was just a prophet proclaiming God? Or even has the keys for the Kingdom of Heaven, or was that not mentioned in the Holy Bible? For these, it will be hard for them to believe that God have infinite love for the whole world, God is most Merciful and His wish is not to lose a soul, as "*For this is how God loved **the world**: He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life*" (John 3:16).

Some would reject the authority Jesus Christ bestowed on Peter as the Head of His Church (Community of the chosen people), and his successors (Popes, i.e. the Church's spiritual leaders) thereafter. Those people are actually refusing to admit the Priesthood God established with Aaron and his sons (Exodus 28:1), and with the Levites (Numbers 1:48-53, 3, 4), and their duties towards God and the people. Similar duties with new understanding to the sacrifice/offering (established by Jesus Christ Himself on the Last Supper and on the Cross) are carried out by the church beehive having the Pope as the Head of the Priests and Deacons and other religious orders (i.e., Servant of the Servants). In the same manner they would deny the Seven Sacraments within the church forgetting that these Sacraments

were originally established by God, and with Jesus Christ they took new form as they are now understood to be performed through The Holy Spirit Whom Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, asked His Father to send to us in His Name (John 14: 16, 26 & 15:26):

1. **Baptism:** Noah's Ark in the Flood, for example, is considered as baptism. The cure of Naaman the Syrian by Elisha from his skin disease by washing in the River of Jordan seven times is an early example for the baptism of water and Spirit as a mark to repent, wash away sins and be filled with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (2 Kings 5:1-19). Jesus Christ himself was baptized by John the Baptist. *Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God.*
2. **Confirmation:** In the Old Testament, the anointed person is consecrated to God (Exodus 30:22-33, Isaiah 61:1-3). In the New Testament, all believers in Jesus Christ are consecrated to God and are His army who spreads His Kingdom. Accordingly they need to be anointed with blessed oil to receive the *seal* of the Holy Spirit, i.e. confirmation.
3. **The Holy Eucharist:** The Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ is the food burnt as a smell pleasing to God: The combination of the cereal offering, the burnt offering, communion sacrifice, the sacrifice for sin, and the sacrifice of reparation (Leviticus 1,2,3,4 & 7, Hebrews 10:8-10). As followers of Jesus Christ, we understand that He is a precious gift from God to us for the sake of our redemption, and at the same time He is our perfect thanksgiving offering to God (He is God's Love given to us freely and our love offered to God with trust and faith). The Holy Eucharist in the form of 'changing the man-made bread and wine into the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ' was first made by Jesus Christ himself on the night he was betrayed (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25) and He Himself requested His disciples to do it (Luke 22:19-20). The Holy Eucharist is the food during a famine (sinful stage of the soul) that shall not be spent but will always be there to feed the hungry; the oil in the jug that will never be empty but will always be there to enlighten the heart, as in the miracle in the Old Testament of Elijah providing a meal and oil to the widow at Zarephath (1 Kings 17:9). *In Holy Communion, we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body (1 Corinthians 10:14-17).*
4. **Penance and Reconciliation:** Forgiveness of sins brings reconciliation with God. We remember the sins we have committed in front of a priest, do penance, correct the wrong and we try not to repeat them. In the Old Testament, the priest offered cereal offering and washed the sins away with water after listening to the sinner (Numbers 5:5-31). Jesus Christ allowed the priests to wash away sins when He told Peter: "*Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven*" (Matthew 16:19).

5. **The Anointing of the Sick** (Ecclesiasticus 38:9-11): In the Old Testament, anointing with oil is mainly considered to set apart someone for priestly (God's) service. Yet if we examine the Psalms we will understand from Psalm 23:5, 92:10, 133:2 that the anointed are people who are free from sin and where love fills their hearts, are not afraid of their enemies (sins) because they are sure that they made their home in the house of Yahweh. Anointing with oil; with olive oil, the oil that comes out of the fruit of the tree whose leaf was carried by the dove that was sent by Noah and came back to indicate to him that there was life on the surface of the earth. The oil that keeps on pouring from God to the nations: Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The oil that God anointed His prophets with to become pure and carry His purity to others. During Jesus Christ's life on earth, Jesus cured a few sick people by laying his hands on them (Mark 6:5) [He did not need to put oil on them because He is the Anointed One and the Anointing Agent]; and His disciples cured people by anointing the sick with oil (Mark 6:13) according to Jesus' teachings. We also, sick people (in soul and/or body) can be anointed by the Holy Oil and be cured (by faith for the soul and according to God's will for the body). *Each time a Christian falls seriously ill, he may receive the Anointing of the Sick. A special ceremony is carried out to make the Holy Oil so that it can be used to cleanse sickness (sins).*
6. **Holy Orders (Priesthood)**: In Exodus 28:1, God selected His first people to minister to Him as priests. Jesus Christ Himself is considered High Priest. *It is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time, new priests are ordained.*
7. **Matrimony**: It is a covenant by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and they become one body to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28, 2:24).

As followers of Jesus Christ, He is our Good Master (The owner of the house, and to Whom we say: Here I am, use me) who came and as He knew that He was going away for some time, He taught us, His servants, how to keep His house clean, tidy and everything in its place according to His will until He come back again. He did what He had to do, and we have to do what is required of us to do, i.e. what He taught us. As in any organization, there are different positions in order to collectively achieve the goal of the organization, so is our spiritual work in the Kingdom of God that can be either simple (living the rules and spreading love/harmony between individuals in simple ways) or initiative where it requires more effort and sacrifice for the sake of all. In order to know whether we are working efficiently, we require a good monitoring system and feedback to compare between what is achieved and what is required, and a rectifier to improve on what is achieved to eliminate/prevent the differences (make it nil!). The monitoring system is our conscience, the feedback is our relationship with the

people surrounding us whether it is good or bad, plus our actual relationship with God, and the rectifier is God's Providence. Confession, admitting mistakes, repentance, and reparation are the best way to improve our relationships. Our goal is to sanctify ourselves.

God has rented this world to us and gave everyone different graces to be used for His glory and for the sake of keeping His creation healthy, e.g. the one who is rich and full should take care of the hungry and in need, the one who is intelligent should use his intelligence for the good of human being, animals and nature rather than using it for creating weapons for killing and destruction for example; our tongues are used for praising rather than cursing; money and time are used in the right place rather than wasting it on gambling in horse-racing, casino, etc. (a factor of self-destruction and family problems) for instance, our skills and bodies are not to participate in immoral activities, plants are used as food or medicine to cure rather than misuse it as drugs to kill, ... etc. God love everything He have made (Genesis 1:31, Wisdom 11:24), accordingly we need to take care of it and keep it safe including our souls that God give her a chance to repent and stay alive. We need to fill our hearts with zeal to God that makes us avoid using any grace given to us by Him in vain just as the zeal of Jesus Christ on His Father's House that it should not be used for anything other than prayer (John 2:13-17). This zeal will make us use God's graces for His Glory (build the Kingdom of God in the hearts) rather than our glory (fame and richness) (Matthew 25:14-18).

For some followers, God gave them the grace to understand that Jesus Christ's Sacred Heart is God's House that have many mansions where the dead in body are asleep in peace enjoying the warmth of such compassionate Heart (John 14:2). Jesus Christ is the servant who came and cleaned our hearts (made it holy) to be ready to invite God and His love for His children to come and stay in our heart (God's Kingdom) while we are on earth and reign on it and change our love to be 'the love of a child to his father' or even 'the love of a faithful wife to her husband', so that when we go to His Kingdom in Heaven, He will invite us to His House (heart). Just as in life on earth, people invite their friends and the people they love to their houses to share a meal together. When Jesus Christ felt the desire of Zacchaeus to see Him, He called him and told him that He wanted to stay at his house that day, and what happened?? Jesus Christ stayed in his heart and changed him (Luke 19:1-10); and from that moment God will see in him His Son and will love him as His Son because Zacchaeus will love God now as Jesus loved Him: "A Father, Upright One" and act accordingly (John 17:25-26).

On the cross, our redemption was fulfilled from God's side for all nations as Jesus Christ died naked without clothes to identify Him from which tribe or nation He came from; He died and His Holy Face was without features ("*Without beauty, without majesty, no looks to attract our eyes*" Isaiah 53:2-3). It is a Gift that was given to us freely but with lots of pain; a Gift that gave us the chance to be born

of the Spirit and be part of God's Kingdom. In John 3:1-21, Jesus Christ wisely explained to Nicodemus who came to Him at night (not because he was scared but as he had thirst for knowing God, he wanted **to be alone** with Jesus and ask Him about God without any interference from other people) that in order to be born of Spirit, we need to fulfill our thirst through the Living Water that kindles God's Love, shown in His Son's sacrifice, in our heart and fill it with joy (similar to the joy of the widow woman whose only son Jesus Christ rose from the dead (Luke 7:11-17) and the joy our Mother Virgin Mary felt when she saw her Son's resurrection). This love, i.e. God's Love will be poured into our hearts and sealed through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5) and give us power to love others as God loved us for God's Glory because God is Love. This love (when 'our thirst for it' is fulfilled through the Living Water) will give us power to surrender totally to God's will and put our trust in Him, repent wholeheartedly, reject sin, and do acts that will reflect God's Holiness to others by loving and forgiving others, doing charitable work towards the needy, and leading others to God's Love, i.e. we will be God's witnesses to others (Acts 1:8) as children imitating their Father. The Living Water that quenches the thirst is the same Living Water that washes and cleanses sins to show the purity of the heart. The Living Water is God's Word, God incarnated as Jesus Christ, Son of Man, The Redeemer who said: "No one who believes in me will ever thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up for eternal life" (John 4:14, 6:35). The Living Water that was held by the man (representing Jesus Christ) who led the disciples to the house (i.e., God's Kingdom) where the Passover is to be eaten (i.e., God's Table) (Luke 22:7-13) [Jesus Christ will show the way To God The Father; he/she who follows Him will reach Heaven (i.e., the upper room) and share His Passover Table]; and it is the same upper room where the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and they became His witnesses. And, the Living Water that flows from God's Heart is the Holy Spirit that we would receive from Jesus Christ when we believe in Him (John 7:37-39), and give us a new heart to be children of God (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

For all who have heard about Him, had faith in Him and believe in Him, Jesus Christ will open their eyes and cure their blindness if they shout to Him with louder voices not caring about what other people think and no matter how they stop them from approaching Him (Luke 18:35-43). In Luke 12:32, Jesus Christ said: "*There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased Your Father to give you the kingdom*".

O Jesus Christ, every time I come to You in the Holy Eucharist, I invite You into my heart and ask You to share Your meal with me at my house until You invite me to Your house in Heaven. I ask You to fill my hunger as Your meal is satisfying and everlasting, and remove my thirst as You are the Living Water. O God, fill us with Your Holy Spirit and let us stand firm in our faith in Jesus Christ Your Beloved and only Son. Amen.

Wisdom and Friends of God

(Reflections on Book of Wisdom, Psalm 119, Luke 17:20-25)

Since creation, God's Wisdom have resided in the hearts of His friends (children) and prophets to be the reflection of the Eternal Light, the untarnished mirror of God's active power, and the image of His Goodness. God's Wisdom resided in their hearts creating the kingdom of God there while they are on earth. Wisdom, (The Spirit of Truth/The Holy Spirit), renews the world generation after generation keeping them closer to God in speech, prayers, thoughts, and deeds for the good of the whole.

"For Wisdom is a Spirit intelligent, Holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, incisive, unsullied, lucid, invulnerable, benevolent, shrewd, irresistible, beneficent, friendly to human beings, steadfast, dependable, unperturbed, Almighty, all-surveying, penetrating all intelligent, pure and most subtle spirits. For Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion; She is so pure, She pervades and permeates all things. Wisdom is the breath of the power of God, pure emanation of the Glory of the Almighty; so nothing impure can find its way into Her." (Wisdom 7:22-25)

Wisdom is the origin of all good things and incalculable wealth, for She is the inexhaustible treasure which we need to acquire to win God's friendship (Wisdom 7:11-14). *All virtues (leading to uprightness) are the fruit of Her labors, since it is She who teaches temperance (self-control) and prudence (good judgment, carefulness when choosing as we have freedom of choice), justice and fortitude (courage, patience and endurance); nothing in life is more useful for human beings (Wisdom 8:7). For Wisdom begins with the sincere desire for instruction (God's Word), care for instruction means loving her, loving her means keeping her laws, attention to her laws guarantees incorruptibility, and incorruptibility brings us near to God; the desire for Wisdom thus leads to sovereignty (Wisdom 6:17-21). [Please note that the word 'Wisdom' is considered a feminine word and not masculine and that is why it is referred to by 'She/Her', and not because 'Wisdom' is female].*

Realizing the importance of Wisdom, in his letter Saint James the Apostle requested every believer if he lacks wisdom to ask God for it and He will provide (James 1:5). Accordingly, as the author of the Book of Wisdom asked, we also ask *You: O God grant us to speak as You would wish and conceive thoughts worthy of the gifts we have received, since You are both guide to Wisdom and director of sages; for we are in Your Hand, yes, ourselves and our sayings, and all intellectual and all practical knowledge. O God of our ancestors, Lord of Mercy, grant us Wisdom, consort of Your Throne, to be Your children, Your servants; we ask this through Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.*

The Way from Sadness to Happiness

(Reflections on Luke 12:1-5, John 8:44, 1 John 3:1-24, 4:4-5, 5:18-21, 1 Timothy 6:3-11, 2 Timothy 2:22-26, 3:1-5, Colossians 3:1-17, Galatians 5:16-25, 6:1)

We feel sadness and weep; a normal reaction in front of a dying person and tears will not dry if he/she is our own son/daughter: A great sadness because of departure for good. How sad You are Lord to see the death of our soul because of our lack of faith, yet how merciful You are to offer Yourself for us to give us the means to save us and bring us back to everlasting life. And still Your Mercy is above all things to accept us as we are through the prayers of the righteous.

It is not easy to understand what happened; it is not easy to change our minds from living by the Law of the Ten Commandments (which was taken literally, thinking of it only as actions towards the body and material things) to living according to the soul, the precious thing that God created in us, and understand the meaning of love to God and love to neighbor. It is not easy to understand how sad it is for God to see us dead not in body (because then He rejoices, and so should we, as it is the way of reunion with Him forever) but in soul as it is the eternal departure from Him. One of the best advices Jesus Christ gave us is not to be afraid from the one who kill our body but as of fear from God we should stay away from the one who is capable of killing our soul and be armored with God's Spirit.

When the Spirit Of Truth (Spirit of Jesus Christ Son of God → Spirit of God The Father (**Father Of Love and Mercy**)) fill and conquer your heart, mind and conscience, you will live forever as the spirits sent from the Father of Lies (Satan) will not be able to kill you in order to be thrown into hell, nor will the teachings of the children of the father of lies (these are the people who in their own choice sold their souls to Satan who bought them through earthly desires to deny the coming of Jesus Christ Son of God: His teachings and His Work).

The Spirit of Truth comes to us when we open our hearts to God (Choose God as our Father), put all our trust in Jesus Christ, eat His Body & drink His Blood for the forgiveness of sins and strengthening our faith, carry our cross and follow Him (John 8:31). The cross shared by all Christians is His Teachings regarding the love to God (as a Father) and the love to each other in the same way as He did (A light yoke). Carrying the cross means listening to His Word: obeying and working on it with love, joy, happiness and without fear; in other words: Keeping God's love and mercy in us as we are in Him and becoming His children. The Spirit of Truth will clothe us with the virtues of the good shepherd: holiness, faith, love, compassion, joy, peace, kindness, faithfulness, humility, wisdom, gentleness, endurance, patience and self-control and unite us all as children of

God. While the spirit of lie will put the seed of greed, impurity, lust, sexual immorality, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft, and clothe us with hate, anger, rage, jealousy and malice, pride, arrogance, slander, selfish ambition, and put filthy language on our lips and be ungrateful to God.

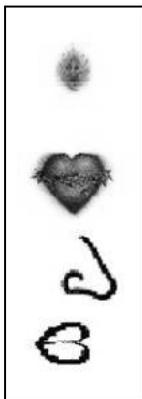
By forgiving others from all our hearts we complete our understanding of loving others' souls as ourselves, because we know that:

- (1) God will forgive us as we forgive others (Matthew 18:23-35),
- (2) By forgiving (through wise teaching) we are killing the 'Spirit of Lie' inside them that caused the misunderstanding or sinning against us, and helping in rebuking that evil spirit from them, and
- (3) Every soul will be accounted for the souls that it has sinned against and caused her to stray from God, have not repented and fixed the situation, and have not been forgiven (Mark 9:42-50).

Remember, every person at any time can be tempted by the spirit of lie. Keeping hate in the heart will kill both souls as it will lead to asking for revenge and treating others as they treat us; not according to spirit of gentleness and forgiveness. In (1 Kings 19:10-13), Elijah knew that God Yahweh Sabaoth can only be found in a gentle murmuring sound, a sound of a gentle breeze that will calm down any trouble and save souls; God is not known in violence or incidents that cause problems. 'Forgiving others from all of our hearts' is one of the acts to tell God that we love Him from all of our hearts. To 'ask for forgiveness' is to walk humbly with God as He is the only one who is Righteous.

In Your Mercy I put my trust, O Lord; I trust that You can cure both the victim and the killer before it is too late cause You are so Merciful and You don't want any soul to be lost. Arm me God with Your Holy Spirit to be one of Your children and a good shepherd leading my children to happiness in Your presence rather than taking them to sadness in the slaughter. Amen.

The Pentecost



When the Holy Spirit came upon the Disciples, He showed them where their treasure is, so their hearts would stick there. He gave them all they need to testify to the Truth that leads us to eternal life. He attached their hearts with Jesus Christ's Sacred Heart who became their lamp that lightened for them the darkness so that they, in turn, will enlighten to all. They started to see things through this Sacred Heart ("The eye is the lamp of the body") that hold all the love and mercy for every one of us. The Holy Spirit made them commemorate God's Law, speak things that comes from the Sacred Heart and preach, with wisdom, God's Love & Mercy for all. The Holy Spirit made them clean as all their actions (speech or thought) comes from such Heart, as Jesus Christ said. Amen.

The Sinner ... The Saint

(Reflection on the Book of Ecclesiasticus; Letter of Saint Paul to Titus; Philippians 2, 3, 4; Psalm 27, 112 & 122; Luke 14:25-33, Luke 16:1-15, 1 Corinthians 3:9-17, Romans 8, Letter of St. James, John 2:13-22, Luke 17)

Some people might see Jesus Christ's teaching for his followers to hate their father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters and even their own life to be so out of the question, to be so opposite to his teachings about loving each other and forgiving each other, yet these words cannot be understood with its right meaning without reading his full message: "To carry their cross and follow Him".

For the followers of Jesus Christ: the cross is "Jesus Christ's Teachings" that is "God's Word" that we need to love, know and understand in order to be able to discern the right teachings from the wrong, in order to stand in front of the one who is doing a wrong behaviour that displeases God with courage and complete confidence no matter what the relation is between that person and us, or even his/her position. Accordingly, if we want to build a tower (i.e. a pure heart as our aim is to see God in Heaven (Matthew 5:8)), then the calculated cost will be "God's Word" that will enable us to build the tower whether in short or long period.

As Christians, we can live our lives without realizing that we are not doing what Jesus Christ actually have asked as to do:

- We can enjoy ourselves without taking care of the poor, and the poorest of all poor people is the one who is standing on our door waiting for us to open to Him, i.e. Jesus Christ who also said that He is thirsty and need from us to provide Him, with our attentive ears, our hearts;
- We can work hard to provide our families with enough money to make them live in good standards yet we forget to take them to church or read to them the Holy Bible;
- We can argue and fight with our partner/parents/relatives on any subject and end up our relationship without remembering Jesus Christ's teachings about forgiveness;
- We can make 'Money' as the motive of our lives;
- We can easily be, with our actions and behaviour, a stumbling block in the path of the faith of others;
- We can easily forget our duties towards God and towards the people surrounding us (our parents, partner, children, ... etc.);

- We can easily have a stubborn heart that will blind our eyes from seeing our own mistakes.
- ...

As Christians, we understand that living with a polluted body will yield a polluted soul; and most of us can have an unpolluted body with polluted spirit (people with lukewarm love to God that is not on Fire so they cannot love others [Revelation (3:14-22): Church of Laodicea]).

What are the things that pollute the body and accordingly the spirit?

The desire of heart and eye --- this, if it is earthly desires, then it can lead to loving earthly riches more than God, lying, stealing, adultery, covetousness to other people's possessions, disobeying God's Word, killing.

What are the things that pollute the spirit without polluting the body?

To obey the Ten Commandments but without doing loving and merciful actions (acts of Charity: Proclaim God's Love; provide shelter, drink, food, clothes and money to the poor (bodily and spiritually) [not loving your neighbour/others (the people in need) as you love yourself]). In other words: to be spiritually unfruitful.

'Washing away the things that pollute the body' is to turn the desire of heart and eye towards Heaven, and wisely invest in whatever gifts (money, intelligence, courage, etc.) that is given to us; and in this case this will automatically sanctify the spirit [even if you are called now 'The unfaithful Stewart'].

'Washing away the things that pollutes the spirit' is to change your heart to be thankful to God, compassionate, sacrificing, meek and humble as Jesus Christ's Heart (Matthew 5:1-48), i.e. to be born of Spirit (to put the Word into practice, i.e. filled with God's Love through the Holy Spirit) and this will sanctify the spirit in addition to the body.

Yes, we are Christians but somehow our own cross is cracked, a crack that can divide the cross in two parts as we have no complete understanding to our Faith and worship other things with God. And, in our hearts there is only lukewarm love to God. Every time we sin (with or without knowledge), the crack in our cross increases and our remembrance to God fades until we start living just like anyone else who don't know that God exist. It is from this kind of living that God want us to be baptized and washed clean. God, and so should we, would like to see a solid healthy cross on our shoulders where our actions would come out of Love and not just as duties towards God and others (Philemon 1:8-9).

If we can imagine/admit this cracked cross then we will feel so sad, upset and worried and ask God to do something, ask Him for His Divine Providence. This feeling is what is called repentance, the feeling of sorrow of how we became like this, and the wish to become nearer to God; a repentance that will lead to a promise to God that we will not go back to our previous actions. Then, we will see a White Linen cloth amending the crack of our cross, keeping both sides together (in good times and bad times (i.e., at the times we break that promise, at a time of distress He will save us by His forgiveness)) and giving strength to ourselves to stay like that forever (i.e. to continue to strive to keep our promise to God). This White Linen cloth is the Resurrected Jesus Christ, His Holiness, and God's Love to us. Living like this, i.e. in God's Love according to Jesus Christ's Teachings will change our cracked cross, our life and we will not be living in our bodies any more but Jesus Christ will be living in us (we will see ourselves as the person who is crucified on the cross); and as followers of Jesus Christ we will be God's Children who build His Kingdom in their hearts (on earth before in Heaven) and their hearts will be His Temple from where He will shine to others. And when the time comes, we, in our new bodies, will shine in the Glory of God and join the Seraphim, the Cherubim, the Angels and all souls in Heaven in praising God with the universal word: "Halleluiah, Halleluiah, Halleluiah".

Understanding what Christianity means will put in our hearts a humble spirit that will say when it does its duties and receives words of appreciation that all thanks is to God as we are only doing our duties: A servant to others as My Master was to me.



My God, Heavenly Father, by the power of Your Holy Spirit lead us to the fullness of Light and Truth and let us taste the sweetness of the true wisdom of Your Word and be embraced always with Your Divine Providence in Jesus Christ Your beloved Son Who reign with You and The Holy Spirit One God. Amen.

Providence and New Human Nature

The following readings include some characteristics that a human being might have and can be changed:

Reflection on Mark 10:31 – 45, Psalm 79, Ecclesiasticus 36:1, 4-5, 10-17

- Misunderstanding God words because of people's love to earthly riches including themselves: In spite of the words Jesus used in predicting His Death, all that two of His disciples and their mother (in a different Gospel) cared about was their reward. They forgot that they were in a group of mainly 12 equal disciples and they wanted to get the best two seats. By doing this, they: (1) forced their will against God's will in distributing the rewards, and (2) thought that they were better than the rest of the disciples; and this inequality may have produced envy and even hate in their hearts (if they did not receive what they asked for) as well as in the other disciples' hearts. A conflict that Jesus, in His Wisdom (Divine Providence), resolved instantly by telling them that Children of God (Mark 10:24), including Himself, are all servants/slaves to each other.
- Suspicious of trusting God to do His will through us and others.
- Jumping to conclusions and ease of becoming furious and indignant with others because of a thought that was said. Inability to sit and resolve problems; everyone thinks of himself.
- Pride in ourselves and expectation of high rewards; especially when the big boss is close to you or you see that you have favor in his eyes. There is no humbleness when we do our job.
- Unable to forgive and accept others, and easily look for revenge, even ask God to do that; forgetting that everybody is His creation [Psalm 79: *Pour out Your rage ...*] and He is God of Love, Mercy and Forgiveness. We need to calm down and not let anger conquer our thoughts and our wishes and trust God's intervention (providence) for healing in His own ways and will.
- Unsure of and scared of the unknown: whether we will see God and be with Him forever, or whether we will not be able to enter the Kingdom of God in Heaven. As a result of this and also because our human desires can be easily tempted, we tend to forget/ignore God's commands especially if it does not suit us.
- Unable to listen and understand. There is a cloud on the eyes that blurs our vision of the truth that "All things are possible with God". Jesus was explaining to the disciples how this statement will come true, but there is no deep will to understand; may be because of the sacrifice they have to make which does not suit them?

Reflection on Genesis 21:5, 8-20, Genesis 49:29-33, 50:15-26, Genesis 27:1-5, 15-29

- The jealousy and selfishness of Sarah, Abraham's wife, has removed any mercy from her heart and made her wish that all her husband's love and wealth will be only towards her son. If a human being forgets God's love and mercy, God himself will not and He will always stretch His Right Hand (Divine Providence) and touch the poor who cry to Him from their hearts.
 - Jealousy of Joseph's brothers has led them even to the thought of killing him, yet God has turned the evil they planned into good.
 - Favoritism of someone over another would lead to sin. In such situations, for example, people would lie and insist that it is the truth if the lie is in favor of the person we love more, as what Rebekah did in favor of Jacob over Esau.
- Always remember and trust that God with His Divine Intervention (Divine Providence) will turn the evil that was planned into good.

Reflection on Matthew 14:28-31, where Jesus Christ asked Peter to walk on water.

- We doubt God's Word when we face a difficulty (doing the right thing according to God's Word in a situation that only the wrong thing is acceptable) because of our little faith; this will lead to our sinking (falling into sin).
- We need to trust God's Word (His Providence).

Reflection on Matthew 8:23-26, where Jesus was with the disciples on the boat and they got scared when a furious storm came up.

- We worry a lot especially during a crisis, this reflects that (1) there is little trust in God (little faith in 'He is always with us'), or (2) we don't recognize His power above everything and ask for His Intervention (Providence), or (3) we don't surrender totally to His will.
- We need to trust God as He is always with us.

Reflections on Matthew 22:2-14 and Luke 14:15-24, where people give excuses for not attending the banquet prepared by the King or the rich man.

- Arrogance, ungratefulness (lack of appreciation), disloyalty (unfaithfulness), aggressiveness, presumption (questioning happiness and joy with God), selfishness, greed and desire for wealth are among the reasons for not listening to God's Word (paying attention to Him), loving Him above all things, and admitting His Majesty over all.
- Greed and desire for wealth would lead to people not understanding what it means to give themselves a rest and offer that period of rest to God, and enjoy that period with His presence. A greedy person will not waste any time which

can be spent in the field or in the market to gain more money on spending it joyfully in prayer in the church or with others.

- Aggressiveness and presumption will not only kill us but also create a stumbling block in front of others as we will not allow others to hear God's Word and accept it.

We need to become meek, humble and satisfied with what we have in order to give ourselves (our time, mind and heart) to God. We should not be scared of being in His presence. God is our Almighty Father who love us and is worthy of all praises by His children. Let us not reject His Invitation (Divine Providence) to share His Glory.

Reflection on Genesis 34, the reaction of Moses' sons asking for revenge.

- When we are insulted and humiliated, the pain (emotional) that results from these acts would lead to sin; we become blind and move away from God's love, we can't forgive and we ask for revenge rather than forgiveness.

Remember, there is no greater pain (humiliation) than the pain Jesus Christ took on himself (Providence), and yet He asked His Father for the forgiveness of our sins, because He, as a human, has forgiven our trespasses. And this is how we should destroy the evil spirit that will make use of this pain and turn it into sin (i.e. by forgiveness).

Reflection on Genesis 32:23-33

- People will set for themselves certain laws, rules and beliefs depending on incidents and not on God's Words. This will lead to judging others (though it is not correct to judge, but as of a human nature we do) as 'unclean' not on God's Words but on human conclusions and rules. After Jacob's struggle with God, the Israelites stopped eating the muscle on the hip socket.

Maybe these are among the laws that were set by the Pharisees regarding forbidding some food while Jesus Christ said "*What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean', but what comes out of his mouth that is what makes him 'unclean'.*" (Matthew 15:11)

Reflections on Daniel 13:1-64, and Matthew 5:27-30

- Children will become faithful and God-fearing when their parents fulfill their duties and teach them God's Law. This will lead to having children with their hearts confident in God.
- People would sin by forgetting the demands of virtue.

Admitting a mistake nowadays seems to be very hard to do; that is if we recognize our mistake. Jesus Christ, in His Sermon on the mount (Matthew 5), gave us Heavenly Advice (Divine Providence) on how to become Children of God, so let us do **God's will: (1) Do justly, (2) Love mercy, and (3) Walk humbly with God** (Micah 6:6-8).

Reflections on Peter's and Judas' actions after denying Jesus

- Peter knew his mistake and was sorry, asked for forgiveness, and came back to his faith in Jesus Christ and lived.
- Judas was in despair, could not ask for forgiveness, he could not imagine how much God is Merciful, he doubted Jesus Christ's teachings about God's Love and Mercy through Him and so he died.

God is faithful to His Word: if we repent and ask for forgiveness, He will forgive us through His providence in Jesus Christ.

Reflection on 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, Psalm 27, Psalm 97, and Luke 4:31-37

- It is the fear of not knowing when the thief, i.e. death or the second coming of Jesus Christ to judge is happening that makes people want to know when the end of the world will be to be ready (without sin).

As followers of Jesus Christ we come to understand that with Him, the Holy One of God, God's Right Hand and His Holy Arm (God's Divine Providence), we do not need to fear anything, even death.

It is the evil spirits who made this kind of human nature, as in the beginning God created everything good. Our ancestors asked God for help (i.e. to show mercy on them) and He listened to their call by sending Jesus Christ to be the Redeemer for all (Isaiah 41:13-14); and in Whose Name all things are made possible. He take away all our weaknesses and strengthen us with the virtues of the Holy Spirit whenever we acknowledge Him and we are born again. We are requested to work in His field (Matthew 9:38) and proclaim His teachings from the roofs (Matthew 10:27), and at the time of crisis (trial or temptation) we need to stay in the field and on the roof and stand firm till the end (Matthew 24:17-18). As followers of Jesus Christ, the best words we can hear from Jesus Himself are what He said to His disciples: "*A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. ... So do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul ... Whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven*" (Matthew 10:24-33, Luke 12:4-9). As followers, our soul is alive and no one can destroy it. Why worry? In Jesus Christ's Name all evil spirits are rebuked, all that we need to do is to acknowledge Him (i.e., follow His teachings, ask for His help and put all our trust in Him). God is the only one Who will judge us and He will not accept any excuse for what we did on earth without regret (knowing that we have heard His Word). He is the only one Who can destroy us in hell if found guilty of sinning, yet because He love us and we are worth a lot to Him (His children), He sent His Son Jesus Christ to give us peace in knowing that nothing can harm us, and even if we sinned, then we can repent and we are forgiven by our Redeemer, and we will have eternal life with God.

Referring to the meditation on the daily readings of the Scripture in the website <http://www.rc.net/wcc/readings/> for Friday (19/10/07): "***Do not fear those who kill the body***", we read:

[What does fear have to do with the kingdom of God? Fear is a powerful force. It can lead us to panic and flight or it can spur us to faith and action. The fear of God is the antidote to the fear of losing one's life. "*I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. ..O fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no want! ..Come, O sons, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*" (Psalm 34:4,9,11) What is godly fear? It is reverence for the One who made us in love and who sustains us in mercy and kindness. The greatest injury or loss which we can experience is not physical but spiritual – the loss of one's soul to the power of hell. A healthy fear of God leads to spiritual maturity, wisdom and right judgment and it frees us from the tyranny of sinful pride, deceit and cowardice – especially in the face of evil and spiritual deception.]

O God, if Your Right Hand is with us whom shall we fear? What can we say but the beautiful prayer said by your servant David in Psalm 27 because we have waited and seen in our hearts The Lord:

The Lord is my light and my salvation. The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though an army encamps against me (sins created by evil spirits), my heart shall not fear. There is one thing I ask of the Lord, for this I long: To live in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, to see the beauty of the Lord, and to look around in his Temple. For God makes me safe in His tent in the day of evil, God hide me in the shelter of his tent; on a High Rock (Deuteronomy 32:4) I am secure. Amen.



A Call For Holiness

In Jesus Christ teachings regarding divorce, which one of the following is true?

- Jesus Christ assumes all men have hard hearts.
- Prior to His time, all men have hard hearts and He will change them to become meek and humble.
- Men need to change their hearts, and the disciples found it hard to change.

How hard is it to change? And do we change our behavior by our own will or with God's interference?

The history of God's chosen people clearly put God's Hand (Providence) in every move they did without any effort from their side other than their belief in Him and their will to follow God and obey His Word.

Divorce seemed to be a very common thing to do that the disciples found it hard to accept that there should be no divorce, although it was the first thing God forbade in His speech with Adam and Eve; and Jesus Christ (wanting all things to go back to how they were in the beginning: Everybody in the Image of God, an image that can be found in the pure hearts of little children) wanted to make the marriage a sacred sacrament lived with holiness from both: the husband and the wife, so that they can be fruitful.

In the Old Testament, God spoke to Moses and asked him to tell the whole community to "be holy for God is Holy" (Leviticus 19:1-19, 20:8-16). In the Gospel, Jesus Christ, God's Word, said to the whole community the same words with higher standards (Matthew 5:1-48). Such holiness is understood in the following aspects:

1. Relationship between people and God: Not to worship another God; keep God's law and put them into practice; fear God out of love to Him, to ourselves and to others; keep His Sabbaths and reverence His Sanctuary.
2. Relationship between children and their parents: Respect.
3. Relationship between people: Love of neighbor (friend or enemy) as oneself (treat them with justice, fairness and kindness, love and mercy), no hatred for anyone in the heart and be open in telling others about their offenses.
4. Sexual Relationship: Only between husband and wife. In Deuteronomy 22:13-29, virginity before marriage and faithfulness in marriage is a must otherwise the sinner will be stoned to death (i.e., commit a sin (adultery or rape) that he/she will be judged before God).

Jesus Christ explain that it is the Mercy of God that allowed Moses to allow divorce as God knew the weakness of men and their hard hearts [where blindness and stubbornness of the heart is one of the reasons of division as it creates

ignorance that will lead to separation from the life of God (Psalm 81, Ephesians 4:17-18)]. This hardness of heart is shown in Jesus' parable (Matthew 22:2-14) regarding the invitation of the king for his son's wedding feast where some of the invited people, caring only for their desires and wealth, they preferred to reject the invitation and spend their time in things that will increase their wealth while others stopped the servants from going to other people and give them the invitation. They were ungrateful to the king, in addition they didn't care for his feelings and share his happiness (this act just shows that they did not acknowledge the king (God) and love him above all matters or even fear him, accordingly they did not want to work for God to spread the good news and build His Kingdom in the hearts where the food in the feast is to do God's Will (John 4:34)). Again, in this parable, Jesus Christ is calling the people to ignite God's Love in their heart, not to close their ears and harden their hearts when they hear His Voice (Psalm 95:7-8, Hebrews 3:15, 4:6-7), repent and wear holiness/righteousness being the garment required to attend the wedding.

In another parable (Matthew 13:1-23), Jesus Christ explain that there is more than one kind of heart in the human race:

- (1) A dull heart who doesn't understand the Word of God so he can't be fruitful,
- (2) A stumbling heart who cannot stand firm to God's Word especially when faced with difficulties and becomes unfruitful,
- (3) A selfish heart who because of the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches make him ignore God's Word and become unfruitful, and
- (4) A humble and compassionate heart who acknowledges God and His Word and wishes to please Him and become fruitful.

Again, Jesus Christ is opening our eyes on ourselves and asking us to identify the nature of our heart and act on changing it to become holy.

In Luke 15:7, Jesus Christ tell His followers (the people who came to listen to Him who were mainly sinners) that there is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. Jesus Christ explained that He came for sinners to repent. In Saint Paul's first letter to Timothy 1:12-19, he said with full confidence that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners as he was a sinner and was saved. How does a sinner repent and what happens to him? He believes in God's Word and acts accordingly (James 1:22-25); his love to God and others will come from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith (Acts 24:15-16, 1 Timothy 1:5). In other words, a sinner will repent and leave the life of sin as Jesus Christ declared (Luke 13:3,5 and John 8:11), and try to become holy and compassionate so that he will be called God's friend (Matthew 5:1-12, Psalm 101, Romans 6:12-23, 8:1-17).

Our behavior and the way to holiness are determined by answering the following:

- Do we understand who is talking to us (who is inviting us to the wedding?)

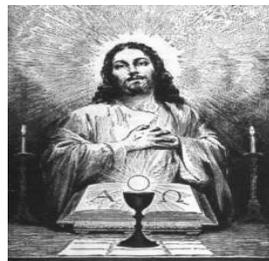
(Isaiah 43:3, 11-12), and what is he asking us to do?

- Do we realize that Jesus Christ is the Word of God?
- Do we understand “God’s Love and Mercy” in relation to Jesus Christ being our ‘Redeemer: The Holy One of Israel’ (Isaiah 41 and 42)?

What are we but a mix of feelings in the heart and the mind: happy, sad, secure, insecure, love, hate, jealous, thirsty, hungry, full, greedy, humble, arrogance, pride, clemency, anger, anxiety, fear ... etc. Our actions and behavior are results of these feelings; and God’s graces to us is to give us faith, wisdom of heart and mind, courage, perseverance, self-control, patience, kindness and gentleness, modesty, holiness as the virtues of the Holy Spirit. In Saint Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians (12:20-21), he urged them not to have the following among them: wrangling, jealousy, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, intrigues, backbiting, gossips, conceits, disorder; and had stayed away from uncleanness, fornication and lewdness; in other words he is calling them to holiness by acts.

As Christians we come to understand that God’s gift to us, God’s Love & Mercy, i.e. Jesus Christ, is our means and His providence to change our hearts and put on us a new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24). Though it seemed hard at that instant for the disciples to understand how is it possible to change the state of the heart, but nowadays as followers of Jesus Christ we know that it can be achieved through our belief in Him (by giving Him thanks, praising Him and trusting Him), and our will to follow God, obey His Word, and attach ourselves to Him in Heaven and in the Holy Eucharist, this is our strive to enter from the narrow gate, the gate of virtue (Psalm 118), to be holy in our families and with each other. Consecration of oneself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (The Spirit of Truth) with contrite heart (Romans 8:1-17, Psalm 51) is the first act of adoration to God and sanctifying ourselves.

Thank You Father for in Your Mercy and Clemency You didn’t let us die. You took our hand and led us through the narrow gate since no one can be holy, but by admitting our mistakes and weaknesses You strengthen us with Your Providence in what Jesus Christ did for us throughout His life, and with the guidance of Your Holy Spirit.



O Holy Soul of my Savior, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, transform me. Water flowing from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus hear me. Within Your wounds hide and shelter me. Suffer me never to be separated from You. From the evil enemy defend me. At the hour of my death call me, and bid me come to You, that with Your saints, I may praise You for all eternity. Amen. (✠ Saint Ignatius of Loyola)

Prayers & Fasting

How often do we repeat our sins? As if it becomes a chronic disease, a disease that cannot be cured. According to St. Paul in his letter to the Romans, it is the sin that dwells in us that makes us do what we don't want to do and practice (Romans 7). Trusting Jesus Christ's words, and for the evil spirits in us, we need to pray; not only in words but also in action by living by the words of 'The Lord's Prayer', and fast; not only from eating but also on sin as Saint Paul explained in his letter to the Romans (Romans 6:11-14), and according to God's will as in Isaiah 58:1-14 (i.e. being just and doing acts of mercy to others). As Jesus Christ said, it is our little faith and perverse heart that see-saws between doing God's will and our will that is provoked by the evil spirits, (i.e. not believing in His Resurrection and Redemption and following His teachings that conquered and cured the death/sickness of soul that is caused by the evil spirits) that keeps us uncured and accordingly cannot cure others (unfruitful).

How many of us use God's Holy Name in vain and swear, enjoy mocking others, call others names, disrespect others by thinking that we are better than them, unable to forgive, keep on fighting with our partners and cause pain to others, have forbidden lusts in thought/deeds, lie and cheat, jealous of our friends' wealth and happiness, seek fortune tellers to know the future, turn away from helping others (sometimes even if they ask), think of ourselves and our earthly happiness, hide ourselves in a shell and close our eyes from seeing the needs of others. What happened to Jesus' Words: "***I desire mercy and not sacrifice***" (Matthew 12:7)? This selfishness becomes our daily life, but it is not what God wanted from us through the Words spoken by Jesus Christ to build the Kingdom of God; He wanted us, under grace, "*to present ourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness to God*" (Romans 6:13).

So many of us have strayed from God's love and acted as if we don't know Him. Regardless of the reason, we need to stop for a second and start with the first step of confession and admitting our mistakes (our wandering away from God and our spiritual laziness), i.e. repentance. It is important to know our mistakes (to see the plank in our eyes), pray to God to help us at the time of trials and save us, to provide us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the graces we need in order to keep a steadfast faith, and fast on doing these mistakes. Only then, sin will be defeated and we will be living a life of holiness (Colossians 3:1-17) and be fruitful. Only then we will be able to be light for others, and others will see God in our actions.

O God, You are Holy; please create in us a new self, a new heart, and help us to become holy, we ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Christian Life

(Reflection on the readings of the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time: Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 12:12-30, Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21)

What differentiate a religious group that has a common belief in their heart forming one body for the good of all is the way they pray and fast; and this also applies for Christians. The disciples and the followers of Jesus Christ asked Him to teach them how to pray as John the Baptist taught his followers how to pray and He taught them “The Lord’s Prayer”; and Jesus Christ said that as long as He is on earth His followers need not to fast, but they will do so after His Resurrection (Luke 5:33-35).

Both praying and fasting is a way of worshiping God, and Christians need to worship Him with their spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). To pray with their spirit is not to repeat words without acting by them; and to fast with their spirit is not to stop eating certain food but to repent, stop sinning and fast the way that glorify God and will be a blessing for them (Isaiah 58:1-14). To worship in truth is to have Jesus Christ’s Spirit as He is The Way, The Truth and Life (Psalm 43, John 14). All His life (His miracles, His preaches, His prayers, His death ...), Jesus Christ was praying and fasting the way God wanted; what He was anointed for to show that **God is Love**.

Living by the words of ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ is to live the Christian faith, to live in love with God our Heavenly Father, sanctifying our actions as His Name is Holy and we represent Him as His Children (i.e., we are His Image to others), working together in harmony filled with the graces of the Holy Spirit to establish God’s Kingdom on earth [A Kingdom that can be identified by a “Kingdom of Service” where everyone uses the gifts that God gave him/her for the benefit of others for God’s Glory], listen to God’s Word to open our eyes and share His Meal (where our food is both Jesus Christ’s Heart in the Holy Eucharist, and doing God’s Will) with joy, rebuke the evil spirit of hate by forgiving (2 Corinthians 2:5-11) [an act that will tell God that we admit that He is Just and we love others as much as we love ourselves and want to give them clothes and a shelter under His Tent as Jesus Christ did for us], and putting our spirit into God’s hand trusting that He will save us from evil by empowering us with His graces as the Power, Glory and Kingdom is all His forever.

In church, nowadays, we still gather to listen to God’s Word to open our eyes, and also to offer our Sacrifice of Thanksgiving and of Forgiveness to God in the same place, thus fulfilling the words of Jesus Christ when He told the Samaritan women that “*The hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem*” (John 4:21). Going to church and worshiping God at the Holy Mass is also a kind of praying ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ in action.

In Isaiah 58:6-7, God say: *“Is not this the sort of fast that pleases Me: To break unjust fetters, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break all yokes? Is it not sharing your food with the hungry, and sheltering the homeless poor; if you see someone lacking clothes, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own kin?”*; isn't this what Jesus Christ did to the people living at His time as He told John The Baptist (Luke 7:18-23), and to our troubled and poor souls, and accordingly God is pleased with Him (Matthew 3:17)? According to Matthew 25:31-46, aren't these acts what distinguish the people whom God was pleased with and have blessed (i.e., the sheep that are on His Right in the Last Judgement) from others who did not do His Will (i.e., the goats on the left hand side)? Did not Jesus Christ say that the people who hear the Word of God and keep it are blessed (Luke 11:28)?

When Jesus Christ asked His followers to go and preach (by words and actions) the Gospel, He wanted them to pray and fast as He did, to live the life that He lived: a life of service to others' body and soul for God's Glory, since His followers will be anointed to be God's Children (i.e., having Jesus Christ's Spirit).

No wonder why God has given His Day (Sabbath) for the work to the needy, the poor, the troubled and doing acts of mercy (Mark 2:23-28, 3:1-6, Luke 14:1-5). This shows how much He love them, as instead of wanting people to do nothing on that day, He prefer that this time is spent on helping and loving each other on earth (as no one is rich), and then in Heaven they will have all the time to enjoy His Glory. And by sending us Jesus Christ and His death on the cross for our salvation indicates that all His Work is for us, because He love us, and He is Love.

O Jesus Christ, when I sinned and became prisoner to Satan and stood in shame (without clothes) in front of God as Adam did, You visited me and washed my sins away, granted me forgiveness, and dressed me with the gown of holiness; thank You. O Jesus Christ, when I was hungry, You came and fed me with the Bread of Life: Yourself; thank You. O Jesus Christ, when I was thirsty, You came and gave me the Living Water: God's Graces, Love and Mercy through The Holy Spirit; thank You. O Jesus Christ, when I became blind and strayed away, when I was burdened with sin, You came and opened my eyes and took me by the hand to the shelter that You prepared for me in Your Father's House; thank You. O Jesus Christ, use me to lead others to Your Heart; to take God's Word to the sick to be cured; to give them from the Living Water that You gave me for God's Glory; to do for them what they cannot do for themselves. Amen.

O God, since 'A life in service to others is a life in service to You', please inspire us to live a Christian Life with Your Beloved Son's Spirit dwelling in our heart, and increase our Faith, Hope and Love. Amen.

Salt of Earth

‘Better To Be Safe Than Sorry’

In Mark 9:41-50 and Matthew 18:1-35, Jesus is talking to His disciples as well as to anyone who wants to be His follower, i.e. want to put in himself a real salt that works as preservative material for his soul as well as for others’ souls and give taste and meaning to their lives, that was created by God to do His will, and be example to others to follow. Jesus show them the reward/punishment to any **act** and give them the advice so that their salt will not lose its saltiness towards themselves and others (Matthew 5:21-48).

1. A salty act towards yourself and others at the same time

From the Holy Bible, we come to understand the Justice and Love of God and how He teach us to love Him, love others and treat them with justice. To understand ‘Sin’ we need to understand that: In the Ten Commandments, if the first four are not obeyed then the person has sinned against God only by being disobedient to God’s Commandment(s); the rest of the Commandments have two aspects regarding sinning:

1. Against God by disobeying God’s Commandment(s), and
2. Against the person(s) whom we performed the sin on (affected by the act thus affecting the purity of his/her soul) because we didn’t love them as we love ourselves; e.g. adultery will affect the wife/husband and the children if any and the other person involved in adultery, killing of body will affect the relatives of the dead, killing of the soul will affect God (all souls belong to God) and the person himself, ... etc.

Knowing that: (1) God is the Creator of our bodies and He blew in us from His Spirit to give wisdom and life to our souls, (2) when we sin our soul dies, and (3) God is Just, then we will understand that it is because of His Love and Jealousy for us (Isaiah 9:5-6) He don’t want to lose any to Satan: He forgave our sins by Jesus Christ’s death on the cross (i.e. His Love) provided that we should NOT:

1. Hold any soul from the reward of returning back to God by holding their sins against us, and
2. Cause others to sin, thus their soul will not return to God. By applying Justice of God (shown in his command: Love to others what you love to yourself), then our own soul will not also return to Him.

Accordingly, God will forgive the sins of whoever forgives others (for the sake of God’s love to all as Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins) for the sin they’ve committed against him/her. And by forgiving others, you

will also be saving their soul from being condemned for that sin, as people will be judged according to the sins that other people hold against them.

The act of mercy in giving water to others in Jesus' Name symbolizes forgiveness, mercifulness, purity and life. He who does that act is considered to be a follower of Jesus Christ and his reward will be great: Forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Being merciful and forgiving others from all our hearts is like receiving the Living Water from God's Hands, understanding fully His Forgiveness and Love, and giving it to others.

2. How to put salt in ourselves and keep its saltiness

Jesus tell us that everyone will sin and pass through the process that either leads to holiness (become followers of Jesus and be salt that provides saltiness to others) or evilness (salt that loses its saltiness has no use). To abide to Jesus' teaching (To love God and love each other), a struggle in one's conscience to do right will create in himself a **set of actions and behavior based on his/her love to God** (i.e., salt) that would return his/her soul back to God and stay away from the fire of the feeling of losing God forever.

Sinning is an act that happens when we are poor in spiritual love, i.e. poor in the knowledge and love of God, so that when we are faced with trials we let Satan control our minds and hearts and makes us forget God's Word to keep us away from God. Satan uses our weak human desires for that purpose.

Acknowledging our sins, and knowing the cause of them (thinking or actual doing), asking God and whoever we sinned against for forgiveness, and having true sorrow for them and a firm purpose of amendment will keep the saltiness of the salt in ourselves and put us on the right track for eternal life with God; in other words: it will put back our love to God in our hearts above all things. Otherwise, when our bodies die we'll find our souls burning in Hell (where sins cannot be forgiven anymore) by the fire in the hearts of our souls for not seeing God forever.

'Forgiving others from all of our hearts' is one of the acts to tell God that we love Him from all of our hearts. To 'ask for forgiveness' is to walk humbly with God as He is the only one who is Righteous.

In the Middle East Countries' tradition, people say to anyone whose pride they feel makes him think he is better than others: "You will not lose any of your body's parts if you come down from your high place as God is the only One in High".

Dear God, have mercy on me and make me understand that I am worth nothing in comparison to others, and my heart will be pleased to walk humbly by Your Side to serve You through others. Amen.

Courage To Kill

To what extent are we willing to become sons of our Father in Heaven??

In order to really become a follower of Jesus Christ we need to be able to forgive others (relative/friend or enemy) from our hearts when they ask for forgiveness as many times as it takes (Matthew 5:44-45), where forgiveness is considered as an act of mercy and an act of love (the same love of God and Jesus Christ to us) if not to be taken as obedience and following Jesus Christ's teachings.

For some reason, some people can't see or admit their mistakes (even though they are faced with what they did) and accordingly won't say sorry. In this case, we need to forgive and turn the left cheek, after being struck on the right one, to be struck again and again (Matthew 5:39). From one side, it is pride that makes a person unable to say sorry; and from the other side it is also our pride that makes us unable to turn the cheek. A priest said it needs courage to forgive from all of our hearts. Yes, it will need courage to stand in front of God and ask him very humbly to empty ourselves and let Jesus Christ fill our hearts with His own Loving Heart; to tell Him that we are weak and poor and without Him we can do nothing, so we ask Him with full confidence (knowing that He will respond) to fill our hearts, enrich us with His Spirit and dwell in us (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Turning to You Father, I see the courage of Your Son Jesus Christ shown in going to and accepting His suffering, while knowing who He is, just to obey You; and at the same time praying for His enemies to be forgiven. O Father, give me the courage to kill the pride in myself and deny myself (not only the pride created from seeing myself better than others due to wealth, wisdom, knowledge, social/work position, etc., but also from thinking that I don't want to suffer any more while You have suffered and forgiven; for how can I be better than You? Or even to judge Your Wisdom and ask why things happened and deny Your will), be obedient to Your teachings, forgive others and be as humble as Your Beloved Son for "it is enough for the student to be like His Teacher, and the servant like His Master" (Matthew 10:25). In Numbers 12:1-13, Miriam and Aaron questioned Your Will, in having Moses speak Your Word to them after he sees You face to face, and Moses so humbly asked You to forgive them and You did.

Please God, don't let the anger and pride in me blow a wind on the candle You've enlightened with Your passion and love. Lord, You are the flame of my candle that provide me with light and warmth through my journey in this dark tunnel until I reach the end of it where Your Light and Glory shine forever. Teach me Lord to accept others as You accepted me, a sinner, and to deny myself and carry my cross and follow You into Heaven (Matthew 16:24). Strengthen with Your pain my personality not in the way the world see a strong personality (becoming a wolf), but in the way that pleases Your Eyes to become one of Your children: merciful, meek, humble, compassionate and offer myself for the sake of others (becoming a lamb). Amen.

Temple for God

God through His Teachings invite us to be His children:

- *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"* (1 Corinthians 3:16).
- *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- *"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life"* (1 John 5:12).
- *"Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His"* (Romans 8:9).
- *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he can't enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh (human nature) is flesh (human), and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"* (John 3:5-6).
- A person whose spirit has not been born of God is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1, 5).

Eureka, Eureka. Any person who would reach the conclusion that in order to:

- keep Jesus Christ's teachings and fulfill them;
 - carry the cross and follow Him;
 - put on him Jesus Christ's yoke because it is easy and His burden is light,
- then he/she must have "Jesus' Sacred Heart" with all His feelings: "The Love to His Father and doing what pleases Him (which includes the love to God's children)" instead of his heart.

This new heart will make our bodies a temple for God and lead to a living conscience that will provide:

- words of thanks and praise to God, wisdom, consolation and comfort to others, ... etc. that comes out from the mouth,
- sinless thoughts that come from the mind, and
- love from the heart through all actions.

This new heart will make us repent, give away everything considered to be of earthly riches, and follow Jesus to be a servant for others. Our actions shall be a reflection of His goodness, an image of God's Love to be seen and felt by others. This new heart will make us as new born children who put all their trust in their Father. This new heart is born at the time of Baptism in The Name of The Father and The Son and The Holy Spirit.

O Lord, turn our hearts towards Your love and make us surrender to You as it is through Your Sacred Heart we will go into Heaven. All praise and thanks is Yours now and forever. Amen.

Humble Workers

The first 72 workers sent into God's harvest field were given the instructions on how to distinguish between the good harvest to be (so that they can take their time on improving it) and the bad (not to waste time on it) directly from Jesus Christ; and they lived themselves the wonderful results they got by following His instructions.

Jesus Christ asked His workers to test the hearts of the people by going to them in the form of a lamb (weak and helpless), asking for help and seeing their reaction (knowing that if they were sent as wealthy people then people will always welcome them expecting a payment in return).

Seeing two people after traveling from town to town bare footed no food, no purse or bag would indicate that they are poor or beggars asking only for food or money after saying 'Hello'. If the person who opened the door was kind hearted, generous and love doing acts of mercy (a son of peace) he would welcome them, provide them with food and shelter for the period required for their rest without thinking that these men will not be able to give him back anything in return. On the other hand, a man with a hard heart will not provide them with anything (especially they are two men not one, leaving no doubt to fake a kind heart).

Also, Jesus Christ asked His workers to be humble in spirit to gain the trust of others so that they will accept what they preach and not to look like they are scavengers looking for their own benefit. To accept what is offered from food and not going into another house the next day would indicate to the owner of the house that they are not after better food or shelter, and they are poor not only from the outside but are satisfied with what they get (they are not better than the residents of the house; i.e. humble in spirit). In time, and through the power given to them by Jesus Christ (i.e. graces from God which are the only thing they need in their journey), they will be able to heal the sick in the house and announce the coming of the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:1). And from one house the whole town will know about what happened; just like the Samaritan woman who informed her town about Jesus Christ and they all believed.

People are divided into two categories: Lambs and Wolves; where lambs know the sound of its Shepherd and follow Him when He call them either by Himself or through other Lambs within the same herd. The outcome of the workers proved that there are more lost lambs than wolves and all that is required is more workers. And, '**Humbleness**' is the key used to enter into the manger, where Jesus Christ was born, in order to see Him and go out glorifying and praising God (Luke 2:1-20).

For the new workers, God's graces are given through the Holy Spirit; and with prayer for what is needed from gifts, they can be good workers in His Field, i.e., '**His Kingdom of service to others**' so that everyone will know God.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Lord of the Harvest, who is thirsty for our souls, please kindle more hearts to work into Your field wholeheartedly. Amen.

The Treasures of the Kingdom

In modern life, they say: “Money generates money”. Spiritually speaking, this proverb is seen and executed in the life of the Saints and all faithful people. When Saint Lawrence, one of seven deacons who helped Pope St. Sixtus and was martyred in the year 258 in Rome, gave the money of the church to the poor and indicated that the poor people are the church’s treasure, he said that taking into consideration that he had already found the first treasure that led to generate the next. His first treasure is the Holy Eucharist; the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, with Whom he merged himself totally, and became one in a way he can’t see that Heart as treasure rather it is: *‘the feelings that come out of that Heart for the poor and the needy not only spiritually but also humanly’*. And, these feelings (i.e. love and mercy) and acting accordingly is what separate sheep from goats on judgment day (Matthew 25:31-45). That is why Jesus Christ sent His disciples (to tell the non-believers about the Kingdom Of God) searching for the kind-hearted, knowing that they will accept the call without hesitation. It is the hard-hearted and the money-lover heart that is hard to repent.



In the Holy Mass, when we eat Jesus Christ’s Body and drink His Blood we are actually “Merging ourselves with Jesus Christ Heart to become righteous” (John 6:34-40, 44-58). This act shows us how much God love us: “He love us as Himself”, guard us as the pupil of His Eyes, and He is so humble, not only by taking our human body in the person of Jesus Christ, but He wanted us to be like Him; shine in glory in His presence in His Kingdom. And for that, *God sacrificed His only begotten Son for whoever believes in Him so that they will not perish* (John 3:16). As Son of Man (i.e. a symbol for us), Jesus Christ lived God’s Law: (1) Love the Lord your God with all your soul, your heart and your mind as His life was for the purpose to please His Father and show His Holiness, and (2) Love your neighbor as yourself where with His actions He made us God’s children (Matthew 22:34-40).

To His friends Jesus Christ say: “*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you*” (John 15:9-17); and as He and The Father are one, this will also indicate that Our Father love us as Himself, as His Son. And to show God’s love to others, we need to love one another and do what He did: to lay down one’s life for his friends (thus doing acts according to the power of God’s Love that is poured into our hearts to the brim through the Holy Spirit). God’s Love for us and our love to Him generates our love to others, and God’s Mercy on us generates our mercy on others (1 John 4:7-17).

Dear God, through the actions of the Saints real meaning of Christianity is demonstrated to the lost lambs and non-believers, may You engrave Your Love in our hearts and provide us with true commitment to follow Your Word and proclaim Your Holy Name to all nations. Amen.

The Fruit of The Promised Land

(Reflection on Deuteronomy 8:7-9, Isaiah 30:19-30, Jeremiah 31:10-14, The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, and 7, Luke 6:20-49), Psalm 23, 104, 111, 114 & 145, Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians, First Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy)

When a farmer grows trees in his field he aims to see a healthy harvest, a delicious fruit; and when parents think of having a child and give birth to one they aim for him/her to be as they are if not better. As the farmer does his best in preparing the soil, adding fertilizers, spraying insecticides so that the fruit will be healthy, similarly the good parents take care during pregnancy, feed the child in infancy and afterwards, provide love and care, teach, train, and be harsh if needed so that: (1) everyone who meets the child will be impressed as his/her actions will show their parents' good character, (2) the child will not harm or disrespect others and (3) he/she will be loved from everyone else so that he/she can be forgiven when doing a mistake as it is not always other people forgive sins as parents do.

When God took the Israelites, 'His Son' (Exodus 4:22-23), by the hand out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1, 3-4), He promised them that they would enter a rich land (their final destination, i.e. Heaven) from whose harvest they would benefit; a harvest that will feed them and feed all the generations to come; a harvest that will be all that they will ask for in order to live happily in the new land, i.e. their Father's House, and all that He asked for is to honour Him as a Holy Father (Malachi 1:6). As a Father, He is always there, waiting for His Children to ask Him for their needs and He will provide (the needs that He know will benefit them and keep them in His House). Jesus Christ in His teachings told us that Our Father will be pleased to give us the Holy Spirit if we asked Him, and we do that when we pray, whether by words or actions, the Lord's Prayer that He taught His disciples to recite (Luke 11:13). God, The Father and The Son, know exactly the benefits of the graces of the Holy Spirit to people as it will turn their hearts into heart of flesh and renew their spirit.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ blessed the people (meaning: they are happy) whom the Holy Spirit dwell in their heart, who have faith, hope and love; and gave them to eat from the fruits of the promised land (Land of wheat and barley, of vines, of figs, of pomegranates, of olives, of oil, of honey (Deuteronomy 8:8)), the fruits that were watered by the running water coming out of the spring of mercy, the spring of peace and consolation, the spring of adoration, and the spring of love that springs unceasingly out of God's Heart: The Fountain of Living Water (Jeremiah 2:13):

1. **Poor in spirit:** The people who know that God created their flesh from dust and it will return back to dust, place all their trust in God, obey only Him, and

never consider themselves as an equal to God and ignore His Word as they know that He will feed them with what they need from the fruit of the promised land to stay alive and live with Him forever: Wheat and Barley (i.e. The Bread of Life: God's Word written and incarnated: Jesus Christ (John 6:35, 48, 51-58)).

2. **Who mourn:** The people who become aware of their sins, mourn their misfortune at disobeying God's Word, but understanding His Love and Mercy will be given wine from the Vine (i.e., God's Console/Redemption/Power of His Right Arm: Jesus Christ (Isaiah 52:9-10, John 15:1, 5)) of the Promised Land to make them happy forever.
3. **Gentle, Merciful and Pure in Heart:** The people with tender hearts, who are meek and merciful, who love others and do no harm to them but help them in all their needs, and at the time when they are treated badly they would forgive and turn the other cheek, as they know that this is how God will treat them and He will give them shelter under the big fig tree (i.e., God's Providence/Protection: Jesus Christ (Isaiah 53:1-12, Matthew 11:28-29)) of the Promised Land and make them taste the sweetness of its soft fruit (i.e., see/inherit Jesus Christ and accordingly see God The Father).
4. **Who hunger and thirst for uprightness:** The people who have zeal for God's Holy Name so they hunger and thirst for rightness as this is how others would see God's Holiness through them and they will not profane God's Holy Name, and God will feed them with pomegranates (i.e., God's Love/The Truth: Jesus Christ (1 John 4:9-10)) the juicy and healthy fruit of the Promised Land, the fruit that comes out at the end of a branch on the tree, the branch that starts as a thorn and then when the leaves start to grow on it in Spring turns into a branch that will hold the fruit (This resembles the pain that Jesus Christ suffered so that our sins are forgiven and we can be called Children of God for His Glory).
5. **Peacemakers:** The people who have peace in their hearts, and try their best to spread that peace to others by proclaiming God's Kingdom and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, the olive tree of the Promised Land, and God will make them olive trees just like His Son: They will know Him as their Holy Father. Those people are enlightened by the Light, the outcome of burning the olive oil (i.e., God's Spirit/God's Robe: Jesus Christ (Psalm 104:1-2, Isaiah 61:1-3, John 1:1-4)) and they become children of God; a light to others for God's Glory.
6. **Persecuted in the cause of uprightness:** The people who would give themselves willingly for the sake of God, they do this out of their love for Him with joy knowing that God will give them the sweetest reward, just as the sweetness of honey; the thick juice (namely, Silan) that comes out of the dates which is the fruit of the palm tree in the Promised Land (i.e., God's

Glory: Jesus Christ (also Eucharistic) (Exodus 40:34-35, John 1:14, Romans 3:23)).

For these people, their houses (i.e., hearts) are built on solid rock (i.e., The Faith in God's Word and Messiah that was sent to us out of His Heart (1 John 5:1-4)), the iron of the Promised Land, looking towards the hills searching for God; mining for the copper (brass): the Divine part of the bronze alloy from which the snake, that Moses lifted in the desert to cure the Israelites from the bite of the fiery snakes (i.e. a result for abandoning God), was made (Numbers 21:4-9). Amazing how the bronze alloy consists of copper and tin combined in one as Divinity and humanity are combined in Jesus Christ.

Amazing how the fruit of the Promised Land is **Jesus Christ's Heart**, as He was identified to be a fruit when Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, greeted Virgin Mary and said: "*Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is The Fruit of your womb*" (Luke 1:41-42). And how much the saying: "*The tree is known by its fruits*" is true for God when we see Jesus Christ's Heart; i.e. hear His speech and see His actions (Luke 6:43-45). Oh what Promised Land (Psalm 23): A green pasture where cattle graze to produce fatty milk so that curd will be eaten, and bees feed on the flowers of its trees to produce sweet honey for whoever eats it will be able to discern the good from evil and know how to refuse the bad and choose the good (Isaiah 7:14-15, 21-22). For the ones who wander in the Promised Land, they will be like babies who never stop feeding from the breast from which the spring of mercy, the spring of peace and consolation, the spring of adoration, and the spring of love springs unceasingly (Isaiah 66:10-14); they are the children who repented, washed their sins with the Blood of The Lamb, trusted and praised God, and reflected their Father's Holiness to others for His Glory (Isaiah 30:18-26, 60:18-22); they are the new shoots of the Vine that will bear fruit for others (Psalm 1).

In His teachings to the crowd who followed Him (in Matthew's Gospel), Jesus Christ wanted them to know God as a Loving Father Who attend always to our needs and ask His angels to protect us, Just, Merciful, Peace-Maker, Trustworthy and Truthful to His promises, Holy, Loving to all people but dislike wrong-doing, Constant-worker Who hates laziness [as laziness generates lies (Matthew 25:14-30)], and wanted His Children to be like Him by having His Spirit dwelling in them (Matthew 10:19-20). In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus Christ mentioned God as The Father over 24 times, and as any good father:

1. He is the Head of His House where His Will and Word are honoured by His children.
2. He lift-up His children and hold them by His-side so tenderly giving them warmth and love.
3. He accept happily the return of the prodigal son, where



Hosea 11:3-4

repentance is the first step on the road to the Father's House.

4. He give His Kingdom to any child who would invest in the wealth of his father for the sake of other children.

Yes, it is Jesus Christ's intention that we know God's Holy Name "Our Father in Heaven" not in the understanding of a 'Name' but in the 'meaning/characteristics behind the name' and act accordingly. Actually, God sent Jesus Christ for us as 'The Son' who is on His Father's side close to His Heart (John 1:18) so that:

- (1) We will know Him better,
- (2) We will live with Him in a relationship that is eternal where the feelings towards a father do not end when the father dies in body; a relationship that is unique where there is only one father to any child and Fatherhood love does not split between more than one person, and
- (3) We will love Him as any child loves his father and accordingly love all His other children as brothers/sisters (1 John 5:1).

We, Followers of Jesus Christ, are the spiritual *House of Israel* to whom God have promised the Spiritual Fruitful Land and His Protection from any harm, and make them fruitful as long as they honor Him as a Father (John 5:24). As the relationship between God and Israel was a Father-Son relationship, so it is with Jesus Christ and all His Followers. By sending Jesus Christ as The Son, God confirmed His Fatherhood to us and His Feelings towards us: One of The Mysteries of God's Kingdom that was incarnated and revealed through the Holy Spirit in the womb of our Mother Virgin Mary. It is God's intention that His Fatherly Love is to be known by all spirits including the blind, the crippled, the sick, the dumb, and anyone who cannot reach Him; He came to them and cured them (e.g., John 5:5-9), and asked whoever knows Him to act on His behalf and do the same. It is God's intention that we know Him through Jesus Christ and all spirits to honor The Son as they honor The Father (John 5:23) so that they will be born of Spirit not of body (1 John 5:1) and be God's Children.

In the beginning, when God created the universe, He took from the soil of the land, made man and blew into him the Breath of Life and man became a living being with a pure heart; an image of Himself (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7). This creation is seen daily in The Holy Mass: By the Words of Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit is blown into the bread and wine that are made of the seed-bearing plant and seed-bearing fruit, and an Image of God is made; a Pure Heart: Jesus Christ's Heart; A Heart that will give food for our hearts and make us grow to be God's Children.

O God, some people cannot love You as a Father, so I ask you to let Your Holy Spirit dwell in our heart, so that we can call You with full confidence and with all our heart say: Father, I love you and look forward to seeing You and living in Your House forever. Amen.

Prisoner of Love

There are people who pass through our lives and they become nearer to our hearts; people for whom we can create an image based on their writings, and who unbeknownst to us, will have a great effect on our lives.

One of these people who has a great influence on millions in all generations is Saint Paul, The Apostle, who loved God from his childhood; he loved Him in the beginning, as he said on himself, as a love of a child, and dedicated his life to serve God and fought for God's Glory with perseverance, and he was faithful in his fight for righteousness.

Just as many of his own generation, he could not see God's Glory and His Divine Light in the person of Jesus the Nazareth, but when he saw '**The Light**', God's love struck his heart and he became blind just as a lover who becomes blind with the love to his beloved and cannot see anything and anyone other than his beloved and he will have no fear or worry regarding any hardships or pain he will go through just to please his beloved, and this is the love of a man after loving God as a child (1 Corinthians 13:10-12).

Saint Paul wanted to be a true child of God, so God gave Him all the graces he need. From his letters and journeys we see that he was a man of wisdom, understanding, counseling, knowledge, piety, fortitude and the fear of God filled his heart. From his letters and journeys we live what Jesus Christ said: "*Love God wholeheartedly above all things*" and "*Love others as you love yourself*" as he wanted everyone to be saved through proclaiming God's Love and Mercy, our salvation in Jesus Christ. From his letters and journeys we learn how to love God: The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit and become like the dough in the hands of our Creator or as a feather in His Wind or even a feather to His Mind for the sake of His Kingdom and building the one body in Jesus Christ.

And, I can imagine him praying to His Father, having Jesus Christ is in Him, and saying:

Our Father Who are in Heaven, I wish You would make me one of the angels who are serving You; but if there is no place for me, then I wish You would accept me as one of the uncountable souls who kneel in front of Your Divine Throne; but if there is no place for me, then I wish You would make me a servant for these souls; but if there is no place for me, then I wish You would make me a sacrifice to be fed by all these souls so I can be part of each one of them and You will see me in everyone of them and I will see You through everyone of them. Amen.

The Perfect Moment



One of the hardest things to do is to imagine oneself in front of Jesus Christ to be judged for what we did during our life on earth so that to receive either eternal happiness with Him or eternal sadness away from Him.

An artist has drawn an image of the abbess Marguerite de Scornay of the Abbey of Nivelles in Brabant, Belgium (1443 – 1462). The abbess kneels before the seated figure of a crowned Blessed Virgin Mary, who holds the Christ child in her lap, his hand pointing toward the kneeling abbess.

Behind Marguerite, with right hand outstretched toward her, stands St. Margaret of Antioch with her symbol, the dragon, at her feet (note: St. Margaret is the abbess's patron saint). The three figures are shown on a tiled floor against an elaborate tapestry background consisting of branches and, if one looks closely, griffins.

To the left are two shields, each with a different coat of arms, these arms being impaled on a third shield centered above the figure of the abbess. One can assume that they record the arms of the abbess's parents. Two other shields, one with a bend, the other with a chevron, are at the right.

In each corner is a symbol of an Evangelist: in the upper left, the eagle of Saint John; in the lower left, the winged ox of Saint Luke; in the upper right, the winged man of Saint Matthew; and, in the lower right, the winged lion of Saint Mark.



The kneeling figure of Marguerite de Scornay, presented in a three-quarter view, clothed in the vestments of an abbess with wimple and veil headdress, hands raised in prayer, the pastoral staff between her arms and resting on her left shoulder. A scroll seemingly issuing from the abbess has in Latin the words of the prayer "Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner."

[http://www.hamline.edu/brass/pdfs/pp_niv-bel_c1460_flemish_fac.pdf]

The same above image is used in this article as an icon (where icons are known to be a vehicle; its object is to transmit the supernatural, to help us see what is beyond) to give the viewer an idea about the perfect moment we meet God whether in prayer or when we really see Him in His Glory.

In the icon, God is represented by a baby sitting in the lap of His mother to indicate that the Divine God has come to earth and has taken our human nature. Please note that the woman is not God, as some people might imagine that God has feminine features; and this is not according to the teachings of Jesus Christ, as He called God "Our Father"; simply it is a blasphemy. Yes, God has a loving, tender and clement heart and these characteristics are not only for woman, even men have this kind of heart if they did not choose to harden it.

As Christians we have based our faith on what the four evangelists have written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit [represented by the four symbols in the four corners of the icon; each has a scroll in his hand representing His Holy Bible (These are the four chariots; the four winds of Heaven (Zechariah 6:1-8)).

The woman, kneeling in front of God in the middle of the page, represents each one in the church, and her hand's work that can be either according to God's Will [represented by the Angel holding the cross]; in other words: to listen to Jesus Christ's Word and work on it, or Satan's will, i.e. the will of the flesh [represented by the dragon]. Everyone of us, as the Son-of-Man, has a free will to lay his life down and surrender to God to please Him in order to lift it up again (Ecclesiasticus 15:11-18, John 10:16-17, 8:29, 6:63). Everyone will be rewarded/judged according to his/her behavior (Matthew 16:27, Revelation 22:12).

Normally, the one who succeed his father and become an heir to his father's possessions would have the same characteristics as his father in order to deserve becoming an heir. Throughout the Gospel, we see Jesus Christ showing and doing acts of Mercy toward others thus showing God's mercifulness to us. In Matthew 25, Jesus Christ distinguished between the one who enters God's Kingdom (the lamb) from the one who won't (the goat) by selecting the souls of the people who did acts of mercy to others; who used the graces God had given them to help the needy, who did what Jesus Christ did for others, who became merciful as their Father in Heaven is, who obeyed Jesus Christ's Word and did His Will as it is The Father's Will, who carried their cross and followed Him (Matthew 16:24-26). To

surrender to God's Will is to accept with joy all hardships that we face in our journey towards righteousness, and this is what Wisdom is, where hardships result from discerning the right teachings from the ungodly teachings, whether these ungodly teachings are initiated from inner self or from the surrounding people through the evil spirits. These ungodly teachings (whether cause leisure or painful feelings) are a big trap for the soul, but the trust in the Lord and His Mercy and keeping His Word as 'our home to live in it and by it' is The Way, The Truth and Life (Wisdom 2 and 3, John 8:31-32). To be part of the kingdom of the Son-of-Man is to have our heart filled with the graces of the Father sent to us through the Holy Spirit in Jesus' Holy Name and act accordingly (as what was seen clearly by the actions of the disciples in the day of Pentecost, and Jesus Christ mentioned it to His disciples in Matthew 16:28 (It was only Judas who did not have the kingdom of God in his heart when he died because he did not understand God's Mercy and asked for forgiveness)).

In Deuteronomy 30:15-20 and Jeremiah 17:5-10, God bless everyone who obey His Word and put his/her trust in Him (believe in Jesus Christ), and curse everyone who obey and put his/her trust in man or other Gods (i.e., money, self-indulgence, ... etc.). The blessing is having eternal life with God, and the curse is eternally staying away from Him (John 6:63). These blessings are beautifully given in the Beatitudes by Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:3-11) to anyone having the graces of the Holy Spirit and its fruits in his/her heart in order to build the Kingdom of God.

With the triumphed cross [in the icon there is an eagle on top of the cross in the hand of the Angle], Jesus Christ defeated Satan. With the triumphed cross, multitude of souls have become holy. On the cross, "The Immaculate Conception", the name Virgin Mary gave Saint Bernadette Soubirous of Lourdes, France (in one of Her Apparitions) to indicate to herself came to life not only to mean that she is The One who was conceived at birth without original sin, but also she is a symbol for holy souls who are God's children and bride in His Kingdom; a symbol for the Church as communion of the saints; a symbol for the Kingdom in Heaven; the New Jerusalem that was conceived by the blood of Jesus Christ, The Lamb. In other words, "The Immaculate Conception" indicates also to her role as the Mother of the Church as she is the Mother of the first born child of this church; the Church who are born new through Water and the Spirit; who are born of the Spirit. This birth through an immaculate conception will make them Children of God; be part of the Kingdom of God in Heaven. This Kingdom that though its People's Holiness will shine in God's Glory to praise God with the angels, but it was through the earthly Jesus Christ, God's Love and Mercy, the Son of Mary, and what He did on the cross, that it is conceived. All her children, purified by The Son, loved God as a Heavenly Father, trusted Him and surrendered totally to His Will, carried their cross with joy and became His

children on earth, thus creating God's Kingdom in their hearts (Luke 17:20) and souls before reaching Heaven. This church with its Queen and Mother is robed with the sun to give light to other creatures on earth (Revelation 12).

The angel with the cross in the hand and the dragon may also resembles what is said in Psalm 34:7: *"The angel of Yahweh pitches camp round those who fear Him; and keeps them safe"*, and what Saint Peter wrote in the first letter (5:8) *"Be calm and vigilant, because your enemy the devil is prowling round like a roaring lion, looking for someone to eat"*, respectively. With these images, they show that the tent that is referred to in Psalm 27:5 is God's Love through Jesus Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross: *"For He shelter me under His awning in times of trouble; He hide me deep in His tent, sets me high on a rock"*.

In the icon of "Mary Mother of Perpetual Help" two angles are drawn behind Mary and Jesus holding the instruments used in His death: the cross and a lance. In this icon, the cross is not the sign of humiliation and death but it is a sign of our salvation and God's love to us. It is not a sign of weakness but it is a sign of power that defeat death (the Death of soul as mentioned in the Book of Wisdom). It is not something that we will run away from, but a tool that we nail ourselves to in order to live.

"The reason why Saint Margaret, an early Christian martyr, is identified with a dragon is because she was tempted by the devil in various guises, once as a dragon who would have devoured her had she not made the sign of the cross. Thus, by her example, she strengthens the spirit of others by her victory over the devil." [http://www.hamline.edu/brass/pdfs/pp_niv-bel_c1460_flemish_facs.pdf]

Humbleness is a great virtue, and God is pleased with anyone who walks with Him in humbleness; humbleness that will lead to wisdom and is derived from the fear of the Lord; humbleness that will make "obedience to God's Word" its only satisfaction. For a wise man will flee from sin, and if he/she sins, then he/she will not do it again and ask forgiveness for all previous faults (Ecclesiasticus 18:19-33, 19:1-3; 21:1-4) and trust in God's Mercy. God's Mercy that can be trusted even in the last moment of our life, just as what happened with one of the criminals who were crucified with Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ gave him pardon for his sins, while it was not granted for the other criminal who kept on abusing Jesus Christ (Luke 23:39-43). Insisting on not acknowledging God is pride, as pride is identified with stubborn heart (Ecclesiasticus 3:26-29). Accordingly, without any pride in the heart, we can all repent and change our wrong behavior (Ecclesiasticus 17:25-26), and pray the following so that God will welcome us into His Kingdom:

"Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, King of kings, have mercy on me a sinner, and grant me Your pardon. Amen and Amen."

Faith ... Hope ... Love

O God, our bodies are weak but the spirit is willing, so I ask You God to remove the plank from our eyes so that we will be able to see clearly and help others to remove the wood from their eyes. Somehow, we have forgotten the real meaning of the parable of the 'Good Samaritan', and we have forgotten that the Samaritan helped the man in need without knowing whether he was a good man or not. Nowadays, there are some who claim to be Your children, yet they are happy to see others suffer and say in themselves that they deserve the suffering; they forgot that You are the only judge, and Your Son has suffered and died because of Your love for us, and He asked us when we pray to forgive others and pray for them. So, how can we put hate in our hearts? And if we haven't understood what real love is, then how can non-Christians understand it? Have mercy on us Lord, and increase in us our faith, our hope and our love.

Faith as in the shout of the cross: If the wood of Jesus Christ's Cross spoke, shall we hear it screaming in pain from the entrance of the nails through its veins? Or, complain from the heavy body laid on it? Or, will it rise high in the sky and stand firmly on earth holding the Holy Body and absorbing the Running Blood with all the power that it has and scream loudly to its Creator along with Whom it hold: "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing*" (Luke 23:34).

Let us, the followers of Jesus Christ (filled with Love & Mercy), be this cross by which the world would understand the love, mercy and forgiveness of God Our Father and His children. Let us purify our minds and open our hearts for forgiveness as God opened His Sacred Heart and purified (baptized) us with Spirit and Water. Let us be like Saint Stephen (Acts 7:55-60): A believer, a forgiver, a follower. Let us pray for all whom have sold their souls to Satan (who live in greed and superiority, selfishness, ignorance of God's will and teachings) and are causing the death of so many souls by putting a big burden on their shoulders. May we all keep our trust in Jesus Christ and fix ourselves firmly to His Cross (i.e. Jesus Christ's Teachings) and make it the cross of our soul that we need to carry with us (in our thoughts, speech and deeds) and follow Him to God's Kingdom. Amen.

Hope as within the prisoner to hope: Our hope is the hope in the resurrection of the dead, i.e. living with God in His Kingdom in Heaven and seeing His Glory and praising Him forever. As we should always be spiritually ready to receive this grace, then all our actions (thoughts, speech and deeds) that comes from our hearts should be done to please the Sacred Heart of Jesus to gain His love, just as anyone in love who becomes a prisoner in actions to his lover because of his love and as a sign and proof of that love to his lover; just as Saint Paul who believed in

the resurrection and said that he would do his best to keep a clear conscience at all times before God and everyone (Acts 24:15-16).

Love as in the Lord's Prayer: When we pray, we make a space in our hearts to put in it God's love and mercy so that it can shine onto others through our thoughts, words, and deeds. All of Jesus Christ's teachings, i.e. to love God from all our hearts and to love others as ourselves, are implied within the prayer He taught us. He himself lived it all His life:

1. Glorifying and loving His Father,
2. Surrendering, with complete trust, to His Father's will,
3. Proclaiming the Kingdom of God when hearts are born from the Holy Spirit,
4. Loving us to the point that He sacrificed Himself so that we will be holy and perfect as He is,
5. Asking His Father to forgive our sins, and
6. Putting His Sacred Heart with all its feelings towards His Father and towards us in the Holy Eucharist to be our daily bread for both our bodies and souls.

In words (prayed in a minute or so), the Lord's Prayer reflects:

- 1) Our love to God as a Holy Father and admitting that (a) He is Almighty; He is the King of Heaven and earth and rules over all who lives on them, and accordingly we have a complete trust in His will for us and surrender to it to build His Kingdom in our hearts and the hearts of all, (b) He is the provider for our human and spiritual needs; He is the Saviour and the Protector, (c) He is Just and will treat us as we treat others; He is Merciful and don't want any sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins but a contrite and loving heart and acts of mercy (forgiving others).
- 2) Our love to others is equal to our love to oneself as all that we ask for ourselves is the forgiveness of sins (in order to inherit the Kingdom of God) which we already do for others so that they will stand in front of God blameless.

And, as Jesus Christ lived it all His life, so He asked us to live it in our lives: A holy life consecrated to God, living with others in unity in His Kingdom on earth based on love, mercy and service; based on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, so that everyone else would understand Christianity as He explained it, and live accordingly.

O God, increase in our hearts our love to You and make us worthy to pray this prayer in words and deeds every day of our lives. Amen.



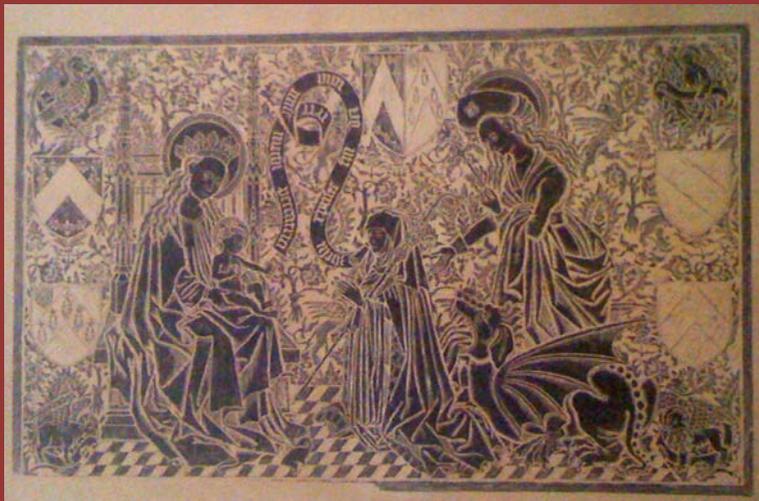
“But if (you believe that) it is through the Spirit of God (finger of God’s Right Hand) that I cast devils out, then know that the kingdom of God has overtaken you.”

Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:28, Luke 11:20)

Inspired by the words of Jesus Christ: “Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you shall find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; everyone who searches finds; everyone who knocks will have the door opened.” (Luke 11:9-10), we can all pray “The Lord’s Prayer” and ask God for His Free Gifts and say:

“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever.”

Amen and Amen. Alleluia. 



"O God, I hope that I have listened to Your Word given to us through Your Holy Spirit by the four Evangelists, and have chosen to do Your Will not the evil's one. Have mercy on me, a sinner, and grant me Your pardon. Amen and Amen."