

NOVEMBER

6th -14th Eight Days Preached Retreat – FR ISAAC MPOKWE, OCD

12th -14th NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN ORGANIZATION (CWO)- National Chaplaincy

13th -15th Weekend Retreat-FR ALFRED NSOPE, DP

15th -21 Session on Religious Life FR. GEORGE TAMBALA, OCD

27th -5th December: Eight Days Preached Retreat – FR NOEL GAMA, CSSP

DECEMBER

6th -12th: Six days Advent Preached Retreat – FR ALFRED CHAIMA

11th -13th Weekend Retreat-FR ALFRED NSOPE, DP

14th: ST JOHN OF THE CROSS DAY

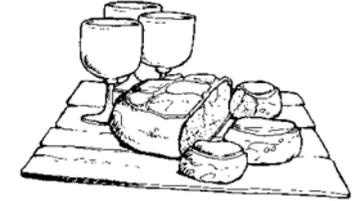
15th -23rd: Eight Days Preached Retreat – FR EPHRAIM KUFANKUMODZI, OCD

27th -2nd Free Booking for End of Year Retreat – FR JOHN PAUL NAM-POTA, OCD

Editorial

Christ is the bread of life. He satisfies spiritual hunger and enables believers to have eternal life. Ontologically man desires what is good and beautiful. Christ is a bread of higher value the desire of each and every person. Faith in Jesus opens the whole horizon to eternal life.

However, for man to advance in spiritual life there is a divine command of love of God and neighbor. These are two pillars that hold our spiritual life firm. They both coexist, one cannot be without the other, and you cannot emphasize on one and neglect the other.



Christ, the bread of life, comes to an integral person, body and soul. Thus a human being needs to be attended and respected in both aspects spiritual and bodily. The environment plays a big role in our spiritual life. Of recent in Africa people have encountered many social problems which have been a hindrance to spiritual life and humanly growth.

The epidemic of *ebola* is one of the major social problems of our time especially in Western African countries. Many people have died because of this deadly disease. It is a challenge to faith. The situation arouses many questions to faith. What is the message delivered to us? Where is God in this situation? Despite that Christ remains the bread of life and for those who believe in him will have eternal life.

Malawi as such is not spared. In the lower shire our brothers and sisters have been highly affected by devastating floods. Imagine the situation where you wake up just to find your family members are taken up by waters? The loss, the pain and the suffering is unbearable. Does God want to teach us to be charitable to one another? Probably God observed that on one hand we love him much and on the other hand we have become more self-centered. Perhaps, God is inviting each one of us to be open and share the little we have.

Going around Malawi and some parts of Zambia, and Mozambique it is self-evident that the crops have not done well. One can fore see a terrible hunger and suffering of the majority poor people. Does this mean that God is inviting each of us to be wise enough and to use our resources well? May be this is the time when farmers are invited not to sell all their crops especially maize so as to practice charity and share with those who do not have or those who will be in a terrible hunger. Christ is the bread of life those who receive him have eternal life and they depend on God's providence.

As if natural disasters such as the epidemic of *ebola*, floods, and the potential hunger are not enough some people have developed ideologies which are inhuman and a threat to human rights. Some fundamentalists believe that to attain eternal life one needs to kill others. Christ is the bread of life therefore, the ideologies, which are contrary to the gospel, are highly condemned. Each and every person has the right to life and freedom of religion and worship. In this case the groups such as *boko haram*, and *al shabaab* who terminate life depending of religious convictions are greatly condemned.

It is unfortunate that some people have short lived memory, not long ago some South Africans got refugee in other African countries when the situation of apartheid was sour in South Africa. It is sad and un-imaginable that the very same people are hostile to fellow African who hosted them. Xenophobic attacks in South Africa are inhuman and need to be condemned with immediate effect.

As the Church celebrates the year of consecrated life, let us pray for our societies to be more open minded to love God more and more, and that love to radiate to the love of neighbor and respect of human life. It is a plea to African governments to give security to the citizens.

Editor



24th -26th Regional Assembly for the Divine Providence Sisters

AUGUST

1st One Day Session for OCDS

1st -15th Regional Assembly for Sisters of Our Lady

15th -22nd AWRIM Session for 4th-6th Year Junior Professed Sisters-*Training for Transformation*- FR. PHILIP MBETA

28th -Sept 5th Eight Days Preached Retreat – FR LUDOVICK BAFUTA, OCD

28th -31st Session for SBVM –FR. JOHN PAUL NAMPOTA, OCD

SEPTEMBER

14th -19th Preached Retreat for OCD FRIARS

20th -26th Six Days Directed Retreat – FR EPHRAIM KUFANKUMODZI, OCD

28th – October 2nd: Six Days Directed Retreat- FR JOHN PAUL NAMPOTA, OCD

OCTOBER

1st October Feast of St Therese of Lisieux

4th -10th AWRIM Session – Mid Life Transition FR ISAAC MPOKWE, OCD

5TH CENTER DAY: 8TH ANNIVERSARY

15TH OCTOBER 5th CENTENARY OF ST TERESA OF AVILA

16th -24th Eight Days Preached Retreat – FR JOHN PAUL NAMPOTA, OCD

23rd -25th Weekend Retreat-FR ALFRED NSOPE, DP

25th -31st: Six Days Directed Retreat – FR EPHRAIM KUFANKUMODZI, OCD

31st – Day of Recollection for the Religious in Blantyre Arch-Diocese- FR NOEL GAMA, CSSP

PROGRAM FOR RETREATS AND SESSIONS FOR ST JOHN OF THE
CROSS CENTRE 2015

JUNE

**31ST MAY-11TH JULY- A SIX WEEK ON-GOING PROGRAM FOR THOSE
PREPARING FOR FINAL VOWS, JUBILEES AND ORDINA-
TIONS – AWRIM)**

Week I (1st -5th): Leadership Management and Entrepreneurship—BRO
NICHOLAS BANDA, FMS

6th Day of Recollection for the Religious in Blantyre Arch-Diocese-SR DIANA
MALIKEBU, SOL

Week II (8th -12th): Community Living, a Psycho-Social Dynamics-*My way of
Being with Self, Others and God*-SR HUGUETTE OSTIGUY, MIC

13th OCDS Encounter

Week III 15th -19th Dynamics of Community Living- *Gender, Ethnicity & Ra-
cism - Culture and Communications Workshop* –FR ANDREW
KAUFA, SMM

Week IV 22nd -26th Spirituality Session- *A journey Towards Maturity of Love,
Growing in Personal Spirituality with the Community* –FR EPHAIM
KUFANKUMODZI, OCD

26th -28th Week end of Recollection

JULY

Week V 29th -3rd July Biblical Spirituality Session-*Religious Life's Commitment
as Living a Personal and Community Prophetic Life*- FR. JOHN-PAUL
NAMPOTA OCD

Week VI 6th June -11th July: Spiritual Direction, the Art of Choosing a Spiritual
Director and Giving Spiritual Direction – FR PHILBERT NAM-
PHANDE, OCD

12th 20th Eight Days Preached Retreat- FR. JOHN PAUL NAMPOTA, OCD
17th -19th Weekend Recollection- FR ALFRED NSOPE, DP

16th: OUR LADY OF MT CARMEL

Reflections for Sundays and Solemn days

THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD
7th JUNE 2015

Ex 24:3-8, Hebr 9:11-15, Mk 14:12-16.22-6

Message of the Liturgy



“For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a haifer’s ashes can sanctify those who are defiled ... how much more will the blood of Christ.” The old covenant which God made with his people is over. This old covenant was sealed by the sacrifice of young bulls and the sprinkling of its blood on the altars. We are the people of the new covenant Christ is our sacrificial lamb and our high priest too as he offers himself for our redemption.

For the Homily

The Old Testament refers to Yahweh as a Saviour of his people. This is in reference to his work when he delivered the Israelites from Egypt and Babylonian captivity. This was a temporal act of redemption. God’s love reached at its climax by sending his Son to obtain for an eternal redemption which is his blood. Christ is the mediator of this new covenant.

The Eucharist is the sacrament of love. Jesus offered his body and blood not for the few but for many. Everyone who believes in him shall take part in this eternal redemption. By offering himself for us, he teaches us to offer ourselves for others as well. We should not put other people in captivity for example by not forgiving them what they have sinned against us.

By offering himself, Christ tells us that we are one if we partake in the sacrifice of mass. The breaking of bread signifies that though many, we are one because we share the body of Christ. It is the unity which the world of today filled up with nepotism, tribalism, regionalism and all sorts of divisions is lacking. We are ambassadors of unity.

The Eucharist is the sending forth feast. Today it is sending us to proclaim unconditional love to love all people regardless of whatever negative things we may think of. Christ offered his body and blood for all the twelve disciples including Judas the one who betrayed him. This gives



us a challenge to offer ourselves even for those who betray us those we know that they don't like us.

“For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a haifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled ... how much more will the blood of Christ.” Truly the body and blood of Christ has brought us eternal redemption. Christ is our Passover lamb and is our high priest. He is the one who offers the sacrifice and that the sacrifice is himself.

Fr. Ludovic M. Bafuta, Ocd

SACRED HEART OF JESUS
12th JUNE 2015

Hos. 11: 1, 3-4; 8-9; Ps. 12: 2-6; Eph. 3: 8-12; 14:19; Jn. 19: 31-37



Message of the Liturgy

In the Byzantine Rite of the Mass there is a little ceremony carried out at the table on which the gifts of bread and wine are prepared for the Mass. A small knife shaped like a spear, with its handle in the shape of a cross, is used by the priest to divide the bread to be consecrated at Mass from other parts of

the loaf.

The allusion of this symbolism is to the lance of which St John, who stood by the cross of Jesus, and witnessed his crucifixion, writes: 'But when they came to Jesus they found that he was already dead, so they did not break his legs. One of the soldiers stabbed his side with a lance and at once there was a flow of blood and water.' This little ceremony carried out in the Byzantine Rite of Mass shows the importance of the Heart of Jesus pierced with the lance.

For the Homily

Jesus loved us to the extreme of offering His Body, His Blood and His Heart on the Cross. “Behold the heart that so loved mankind and that has spared nothing in order to save them and show them my love,” Jesus told St. Margaret May of Alacoque as He physically showed her His Heart in 1657. How much does Jesus want us to comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth (Eph. 3:18) of the love of His heart! How much He desires that we set out to contemplate, as St. John the mysteries of love found in His pierced heart! So one of the most important lessons from the pierced heart of Jesus is that we must love God, neighbor and the nature to the extreme of casting off our Egoism, Pride, Jealousy, Anger, Laziness, Greed and Covetousness.

ters. The whole family of SBVM thanks God for his graces and unceasing vocation of young girls to this family.

Some of the challenges which sisters are facing, Sr. Teresa explained are financial problems which affect the congregation as it does to the entire society. Then another challenge is failure of young girls to come up with MSCE to join the family.

According to Sr. Teresa the basic requirement to join the family is MSCE. And she described the period of formation as the time of preparation for the young one to be helped to discern and respond to their vocation. At present there are two hundred and eighty four (284) sisters in this family.

In her concluding remarks Sr. Teresa encouraged the young girls who feel God is calling them to religious life to feel at home with SBVM family. And she asked prayers and support from all people of good will as the celebration is on 5th September 2015. and their current address is Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mary View, P.O. Box 5501, Limbe.

PRAYER OF THE CONSECRATED

We thank you, heavenly Father, for calling us as consecrated men and women to serve in your kingdom.

Through your poverty may we recognize that all we are and have comes from you, O Lord.

Through our chastity may we open ourselves totally to your love, to share it with others.

Through our obedience may we stand ready to respond to your will wherever it is expressed.

Throughout this year when we celebrate our consecration, renew our knowledge and love of you, and send your Holy Spirit to help us bring good news and healing to your people.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ, who live and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

tery of Incarnation on 2 November 1536 when she was twenty one. She professed as a religious after one year on novitiate on 3 November 1537.

After a short period of time her health became poor due to change of food, fainting spell began to increase. She was taken to Becedas for cure where she stayed for a year. It is worth noting that during this time Teresa had difficulties in prayer. She had no confessor who could understand her soul. She could not recollect unless with the aid of books. The medication did not help her that she had to go back to Avila. She suffered to the point of death. She prayed through the intercession of the glorious St. Joseph and recommended herself to him. She encourages us to pray through the intercession of St. Joseph as she writes, "I have experience that he helped in all our needs and that the Lord wants us to understand that just as he was subject to St. Joseph on earth for since bearing the title of father, being the Lord's tutor, Joseph could give the child commands so in heaven and God does whatever he commands" Life 6:6.

SERVANTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (SBVM)

CLOCKS 90!

Interview with Sr. Teresa Mmanga SBVM

Fr. Charles Jester Banda Ocd

As the Church celebrates the year of consecrated life; the sisters in the congregation of Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary have all the reasons to thank God as the congregation clocks ninety. In an interview with Sr. Teresa, she illustrated that the Congregation was found in 1925 by Monsignor Louis Auneau a Montfort missionary from France. Sr. Teresa expressed that the *spirit* of the missionary was to find indigenous girls who would work, support and serve God's people in their own country. The heart of SBVM is "to bring Jesus to the world by following the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

At present, Sr. Terese explained that the sisters of SBVM are serving in six dioceses Dedza, Mangochi, Zomba, Blantyre, and Chikwawa. They have various kinds of apostolate such as teaching, hospital, pastoral and administration. Thus the sisters preach the kingdom of God through teaching in schools, catechesis, and caring for the sick, the needy and the neglected.

Sr. Teresa proudly expressed that the general experience as they clock ninety is the vibrant service to the Church, thanks to the good community life, and collaboration in the service. And she commented that uncountable people have comprehended and appreciated the work well done in the apostolate by the sis-

The famous painter Holman Hunt was once taking some visitors through his study when they stopped before a famous canvas: "Light of the World" (Our Lord carrying a lantern, knocking on a door). One of the visitors said, "No doubt you have forgotten something here; there is no latch on the door." "It is not an error," said the artist. "This door represents the human heart that opens only from the inside; Our Lord is on the outside waiting for us to say, 'Come in.' He never forces Himself in, it is up to us to invite Him in." "Here I am knocking at your door; if someone will listen to my voice and open the door, I will enter and eat with him and him with me" (Apoc. 3:20). Consider the contrast between the heart of Jesus and the human heart, which is locked from within. The Heart of Jesus is ever opened for the love of humanity and of the Father. Open heart symbolizes one that does not reject, exclude, and is ever receptive.

The heart of Jesus was and is one that beats for the humanity. It is the source of mercy and compassion. The heart that was pierced with a lance is the source of sacraments the Blood symbolizing the Holy Eucharist and the Water symbolizing the Baptism. So it is a heart that does not spare anything for itself and burns always for others. Here, I think that it is relevant to speak about St. Longinus, who according to the Christian legend was a blind Roman centurion who thrust the spear into Christ's side at the crucifixion. Some of Jesus' blood fell upon his eyes and he was healed. Upon this miracle Longinus believed in Jesus. Here we find the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which performs a miracle even on the one who pierced. Our challenge today is crystallised in the following words of Pope St. John Paul the II: "The man of the year 2000 needs Christ's Heart to know God and to know himself; he needs it to build the civilization of love" (St. John Paul II, Letter, June 11, 1999).

Fr. Joseph Kakkaryil Ocd

11th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

14th JUNE 2015

Ez 17:22-24; 2 Cor 5:6-10; Mk 4:26-34

Message of the Liturgy



The kingdom of God is a mystery. God works with us or without us to establish his reign on earth. We are invited to cooperate with God's salvific initiative.

For the Homily

In the first reading, Ezekiel's prophesy is in the context when the faith of Israel-

ites had reached rock bottom. The future looked bleak and hopeless; why? Their king Jehoiakim was conquered and sent into Babylonian captivity. They could not just comprehend that how on earth the last of the line of David could suffer this way. How would they become a great nation? Amidst their predicament, a shoot sprouts. A clear proof that God's ways are not ours and in the nick of the time God's will is always done. Our faith should never waver even if it gets a hitting.

In the Gospel, we are confronted with two parables teaching about the kingdom of God. The seed sprouts, grows and matures independent of the sower but on the power inherent. The seed stands for the word of God; the word of God is powerful; its effectiveness does not depend on the preacher, on our powers, our means, and intelligence. Thus, the building of God's kingdom is God's work. It goes on whether we notice it or not, whether we are working with it or not, it is not hindered by our passivity, opposition and sins. This is why it is of utmost and capital importance to always trust in the Lord's ways. Lao-tzu rightfully said "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Everything must truly have a beginning and great things emanate from small things.

A mustard seed, the smallest of the seeds on the earth when it is sown it is transformed into a big tree. Reign of God beginning is almost invisible; it starts like a mustard seed but puts forth large branches which accommodate the birds of the sky. It transforms the person completely; it transforms the world completely into one big happy family of God- thus universal salvation. Its outcome is inevitable; it is up to us to identify with it or not. The farmer does not make the seed grow; in fact the farmer does not understand how it grows. We do not create the kingdom of God; it is God's kingdom. Its growth, sustainability and effectiveness depend on the power and will of God. Despite our rebellion and disobedience God's will is always fulfilled.



The two parables challenge those who think God is doing nothing; God is very much active in our world leading the world to its purpose. On the other hand it challenges those who want God to act on sensations or with visible immediacy. We need to cultivate the patience, unquestioned trust in God, wait on God, hope in God and do away with pessimism.

Fr. Sylvester Chasweka Dp

SAINT TERESA OF AVILA : PART II

Fr. Charles Jester Banda Ocd

Teresa goes astray

St. Teresa in her writing complains of her losing childhood virtues. There are several factors and circumstances which contributed to the loss of her childhood virtues. As an adolescent Teresa was influenced by her mother to read chivalry stories; "adventure stories, very popular in the sixteenth century in Spain." Teresa and her mother read these stories despite the father's disapproval. Chivalry stories affected Teresa and she comments: "I began to get the habit of reading these books. And by little fault which I saw in my mother, I started to grow cold in my desires and to fail in everything else." Life 2:1.

Teresa also complains about her cousins. She probably refers to the sons of Don Hernando and Dona Elvira de Cepeda her father's brother and sister. With her cousins they engaged in conversations about all things that pleased them. Teresa regrets: "I listened to accounts of their affections and the childish things not least bit edifying; and what was worse, I exposed my soul to that which caused all its harm" Life 2:2.

In addition Teresa was challenged by another relative whose name is not mentioned. She was playful and Teresa liked to associate with her. She encouraged Teresa in all the entertainments and she shared with her conversations and vanities. Teresa confesses, "Until I began to associate with her ... I don't think I would have abandoned God by mortal sin or loss of the fear of God." Life 2:3.

Teresa: lost but found

After her sister Mary had married, her father sent Teresa to a convent of Augustinian nuns, named Our Lady of Grace. At this convent she started to like good and holy conversation with a nun known as Dona Maria de Briceno she was in charge of the girls who slept in large dormitories. Teresa was happy to hear about God. After a year in that convent she started to recite vocal prayers but she still had no desire to become a nun. Later she favored to be a nun though it was not in the Augustinian convent but in the monastery of Incarnation because she had a friend Juana Suarez. While at this convent school she fell sick that she had to leave. After getting better she lived with her sister who was very dear to her and later with her uncle: very virtuous man. He liked reading good books and his conversations were about God and the vanities of the world. This good company helped Teresa to retain her childhood virtues. As she writes:

This good company began to help me get rid of the habits that the bad company had caused and to turn my mind to the desire for eternal things and for some freedom from the antagonism that I felt strongly within myself toward becoming a nun. "... because of the good company and the strength the words of God both heard and read gave my heart, I began to understand the truth I knew in childhood ... and to fear that if I were to die I would go to hell. Life 3:1, 5.

It was very difficult for Teresa to join religious life because she experienced many temptations, fears and sicknesses. Her father was not in favor that Teresa joins religious life. She reports that she had to sneak with her brother Antonio de Ahumada who joined Jeronimites but he did not persevere for lack of health. Teresa joined the monas-

gious, prayer is not an optional but a necessity. It constitutes the pillar and heart of religious life. It is the right sort of foundation for authentic religious life because it complements the endeavour of personal communion with God which is, in fact, the authentic goal of religious life. In St. Teresa's own words "prayer with pure heart is the best way of reaching and sustaining the union with God." Therefore, if the main aim of religious life constitutes one's contact with God, prayer then constitutes the very essence of it.

Indeed it is very difficult, if not impossible, to think of religious life without prayer. Prayer and religious life are like two wheels of a cart. If you remove one, the cart will not move. In the same way, religious life is static, void and blind if lived without prayer. For St. Teresa, without prayer we become like people whose bodies or limbs are paralysed; they possess feet and heads but they cannot control them. Appropriately, one cannot authentically claim to be a religious if prayer is an enemy. It is not overstatement then to say that religious life is not only based on the evangelical castles. In fact, the evangelical castles become baseless, a burden and unappreciated unless cherished and enforced by prayer. It is only through prayer that we get the power to love, obey and eventually the power to wake up others. The truth then stands; without prayer there can never be authentic observance of our religious vows but only the outward show of natural goodness which quickly fades.

It should as well be pointed out that where there is no prayer, the love of God becomes weak. When the love of God is weak, the love of our vocation dwindles. Consequently, our religious life loses direction and self-love flourishes. And with self-love community life becomes a cross, our vows a burden, while sins and imperfections flourish. This is so because it is prayer which is the authentic stem of all virtues. It is usually prayer which pushes us to love others. It is prayer which renders us to be humble in the community. In short, it is prayer which makes religious life possible.



Therefore, a religious should never tire of seeking the Load in prayer, however hard it maybe and apparently un rewarding. In the same line any religious community should have a set of principles and practices that protect, preserve and induce the life of personal prayer. A religious and prayer are inseparable twins because religious life is tightly based on prayer. In other words, without prayer we lose our vocation and accordingly become religious *inutile*.

12th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

21st JUNE 2015

Job 38:1, 8-11; 2 Cor. 5:14-17; Mk 4:35-41

Message of the Liturgy

Today's readings speak of storms at sea, of concern for life, and of the calm brought by God's intervention. Surely, if the Lord, the creator of all can calm a tumultuous sea, he can, if our faith allows, help to calm the boiling ocean on which our lives are sometimes tossed. Just to know that Christ is with us amid all the commotion of life is a great cause of celebration and thanksgiving. With Christ the turbulence can become the birth pangs of a new creation.



For the Homily

The first reading highlights the fact that God has plans and purposes which mortal men cannot grasp. God makes it clear to Job that he is not in a position to judge the doings of God. Job has no right to question God's justice for he knows little about both creation and the Creator. While Job's three friends try to persuade him that he must be guilty of some crime, otherwise he would not be suffering as he is, Job insists on his innocence. An old age question 'Why should God let the good suffer and the wicked prosper in this world?' ought not to be a problem for true Christians. We are followers of the innocent Christ, who suffered and died for the sake of mankind.

Paul's letter to the 'saints' in and around the city of Corinth notes the intertwining of suffering and consolation. Unlike the argument exercised by Job's three friends – that suffering is a sign of sin, Paul links personal, human suffering with the suffering unto death of Jesus. Expressed in this way it becomes something positive and redemptive; something that creates a person a new and more in the likeness of Jesus because of the death and resurrection of Christ, Christians have been given a new mode of life - they are new creations. Like Jesus Christ, Christians too will rise from the dead if they live, not for themselves or this world but for Christ – by keeping his commandments.

Central to the gospel reading is the identity of Jesus Christ. Jesus rebukes a strong and frightening storm that erupts as he and his disciples are in a boat crossing over to the other side of the lake. The wind which drops and there is calmness again. Jesus stills the storm to a whisper and all the waves are made silent. Not only does he calm the sea but also the hearts of frightened apostles bringing peace once again. In the Bible only God has power over the sea. Since Jesus has this authority, then he must be 'the Lord'. Indeed, Jesus has power over all the forces that are a threat to life.

In our lives we sometimes find ourselves in stormy situations. We are faced with different problems, illness, sorrow and pain, unemployment, earthquakes, floods, hostile environment, and professional or financial difficulties that are beyond our management. What do we do in that kind of situation? Unfortunately, there are Christians who question the goodness of God in such kind of situations when some heavy seas break across their life's barque. 'How could God, if he is good' they ask, 'allow me to suffer like this, I who have been so faithful? Such kind of questions comes from Christians who lose heart and overcome by doubts and fears like the apostles overcome by the waves. They think like apostles: Do you not care, Lord that I am in such suffering? They think that God has forgotten them, that he is not interested when storms break around them. In fact, it is then that He is nearest to us, using such storms to rekindle our faith. Jesus has God's power to help us in whatever trouble or danger we are. However, for His power to be able to work, Jesus needs faith in our hearts. Our intimacy with God will give us calmness and strength, and we will be a firm rock for many. Let's us ask the Lord to give us the faith that obtains miracles form Him as it did in the past

Fr. Daniel Chasowa Kamanga Dp – Mzuzu Diocese

**13th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
28th JUNE 2015**

Wis 1:13-15, 2 Cor 12:7-10, Mk 6:16

Message of the Liturgy



In as much as death puts us all in the hopeless state and situation, our readings are stating to us clearly that death is submissive to the author of life. As Christians recognize and submit to Jesus Christ, we render death powerless in us, consequently we live.

For the Homily

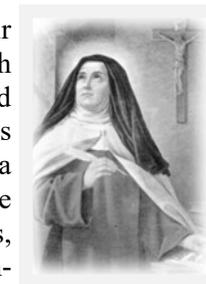
In the passage that we are reading today the scripture looks at death through the microscope of the creator. The passage from the book of wisdom confirms that no matter how death seems to powerful, it is not created by God. God as the author of life intends that everything that he created be or live (Wis 1:13-15). The theme which the passage is advancing with is the basic belief to be accepted by all believers. This is at the heart of the Scripture as scripture itself opens with belief (Gn 1:1-31). We may also wonder at this liturgy why death visits every home and does not spare any one. The preliminary answer that the book of Wisdom gives concurs with the teaching of the third chapter of Genesis. Death comes as a result of sin.

question of what we are doing. Let the works we do speak for us of our true identity. The bible was written before our founders and foundresses started our congregations. They had also read the letter to the Hebrews before starting our congregations and yet they started. So if you are to know why the religious exist find out the aims of the founders and foundresses. There we will get a very beautiful answer of what we are. There will be many of the prophetic values that will never be missed out from the answers we will get in the footsteps of our founders.

**THE ESSENCE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN THE LIGHT
OF ST TERESA OF AVILA**

Br. Stephano Kamwaza Ocd

“Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living! It is possible to live differently in this world.” The words of Pope Francis urging all the religious to their proper mission. And later he continues: “I expect that each form of consecrated life will question what it is that God and people today are asking of them.” A practical category tells us: “No one cannot give that which he does not have.” If a religious is to wake up the world, he/she cannot do that while asleep; has firstly to be awake him/herself. Pondering on this, our minds are clouded with numerous questions on what consists this vigil of a religious. In other words, what is the heart of religious life? What is its role and mission? In a nutshell, what is the essence of religious life?



Reflecting on the teaching of St. Teresa of Avila gives us some consolation on the matter. Writing to her sisters, she elevates prayer as the very purpose of their vocation: “Oh my sisters in Christ!! Help me to entreat this of the Lord, Who has brought you together here for that very purpose. This is your vocation; this must be your business; these must be your desires; these your tears; these your petitions.” Though St. Teresa was writing primarily for her co-sisters, her reflections merit to underline what can be termed the heart of religious life. As far as religious life intends to reach its main goal, prayer remains inseparable from it.

It should be affirmed first that there is no exceptional with a life of prayer. “Every Christian is indeed called to holiness, and so to a life of prayer.” However, the religious have that vocation in particular, and have to fulfil it as perfectly as possibly by making prayer the focal point of their lives. For the reli-

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR FOUNDERS

Sr. Evarista Kapwata Sol

The world is full of questions. But think of those who have been making mathematical formulas and scientific theories, could they not find solutions to all these questions? I mean if at all these people have been working hard. Perhaps today we could have rested. Our only work maybe could be going to school to learn formulas and theories and we could live as Eden was in the past. But besides the existence of these great mathematicians and Scientist, there seem to be as many questions without answers. We still struggle to find answers for them. This means maybe questions will not leave a living person.



One of the questions that is often asked in the circles of Religious life is that; what are the Religious there for? Of course many can give the answers of who we are in terms of the works we do. Some of us are teaching, some working in healing ministry, some preaching, some caring for the aged and many more. All to show people how good the good Lord is, how wise the Lord is, How caring...., in short to make the Lord known to the people. If we are to be defined by the works we do, what if we are faced with the challenging words from Hebrew 8:11. ***There will be no further need for neighbor to try to teach neighbor or brothers to say to brother "Learn to know the Lord!" No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest.***

From this we can question again; what is remaining of us Religious? The work is already finished if we are to see the letter to the Hebrews. It was all done by the Lord. What are we there for? The people already know the Lord, the Lord himself taught them. No need for neighbor or brother to take up this work anymore. What is remaining of us Religious? Perhaps we may say something is remaining, yes what is it? It is a fact that people have known God. There are many churches nowadays and all are preaching of God. They have known him. As a God who provides, strengthens in times of sorrows and suffering, God who is a healer.

We still come back to our question, what are we there for? It seems the world sees there is no work remaining for us. Everything can be done by people without our guidance or teachings. In this year of Consecrated life let us look back on the aim of our founders and foundresses. It is high time we let people not to

The basic definition of sin according to the teaching of Genesis is "deliberate refusal to take God's instruction (Gn 3:1-7). Corollary to this is failure to recognize God as the soul ruler of our life. Wis 1:15 calls the obedience to God the "undying justice." In the Gospel of Mark this fact is shown in the healing of the daughter of Jairus. Jairus as one of the synagogue official enjoyed and commanded a lot of respect from people that gave him the prestige of power. In front of the sickness of his daughter, Jairus is able to see the other power that is emanating from Jesus the author of life.

In front of this power Jairos is able to come down in humility and submission "seeing him he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him (Mk 5:22-23). This gesture can be contrasted with the pride and quest for superiority of Eve as presented in Gn 3:1-7. If the consequences of these two contrasted gestures are to be measured, we see that the gesture of Eve merited death (Gn 3:19) and the Gesture of Jairus has merited life: *Talitha koum* (Mk 5:41).

Rather than focusing on the miracle of a little girl rising from death, we may here look at the wonder of the life giving obedience and submission to Christ. The story of Jairus in the Gospel offers us an alternative view of death. Rather than looking at death as simply a consequence of sin as is viewed in the Old Testament, we have an opportunity to see an invitation to life by recognizing submitting to Jesus as the author of life. Though in most of times we are destroyed by the commotions of life, we should be able to focus on the Christ we have submitted to and at the end we will have life restored even in the most hopeless situations of death as is the case of Jairus' daughter in the Gospel.

Therefore, just as death was not created by God as the passage of wisdom is indicating, life is what is intended. The Gospel is indicating that the intended life is found only by submitting and recognizing Jesus who is the Lord and author of life.

Fr. Paul Nampota Ocd

SOLEMNITY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL
29th JUNE 2015

Acts 12:1-11; 2 Tim 4:6-8. 17-18; Mt 16:13-19

Message for the Liturgy

Today we celebrate the solemnity of two great apostles, Peter and Paul. Peter was foremost in confessing the faith while Paul was an outstanding preacher. Peter is the rock on which Christ founded His Church while Paul was the master and teacher of the gentiles. Each great in a unique way gathered together the one family of Christ; revered together and both suffered martyrdom.



For the Homily

Peter was an affirmed choice of Jesus Christ to lead his Church. *“Blessed are you Simon Bar-Jona...you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it”*. The journey of the life of faith of Peter is quite a story. A mere fisherman, with no formal education and a humble social standing in the society was transformed into a “fisher of people,” he was mandated by Christ to “feed my sheep.” He was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven so that whatever he binds on earth shall likewise be bound in heaven. Peter was not only a chosen disciple; he was a simple man, sincere, who took things as they come and who reacted on impulse. The quality of his discipleship was at times suspect. His messianic expectations were thoroughly steeped in Judaism. On a number of occasions, Peter is rebuked by Christ for seeing the cross as a stumbling block: *“get behind me, Satan. You are thinking is not as God does, but as human beings do.”* (Mk 8:33b) He even rejected Christ. Together with his fellow disciples, they were shell-shocked by Christ’s death; it was only after the Pentecost event that the salvation history became clearer. Peter then understood the cost of discipleship: *“whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me”* (Mk 8:34). He preached the good news with courage, commitment and diligence even up to the point of being crucified upside down.



As much as Peter preached among Jews, Paul took the good news to the gentiles. Christianity had a universal message, for Jews and gentiles; yet it was cradled in Judaism thereby in the eyes of the world a Jewish affair and in the eyes of many Jews a heretical sect. This was the dilemma Christianity faced. To solve this predicament there had to be a bridge between the Jewish and the Gentile world; Paul was that man: *a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a Roman citizen of no mean city- a university town with distinguished scholars*. There was no purer Jew than Paul, a Hebrew born of the Hebrews; obviously a devout monotheistic and a zealous Pharisaic rabbi; educated according to the strict manner of the Torah at the feet of Gamaliel, a man steeped in the cultural and religious movements of the Hellenistic world. Persecution of Christianity was but a natural outcome of his life as a devout Pharisee in Judaism. The encounter with the risen Lord on the road to Damascus turned him from being a ‘persecutor of Christ’ to being ‘persecuted for Christ.’ He never turned back, he criss-crossed the Asia Minor preaching the good news to the Gentiles: *“but when (God), who from my mother’s womb had set me apart and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him to the gentiles.”* (Gal 1:15-16a)

life led in common, and witness given to the union of Christ with the Church’. It is a life born of love, and that love is to flow out to the world.

Deeply inserted into the joys and hopes, grief and anguish, fears and suffering of our world, religious are to live, pray, love and serve in the ‘land of the common people’, serving God’s needy and suffering world, caring for the earth and working for systematic change to redress injustices. In fact, all religious are daily invited ‘to rediscover the joy of following Christ and strive to serve the poor with zeal’. Pope Francis speaks of today’s world as a ‘field hospital’ a place often lacking the gift of joy. Religious are to engage in the ministry of consolation to a fractured, love-starved and needy world. The pope asks that we

‘give witness to the joy that arises from the certainty of knowing that we are loved’. But how can religious witness to God’s tender love unless they personally experience it through contemplation and prayer?



Through prayer and contemplation, consecrated persons discover the underlying meaning of their vocation: ‘It is a response to a call, a call to love’. It is a returning again and again to the moment when Jesus looked on them with love, and their hearts were moved to respond. Religious make a lifelong decision to stay with Jesus Christ and to share their life with him. They offer ‘the obedience of faith, the happiness of poverty, the radicality of love’ through a publicly vowed life. This vision influences all their decision-making and their actions. Through this divine connectedness the sap of zeal flows in and through them for the good of the world. And so they witness to the quest for God.

Living in a world where every value is questioned, and where vocations are sometimes drying up, disillusionment can creep in, robbing religious of their vitality, identity and joy. In this context, Pope Francis urges religious to renew their life commitment to Christ, so that once again they may feel the fire of passion, zeal and joy burning in their hearts. Consequently, the Gospel values will become the testimony that ‘wakes up the world’. This fire of divine love will inspire religious men and women across the globe, ‘to be witnesses to a different way of doing things’. In this year dedicated to consecrated life, may these challenging words and the intention of Pope Francis become ever more a living reality!

Articles and Reflections

ONE WILD AND PRECIOUS LIFE

Fr. Daniel Kamanga Dp

Pope Francis's intention for the month of January 2015 reads *'That in this year dedicated to Consecrated Life, Religious Men and Women may rediscover the joy following Christ and strive to serve the poor with zeal'*. One day in my spiritual reading, I came across an article written by Sr. Anne Lyons of the Presentation Sister, in the 'Messenger' Magazine of January 2015. The article is entitled 'One Wild and Precious Life', borrowed from the poem of Mary Oliver entitled 'The Summer Day'. In the poem, Mary Oliver asks a very spiritual and intimate question; 'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and



precious life? It is from this question that the title of this article is drawn. Feeling touched with the thoughts in the article, I wish to single out and extend to you my friends some of her ideas in this year dedicated to Consecrated Life.

As Jesus' followers we are all 'consecrated' or 'made holy' in different ways. Because God is holy, God's people are to be holy also. The book of Leviticus says it clearly 'be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy' (19:2). In fact holiness is a gift and a challenge; each of us is called to be a son or daughter of God! Consecrated life, then, may be viewed as a radical and definitive response to the question posed by Mary Oliver in the poem quoted above; 'what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life? Consecrated life is born in personal experience of being invited to follow Jesus Christ in a particular way. Consecrated life is to be deeply attracted to the person of Jesus Christ and all that he stood for. Rooted in the hope and the joy of Christ, and through their vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, consecrated men and women follow Jesus by ministering to the needy with freedom, zeal and generosity.



Religious, then, are to be a gift for the world. Consecrated life is an individual's free response to the call of the spirit, and is recognised by the church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (n. 925) says that it is *'distinguished from other forms of the consecrated life by its liturgical character, public profession of the evangelical counsels, by a fraternal*

Saints Peter and Paul are truly the two pillars of the Church of Christ. Peter was a true apostle of the Jews and Paul was a true apostle of the gentiles. They carried their ministries with pure faithfulness despite experiencing solitude and suffering; they put their lives on the line for the sake of Gospel. As members of the body of Christ, our Christian lives ought to emulate the great examples of these two pillars. God never abandons those who trust and serve Him; in due time He protects and rewards them: *"Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting"*

Fr. Sylvester Chasweka Dp

14th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 5th JULY 2015

Ez 2:2-5; 2 Cor. 12:7-10; Mk 6:1-6

Message for the Liturgy

Often times we display pride, stubbornness and rebel against our God. We prefer to shut our ears and close our eyes than to hear anything of His love and goodness. We push our God to the very outskirts of our life and create a barrier in between. Nevertheless, God in his goodness comes to us offering his love and giving us a second chance to be reconciled with Him once again. To experience His love we need to constantly deepen our faith in Him.

For the Homily

In the first reading, God Himself warns prophet Ezekiel that he will find 'rebels, defiant, obstinate, stubborn and proud people, not ready to listen or to obey God's words. If they do not listen to God's message, it is doubtful that they will receive Ezekiel very well. The history of the Chosen people is in fact, a sad commentary on the meanness of human beings in their dealings with God. Even as they journeyed in the desert to the Promised Land, they murmured and rebelled against him. As God said in today's reading: the Chosen People, to whom he was sending Ezekiel, were a 'nation of rebels'. Interestingly, the very fact that he was sending a prophet, his own representative, to them notwithstanding their unworthiness, makes us marvel at this infinite mercy and love. We marvel at his goodness in keeping on sending prophet after prophet, giving chance after chance to this stubborn rebellious people to change their mind. He does not abandon them but continues to give them chance to repent, mend their ways and become once again His true sons and daughters.

In today's gospel, Jesus visits his hometown of Nazareth with his new family of disciples. Much has happened since he was last in Nazareth. He has demonstrated his authority over demons, nature, illness and death. Many have come to faith in him, especially in Capernaum where he now lives. As is his practice he

goes to the synagogue to preach. But the locals aren't impressed. They ask very pointed questions. They want to know the source of his words and deeds. They question the wisdom that has been given to him. His townspeople are limited by their own narrow experience and fixed ideas. They know his family and live in his town and simply cannot believe there is anything significant about him. In fact, it was here in Nazareth where his own natural family had believed he was insane and had tried to stop his mission (Mk3:21).

The effect of their rejection is that Jesus is unable to work any significant miracle in Nazareth. Jesus' miracles require faith and this is lacking in Nazareth. It is sad to see that the very people who should have accepted Jesus are the ones who reject Him. The scribes and the Pharisees were those who had studied God's message in the Old Testament. They had received the Law. They had been taught by the Prophets. Yet, they are those who refused to welcome God's own son. Like in the first reading, his own people became stubborn, proud and obstinate as far as his ministry was concerned. The overall effect on Jesus is that he is 'amazed' or greatly surprised at the Nazarenes' lack of faith.

This attitude of Pharisees may well be within us! There is this part of us which is not ready to accept certain people. We judge them. We do not like their ways especially when different from ours. We may even look down on them. If ever they tried to tell us something, it is sure that we would not listen, so proud and do not need anyone, not even God. We like to think everything is fine with ourselves. This is the Pharisee in us.

Seriously speaking, the great enemy of faith is not only doubt but also 'familiarity' or the refusal to believe that God may be working through the person right beside us who is all too well known to us. The Nazarenes were so convinced of their fixed ideas that they could not recognise God's power in Jesus and he could not do a work of power among them

Fr. Daniel Chasowa Kamanga Dp – Mzuzu Diocese

15th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

12th JULY 2015

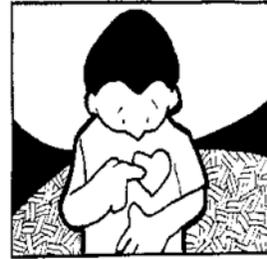
Am 7:12-15; Eph 1:3-10; Mk 6:7-13

Message for the Liturgy

Although Jesus was rejected by His own people, He did not give up His trust in the love and power of the Father. Jesus went around the villages teaching the people. So a Christian is not tired of mistrust from others; it even strengthens him/her to trust in the one who has sent him/her. Instead of being negative a Christian goes around preaching the Good News. A Christian is the herald of Good News even in moments of adversity.

For the Homily

Today the second reading from the book of James tells us that. Christian holiness has to be well balanced. It involves both interior holiness and good deeds to others. "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (Jam 1:27). The man lacks one part and so falls on the way. He is good indeed to the neighbour and has done charitable work but lacks the interior holiness. The act of using stolen money is unjustifiable.



Many of us Christians today might fall in the same hook. We might be good in society but lacking the other part of interior holiness, and visa versa. In the same way, we might be good in the knowledge of our traditions and commandments but lacking the practical point of it. And so in the gospel, Jesus quotes Isaiah to speak against that: "These people honour me only with lip-service, while their hearts are far from me." This is an invitation for each Christian to be well adjusted. Pure Christian life is more than being outwardly perfect. In other words, it is more than only observing our tradition essentials. In this case, Jesus invites us first to realise the essentials of our faith and then put them into practice. To be specific, true Christian holiness has much to do with doing good to others as it has with keeping ourselves pure. Accordingly, Jesus also speaks against the attitude of clinging to the traditions and putting aside the commandment of God. What matters most is not knowing our traditions but what we do. It is not only what we hear but how we live that which we hear.

The first reading from the book of Deuteronomy clarifies the importance of following the commandment of God. The reading does not only say "know the commandment" but it goes on to say "observe them." So our task as Christians does not only end with the knowledge of the commandment. Pure Christian life involves observing them and putting them into practise.

Br Stephano Kamwaza Ocd

have first loved it. The Bible is a history of human choices, the chosen responses of humans to the God who reveals and offers Himself to us. This is evident in the response of Peter and the Twelve when faced with crisis of faith in today's gospel. "When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him" (John 6:60, 66). When Jesus was teaching that he would continue his presence among them in the form of bread and wine. His followers could not make sense out of this. This put them into a crisis and many of them responded by turning back from following Him. Now only Jesus' most intimate followers, the Twelve, remain. Jesus turns to them and asks, "Do you also wish to go away?" Peter answers for the group, "Lord, to whom can we go? No one is to your comparison. You have the words of eternal life," (verses 67-69). In this the response, Peter, shows an absolute decision, never to turn back but strongly and faithfully to follow Jesus who is the custodian of the spirit of life.



Many people, renowned Christians today have left because they did not agree with some teaching or the other. We know that faith seeks understanding but there is no guarantee that faith will always find the understanding it seeks. Today's gospel, therefore, is an invitation to us to put faith before and above understanding as Peter and the twelve did. They never understood Him as He spoke to them but because of their unending belief, they firmly held to Him. They did not put understanding before and over faith like the unfaithful followers who left. It is an invitation to us all to cry out: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" as St. Peter confessed.

Br. Cosmas Kamwendo Ocd

22nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
30th AUGUST 2015

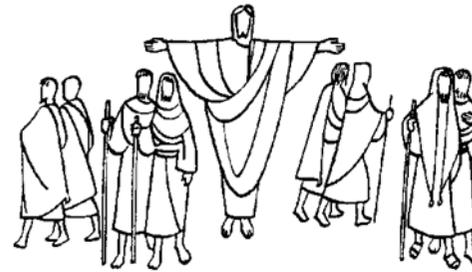
Deut 4:1-2, 6-8; Jas 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27; Mk 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Message of the Liturgy

A man, cycling back home from work, finds a wallet on the way. Opening it, he finds some important personal documents (a driving licence and a passport) and a large sum of money. He takes the documents straight to police but the money he does not surrender. Reaching home, he finds the neighbour's child very sick. He feels pity, takes the poor neighbour's child to the hospital and pays the bills with the same money he had just found. The neighbour is much thankful to him for the child is healed but the man runs out of words. The man might appear good to the neighbour for the initiative shown but is not holy.

For the Homily

It is indicated in the gospel today that Jesus called the twelve disciples: This implies that the source of mission is Jesus Himself. The one who is being sent does not have a mission of his own; therefore, a Christian is an ambassador, a prophet, the tongue of Jesus. As Jesus Himself was the tongue of God, who had only one mission: to do the will of the Father, a Christian missionary shall not have vested, personal and selfish interests.



He sent them two by two; even Jesus was sent by the Father; He in turn sent the disciples to all the quarters of the world. They cannot go alone, they have to go in pairs, two by two, because two persons represent the community better than one alone and they can mutually help one another. *The main reason for sending two by two is that the*

one is a witness to the other who preaches, and a check to any contrary preaching. Here the message is clear: The preacher or the messenger is there to proclaim the Good News that he has lived; he cannot tell lie; he cannot fabricate stories. The life of witness is an essential characteristic of Christianity.

When we compare the same passage with other gospels we find that the missionaries are sent out in pairs, in both missions. We see this practice continuing in Paul's ministry too. See Paul and Barnabas in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26), in Jerusalem (Acts 11:31), and then being sent out on a "tour" from Antioch (Acts 13ff), etc. After they split up over the issue of taking John Mark with them, they each form new pairs: Barnabas with John Mark, and Paul with Silas (Acts 15:36-40). Even Paul's letters often are from Paul and someone else (1 Cor 1:1, 2 Cor 1:1, Phil 1:1, Col 1:1, Phm 1, or 1 and 2 Thes. from three). Mission is a community work, wherein each one must support the other.

The first reading speaks about the rejection of Prophet Amos, who was prophesying not for a pay, by the Israelites. It is in line with the spirit of mission instilled by Jesus who asks His disciples to depend on God alone. The second reading of today reveals the truth that our union with Christ itself is a mere grace from God, in whom alone we must depend. At the time of Jesus there were several other movements of renewal, for example, the Essens and the Pharisees. They also sought a new way of living in community and they had their own missionaries (Mt. 23:15). But these, when they went on mission, had prejudices. They took with them a haversack and money to take care of their own meals, because they did not trust the food that people would give them, which was not always ritually "pure."

They should go without taking anything. That meant that Jesus obliged them to trust in hospitality. There was a rule from the Jewish rabbis that you could not enter the temple area with a staff, shoes, or a moneybag, because you wanted to avoid even the appearance of being engaged in any other business than the service of the Lord. The disciples are engaged in such holy work (preaching the gospel and bringing God's healing) that they can't give the impression that they have any other motive. *He gave them authority even over the Evil spirits.*

Fr. Joseph Kakkary Ocd

16th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
19th JULY 2015

Jer 23:1-6-22; Eph 2:13-18; Mk 6:30-34.

Message for the Liturgy

Love your God and love you neighbour is the great commandment Jesus gave to his disciples. An authentic disciple of Jesus is always serving God and the neighbour, always working for the kingdom of God, and always making everything available for the people of God. They also need the strength to do it, and draw it up from the Lord. A true disciple, then, needs to reserve some time to be with the Lord of his/her life. Jesus himself showed this way to all disciples, giving them an example, to have time to pray always.



For the Homily

Today's liturgy invites us to experience the pastoral activities of Jesus and his disciples. As a good pastoral agent Jesus gives confidence, and he is sensitive to their needs and feelings. And comforts them that they may appreciate and sing with same tune as the psalmist: "The Lord is my Shepherd. There

is nothing I could miss."

The first reading presents an oracle by prophet Jeremiah, where he announces that God will take care of his flock. God complains that other shepherds have misbehaved and as a result they deserve punishment. Then the loving and caring God will take care of every lamb, and every new born. The message of hope is that God will bring a proper shepherd for his flock, from the house of David, and he will be called "The Lord Our Justice".

Second reading, from the letter of Saint Paul to Ephesians, illustrates the outcome of the good shepherd. Paul presents Christ as the good shepherd. Unlike the Old Testament shepherds Christ gives up his own life for the flock, and He succeeds in bringing the whole flock together and healthy in front of God, with

21st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
23rd AUGUST 2015

Josh 24:1-2, 15-18; Eph 5:21-32; Jn 6: 60-69

Message for the Liturgy



"When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This is a hard teaching; who can accept it?' Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him" What teaching was it that many of his disciples decided to turn back? Our theme today is about choices in life. How do we make our choices? Are our choices motivated by love?

For The Homily

The readings today are centered on human choices. Life most of the times demands us to make an enlighten choice and it may happen that both alternatives have negative consequences. As result, we opt for the middle course as a solution to our dilemma. With reason, this may appeal to the situation nonetheless, in matters of faith, there is no such a thing as the middle way; there is no application of the Greek philosophy of the middle ground. There is simply the right way or the wrong way. This entails that each one of us is endowed with freedom of choice. It is our choice to choose either the right or the wrong way; to choose either good or bad.

The Catholic Church is very much in favor of freedom of choice. Love is the root of all choices. In marriage, love should manifest to its fuller sense. The second reading has explained what a man who leaves his mother and father to live together with a woman as husband and wife should achieve. A marriage is the fruit of choice hence a man who becomes a husband should love his wife as he loves his body. For a husband to love his wife is to love himself for they are no longer two but one body (Eph. 5:28-29). In the same way wives should submit to their husbands. In fact, the second reading today is telling us about the mutual love which should exist in families.

The question then, is not whether we can freely choose but is about what we freely choose to do, first reading presents one of the greatest moments in Jewish history, the moment when Joshua had summoned the Israelites and put forward the option to choose, either to serve other gods, or to serve the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And Joshua himself (Josh 24: 15) declared that for him and his family had chosen to serve Yahweh. This choice demands nothing but one's self-conviction. It involves love. To have the choice of something is to

izing he is present in the Eucharist. Wise people say “*grass appears greener from afar*”. Be satisfied with what you have. Christ is present to give you everlasting life, advance and remain steadfast in in faith and all shall be well.

Second, he speaks of the food as *flesh and blood*. “**Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life** (verses 53-54). “*Flesh and blood*” connotes “the whole person”. By eating his body we receive Jesus Christ who offered his life for our redemption so we have to live a life as the redeemed people. If we understand that Jesus equates the Eucharistic with his total person, then we can also validly conclude that the Eucharistic bread is the body of Christ. It is the whole of Christ. In the Eucharist Jesus does not give us a thing but himself. He thus gives us the totality of his life and reveal to us the origin if his true love. From this we can therefore say that Jesus Christ is not merely present in the Blessed Sacrament, as if one could break the consecrated host and find Christ hidden inside it, rather the Blessed Sacrament is Jesus Christ himself. It is not so much a question of presence as that of identity.

As we receive communion, let us be conscious that we are receiving Jesus Christ himself and let us open our hearts to receive the new life that he brings to us. For he promised that “**Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me**” (verse 57). Indeed reaching at this juncture we can agree with Mahatma Gand by saying that there are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread”. Our role is to realize our hunger and invite Jesus to satisfy us. The divine precaution is do not labour for the food that which cannot give eternal life. As we labour for earthly goods never forget the bread of life for our spiritual welfare.

As for those who do not participate in this bread life may be regarded as dead and stinking of all sorts of evil things. For instance; unfaithfulness, drunkenness, absent for or coming later for prayers, being passive in the liturgy, idolatry , smoking marijuana, fighting for positions in the Church, helping oneself with Church’s offertory just to mention a few. The remedy our problems is to give time to Christ who comes to us in the Eucharist to give us everlasting life. He is ready to receive our petitions as long as we are able to cry to him in times of trials.

Br. Patrick Dalikeni OCD

the same Spirit. After learning from their master, in the Gospel we find the twelve coming back to Jesus happily after a tournament of teaching. Full of the Spirit and joy they demonstrated their faith by facts and words, and brought good news to the poor.



An authentic Christian Community ought to be open towards the outsiders, thus preaching the good news, preparing charitable acts, organizing a better world for all. Second it must focus on our own renewal, our own improvement in faith and love. Not only because we know we are not perfect, but also because we want to show with our own life that God and staying with God is actually the best we have. It is only after possessing that knowledge and experience, that we are able to share it and bring it to the others. Though the resting time is very little, Christ and the twelve proceed to preach and show the mercifulness of God to everybody. The Good Shepherd, then, Christ, is looking for us to work more and more, to enjoy with him but also to go ahead in every commitment until his love is well known and enjoyed throughout the whole world. Let us give thanks to the Lord who gives us such a nice example of working for others up to death, as we saw in the second reading. Let us give thanks to the Lord who wants us to rest with him, but also wants that "us" to embrace the whole humankind. Let us give thanks to the Lord who presents himself as the Good Shepherd for each one of us, for each and every human person, from here and there, from the past, the present or the future, for all.

Fr. Juan Aristondo, Ocd

17th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

26th JULY 2015

2 Kgs 4:42-44; Eph 4:1-6; Jn 6:1-15

Message of the Liturgy

“Believers by believing enable miracles to happen in their lives. Non-believers by not believing block their chances of experiencing a miracle”- Henry Ford.



For the Homily

In the first reading, we are confronted with the generosity of Baal-shalishah who gave prophet Elisha 20 loaves of barley. The prophet miraculously multiplied the loaves and a hundred men ate and had some left. The multiplication of the loaves is a crystal clear sign for Israel. Israelites had to always depend on Yahweh for their sustainability and not to pin their hopes on false gods. It is in this

spirit, that as Christians we are called to put all our undivided and unquestioned trust in God.

In the gospel, Jesus goes to the other side of the Sea of Galilee and went up the hills with his disciples; a retreat away from the crowds so necessary for a rest and to lead his disciples into deeper understanding of himself. But the crowds streamed towards the hills; they were so much attracted by His miraculous deeds at the same time they showed a deeper hunger and longing for healing. The record must be put straight: Jesus is not a miracle worker, these tendencies must be purified-there is no discipleship minus the cross; crowning Him a King is to miss the point. The miracle points to the Christ event since it is near the Passover

Looking at the multitude, Jesus turns to Phillip who had local knowledge of the area: *“how are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?”* Phillip shows naturalistic faith, he does not hope for miracles: *“two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little”*. Contrary, Andrew shows supernatural faith, he gives room for miracles at least for a start, *“there is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what are they among so many?”* The generosity of the boy must be highlighted, it would be possible that in a multitude like that some may have had some food but would not dare to share. The boy gave the little he had, *what a generous heart!* This reminds us of the generosity of Baal-shalishah in the first reading.

Jesus needs what we can bring him. We may not have much; but we ought to remember that little is always much in the hands of Christ. The little we have, the way we are God wants that. We do not need extra-ordinary things; God works with what we have and with what we are. If the lad and Baal-shalishah were selfish we would not be reporting of these miracles. The abject poverty, malnutrition and hunger engulfing and plaguing the world are a direct result of selfishness. There are enough resources for all people, but wealth is concentrated in few individuals who are either selfish and stingy or unwilling to share. *“Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more”* Lk 12:48b.
Fr. Sylvester Chasweka Dp

18th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
2nd AUGUST 2015

Ex 16:2-4, 12-15; Eph 4:17.20-24; Jn 6:24-35.

Message of the Liturgy

We are all looking for something to sustain and nourish our lives in one way or the other and mostly our problem is not that we are hungry rather it is the kind

And this is the invitation and the challenge of today's feast to us. If we want to share their glory, we must imitate Jesus and Mary in prayer, faithfulness, humility, trust, and obedience to God's will. We must extend our help to others without looking at their colour, religion, tribe, nationality or their gender looking at Jesus and Blessed Virgin Mary as our models. Mary's Assumption into heaven after completing her life while remaining sinless, reminds us that the goal of the Church is heaven. We pray that one day the whole Church may be in heaven pure and holy like Mary in heaven, *“in the Most Holy Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle.”* (*Redemptoris Mater* §47)

Br. Nester Mtiwa Ocd

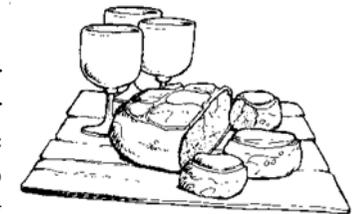
20th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
16th JULY 2015

Prov 9:1-6; Eph 5:15-20; Jn 6:51-58

Message of the Liturgy

“My Mother is my friend who shares with me her bread and all my hopelessness is cured and her company makes me secured”. With such a poetic piece we agree that food is very important to keep us going on this planet. Food aims at nourishing and if we dare not to eat we dig our own grave.

Jesus is our true bread and his blood our drink on our journey to the Father and thus it is a token for our eternal life. The Eucharist is means of encountering Christ.



For the Homily

In the 16th Century there was a big controversy about the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Above all the teaching of the Church remains intact as it holds and strongly believes that Jesus is fully present in the Eucharist. Today's Gospel affirms when Jesus declares that his flesh is real food and his blood real drink. In John's Gospel Jesus speaks in different terms of the food that he gives for the life of the world.

First, he speaks of it in terms of *bread and blood* **“Whoever eats of this bread will live forever,”** (verse 51b) **“for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink”** (verse 55). This gives us a challenge that if we want to live forever then the Eucharist is inevitable. The problem is that we miss a target, instead of realizing the greatness of Jesus Christ the Bread of life we tend to be too nomadic searching for the food out there that cannot even satisfy us. Once we do not receive the Bread of life our life becomes a misery and we become restless moving from one denomination to another with hope to find God seated without real-

For the Homily

Every feast of Mary is also a feast of Jesus because of the special privilege which our faith believes has been extended to Mary and was given to her by God precisely because of her relationship with her Son. She is the Queen of Heaven because she was destined from the beginning, in God's plan of salvation, to become the human mother of the Word made flesh (Jesus Christ).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC 965 reminds us that "the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death." The word taken up signifies a difference between the ascension of Jesus and the experience of Blessed Virgin Mary: Mary did not raise herself up or ascend but she was taken up by the power of her risen and gloried son.

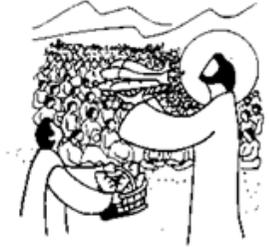
"The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a singular participation in her Son's resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians." In other words, where Jesus has gone, he has invited his Mother to follow after; and she is the "down payment" on the glory which God wants all of us to enjoy one day in eternal life with Jesus and Mary. St. Paul points out in the second reading that by the resurrection Jesus, has overcome sin and death, and has "given us the victory" over them. As a consequence, God has honored Mary by allowing, in her, "that which is mortal" to clothe itself "with immortality." Therefore, Mary's special gift of grace stands as a promise of our own future glory – she is, like her risen Son Jesus, the "first fruits of those who have fallen asleep."

According to Luke, Mary is "blessed" precisely because she is a model of our faith and a perfect disciple and the Mother of Jesus. This is asserted in the Elizabeth's exclamation, "blessed are you among all women" Lk 1:42, and in the woman's affirmation to Jesus: "Blessed is the womb that carried you and the breasts at which you nursed" Lk 11:27. True enough. But Jesus expands his mother's privilege to include all of us when he says: "Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it" Lk 11:28. It is Mary's obedience and ours that opens the way to eternal life with God. Mary's prayer in the fiat and magnificent shows her generous offering of her whole being in faith. It is the Blessed Virgin Mary who is being portrayed as the Queen of the cosmos through the powerful symbol of sun, moon and twelve stars. The Queen of the heaven is queen in her maternity but she is also the queen of earth and so after her child is born she lives in "retreat" in the desert. The role of the disciple is to give birth to the reign of God in His or her life

of bread we are looking for. It is not a surprise to see people in some parts of the world eating bread of violence, war, hostility, resentment, fear and isolation not to mention sorrow and guilt. That's why today's readings are aimed at repairing our faulty of understanding of the identity of Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth and the light.

For the Homily

After last week's miracle of the multiplication of bread we see the people looking for Christ not that they had understood the message put across by the Lord through that miracle but because they are looking forward to fill their bellies again. Christ is admonishing them not to look for physical bread alone but also to look for the bread which is imperishable. Here Christ is referring to himself as the bread from heaven which satisfies all the hunger. He is the one who is essential for the sustenance of our lives unlike the other bread which goes stale or moldy and harms our bodies sometimes. Christ feeds us inside with the love and hope, grace and forgiveness in short He is the true manna our bodies need to live as we were created. No wonder through our participation in the Eucharist we are commissioned to share with others the love we ourselves have received and experienced during our encounter with the Christ who is the bread of life. In Eucharist we receive the actual grace which gives us light to see what is evil and the strength to fight against it. Through the Holy Communion we are cleansed from the stains of our daily faults and sins which we commit due to our human nature. Just like the physical food which repairs what have been lost from the body, Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is the remedy for the spiritual infirmities of our everyday life.



A surprise is that the Lord Jesus Christ criticized them. They failed to understand the generosity and omnipotence of the Lord in the miracle of the multiplication of the bread and were only worried of missing their next meal. Let us not allow our appetites to rule us so as to avoid striving after things that do not last like power and authority which forces us to look for more yet we don't get satisfied like the people in today's gospel. It is our calling today to understand that Christ is the bread that is broken but not divided. He is the food that is eaten but never finished and those who commune with Him are consecrated and sanctified. Therefore, all who take part in the Eucharist need to show forth the fruits of their union with Christ by healing those who are wounded, bringing peace and completeness to the world just as our Lord Jesus Christ is the prince of peace.

Despite the weakness of the people in failing to recognize Christ as the messiah they used their efforts to come to Jesus and this is a call for all Christians to know Christ personally. We are called to know how Christ on the cross was a

substitute for our sins through which God erased our dark side and made us free and heirs to His throne. To know our changed life we need to listen to Christ. St Paul says “I know you had heard Him” which implies that we need to open our deaf ears and respond to his call to faith and repentance. To be taught about Christ propels the growth our knowledge in Him personally. Let us then know that we are not saved by philosophy of redemption but that everything in our faith rests or depends on the truth that is found in Christ who died and rose from dead. Our lives stems from the transformation our souls undergoes after being touched by Christ. Therefore, brothers and sisters let us not fail to understand the glory and grace of God like the Israelites in the wilderness. We need then to ask for good things from the Lord who is the source of all the things we boast of, the one who provides us without looking at our weaknesses. The proof of this is what St Paul says that Christ died for us while we were still sinful. Nevertheless, one thing is clear He died for us without us but He cannot save us without us.

Br. Paul Chitende Ocd

19th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
9th AUGUST 2015

1 Kgs 19:4 – 8; Eph 4: 30 – 5:2; Jn 6:41 – 51

Message of the Liturgy

Our God is loving Father; He takes care of his people. He is present in all the situations of our life experience. Let us put our total trust and confidence in him.



For the Homily

The first reading presents God who takes care for his people. After Elijah killed all the deceitful prophets, he was afraid and fled to the desert. When he was on the way, God sent an angel to give him food to strengthen him. This is an indication that God answered his prayer and he came to his rescue. Elijah was faithful and just before God. This is a reminder to us that God will never abandon us. It is an invitation to each one of us to be faithful in whatever we do,

whatever responsibility we have been entrusted with. When we do His will, God will give us the grace to fulfill it. God never sends us for a mission without giving us the grace to accomplish it. When we walk with him, he sees to it that all our needs are well taken care of. This does not happen automatically. It requires a deep faith. Therefore, we need to pray to God always that our faith may keep on growing. In this way, we will be able to realize his everlasting presence among us.

Some of us in our life, we have felt like Elijah, that it was better for us to die. In the society today, there are people who do not find meaning to their life. This is because of many challenges beyond their control. It might be because of poverty, lack of shelter, rejection by family members, friends and loved ones. It might be because of failure to perform well at school. It might be because of various abuses that they been through. In all these, we are invited to keep on trusting in God. Remember Elijah, when he realized that the situation was getting out of hand, he prayed to God and God came to his aid. We need to trust in God always, be it in time of joy or sorrow.

In all our experiences, God is always there for us.

In the second reading, St. Paul is teaching us that God will send his Holy Spirit to free us from all our sufferings. Despite the bad things that people have done to us, we must still pray for them. Jesus tells us that we should love our enemies and be ready to forgive. When we forgive does not mean we forget. Thus the human part of us, but still we can forgive and this is our Christian calling.

In the Gospel, Jesus is inviting us to believe in Him so that we may have eternal life. He is the bread from heaven that satisfy our spiritual hunger. When our bodies are tormented, should cling to Jesus who became human like us except sin and he will save us. Therefore, belief in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist is not an option, but an obligation because this is what Jesus is teaching us. He repeatedly said that the bread he will give for the life of the world is his flesh, meaning his very life. Consequently, we need to ask for the grace that we may always hunger for his body and blood offered during the Eucharistic celebration. It is the bread for our spiritual journey. Through it, we get the strength to face the changes that we meet in life.

Br. Emmanuel Saopa Sm.

THE ASSUMPTION OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
15th AUGUST 2015

Rev 11:19, 12:1-6, 10; 1Cor 15: 20-29; Lk 1: 39-56

Message of the Liturgy

Today, we are celebrating one of the dogmas of the Church “The Assumption of Mary” which state that when her earthly life was finished, she was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven. Therefore the Blessed Virgin Mary is in heaven in a special and unique way. This article of faith was defined by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

