

DAYS '97

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James H. Kurt

These daily reflections began in February of 1996 (following completion of an autobiography) and are particularly intended to coincide with Pope John Paul II's declaration of these years as ones of preparation for the Jubilee of 2000. The reflections contained herein are for 1997 - the Year of Jesus.

The entries are part diary and part scriptural exegesis. They refer to the liturgical readings of the Catholic Mass (as indicated at the top of each page) and are prayerfully offered as a sign of integration of the Word in an individual life.

Jesus be with you every day of your life.

December 1 (1996) (Is.63:16-17,19,64:2-7;
Ps.80:2-3,15-16,18-19; 1Cor.1:3-9; Mk.13:33-37)

Advent begins. And we await the birth of Jesus,
the birth of the Child, the birth of new life in
our hearts. And now His second coming is imminent.

And as we wait, we pray the Lord mold our lives as the
potter molds clay. We pray we shall be compliant with
His Hand, that our souls shall be so supple to His touch.
For the Spirit would gift us as needed and remain with us
till the end if we keep awake in prayer.

Three pregnant women in presence and prayer; friend with
a hat: "I'm a new Daddy"; on the phone with an associate,
his "little one" in the background... new life is upon
us. Another couple tries to conceive, and is the Lord
setting an alarm for myself?

Come, Lord Jesus, be born in our hearts;
inspire us each day with new life.
May we be awake and awaiting your coming,
that we might adhere to the Spirit's guidance.

Take our lives from beginning to end.

(Note: Decided as writing this to begin new year of
Days with new church year (rather than calendar
year). So here is first entry (a new birth).)

December 2 (Is.2:1-5; Ps.122:1-9; Mt.8:5-11)

The many nations all stream to the house of the Lord,
to the holy mountain which draws them, towering above
all peoples.

And so is the Catholic Church comprised of all nations;
and so are all peoples drawn to Jesus. I thank God that
He has instilled such faith in the Gentile race. For I
am of such stock and live only by His promise.

And Christians of several nations I meet today in my
work, in my day. And all are saved by His promise.
And He is faithful.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof,
and yet I receive you today;
I accept your gift - your Word, your bread.

December 3 (Is.11:1-10; Ps.72:1,7-8,12-13,17; Lk.10:21-24)

Jesus is the promised shoot of Jesse. It is on the mountain that is He where we take repose. There peace reigns. There alone justice showers down upon all creation. With Him is endless joy.

Our eyes are open now and we see. Our hearts are filled to overflowing. Though we seem to forget at times and may not always be conscious of the gift of life, of the Spirit, within us - yet He is here. He smiles down upon us. His angels do guard us. His Spirit goes forth and fills the earth with knowledge of His glory.

"Have a good teaching day," a brother said to me this morning. May I teach you that if you sit in silence and wait, Jesus will be with you; His Spirit will be upon you. And you, too, will see the kingdom coming, not with human eyes of anxious fiction, but with the eyes of a blessed child of God.

His kingdom is in our midst,
and comes when we do not expect it.

O Lord, open my eyes to see your blessed presence amongst us.
May my heart be set on your peaceful kingdom.
May we rejoice with you in the Holy Spirit,
and live eternally in the Father's love.

December 4 (Is.25:6-10; Ps.23:1-6; Mt.15:29-37)

The Lord shall remove the veil that covers our minds
in darkness. We shall see.

Inexplicable sense of death this morning in church.
Though not afraid, I felt it near; I was not sad,
for I felt the Lord's hand there. The awareness was
confirmed in reading the psalm (23), and especially
when the priest remarked that the first reading is
often used at funerals. (I drove to work carefully.)

At work, I quite forgot all about this idea, and driving
home remarked to myself that it was quite gone. However,
shortly after entering the house I received a phone call
which would become a lengthy criticism of my lecturing
and prayer group teaching/readings. This cut me to the
quick, and herein was death to self.

The bread of life awaits us if we accept the cross.
The wisdom and grace and healing of Christ is near
to all who call upon Him and believe.

O Lord, your ways are marvelous to behold.
Teach us your sacrificial love
which leads to the kingdom.

Feed me, Lord, with your bread.

(Note: It is a day of bread fast.
I receive a gift of bakery bread.
One close friend remarks, "Bread of life"
(our soup kitchen's name);
another sings the "We Are The World" charity song.)

December 5 (Is.26:1-6; Ps.118:1,8-9,19-21,25-27;
Mt.7:21,24-27)

Trust in the Lord. Entrust all to His care.
Speak nothing of yourself. Speak for God,
and you shall be blessed - your house will be on solid rock.

If in the house of the Lord we dwell, we cannot be moved.
If His protection we possess, what can harm us?

I seek His blessed guidance this day. On my knees I beg
His hand upon me. What steps shall I take? What words
shall I say? Where would He have me be? (And again I am
homesick, to be a child of light, to be an artist for Christ -
to swim in His sacred pool.)

Again I can but say, Lord,
"Let thy will be done in my life."
Make my soul so pliant to your Spirit,
that I shall be one with you.

Make me strong in you alone.

December 6 (Is.29:17-24; Ps.27:1,4,13-14; Mt.9:27-31)

Feast of St. Nicholas. (Merry Christmas to our Russian brothers!) And driving rain during my walk to church becomes a beautiful snowfall as I leave.

And tonight I speak on the birth of Christ -
Silent Night.

Jesus asks us all if we believe in Him; do we know who He is and the power He holds? Do you realize He is the Son of God, the Messiah prophesied, the fulfillment of the Scriptures? Do we believe He has walked amongst us, that He is with us still, that we are His children? If we do, we shall be healed; all indeed will be ours.

O Lord, may we possess your vision;
may the vision of heaven always be with us.
Cast out all darkness from our presence.
We believe in you.

December 7 (Is.30:19-21,23-26; Ps.147:1-6,Is.30:18;
Mt.9:35-10:1,6-8)

Several friends receive blows from the Lord and are in and out of hospitals... but the Lord will bind up and heal what He has broken. I pray they but turn to Him.

It is a blessing to receive affliction, chastisement, from the Lord. By it He calls us to Him, out of the error of our ways - from turning to the right or the left, He leads us straight. If we but turn to Him, healing will be ours.

And what is more, we are called to go out and to heal others - to call them to the Lord. We must be His laborers in the field if there is to be abundant fruit. "The reign of God is near."

O Lord, grant me the strength of conviction
both to turn from sin myself
and to whisper in others' ears
of your salvation.

May we see your healing graces flow forth.
Amen.

(I cry particularly over the sin of abortion today.)

December 8 (Is.40:1-5,9-11; Ps.85:9-14; 2Pt.3:8-14;
Mk.1:1-8)

Make straight the way of the Lord! The prophet cries out.
The end is near; your path must be straight.

But only with patience do we walk the road to God.
Soon Christ will be fully known.

Weeding out sin in my life, I find an answer to my
difficulties, a source of my ineptitude. An elderly
woman at the nursing home we visit today says - and I
take it with meaning, not distraction - "Sometimes Mary
doesn't come." For she recognizes the Mary in my
partner, and sees how I am lacking.

Today we do not celebrate the feast of the Immaculate
Conception - tomorrow... and perhaps tomorrow my
relationship with the Blessed Mother will improve.

O Lord, fill in my valleys of ignorance;
tear down my mountains of vanity and pride.

May I walk the straight path to you in peace.

December 9 (Gn.3:9-15,20; Ps.98:1-4; Eph.1:3-6,11-12;
Lk.1:26-38)

Celebrated feast of Immaculate Conception.

I am naked, I know, but Christ is my hope. And Mary is His blessed instrument, His mother, and the mother of all. All are one in Christ, and all are one through Mary.

I can't say I feel any closer to Mary today; I can't say I am any further from sin. Though the Lord may be watching over, though He seems to be protecting me, keeping me from harm... I find not a revelation. But perhaps the Lord works day to day in ways we cannot see.

To fathom the mystery of the virgin birth is no simple affair. And understanding of Mary yet is not fully with me. But may it become more real.

Flesh of Christ, be with us.
Leave us not naked in this world.
Wrap us in swaddling clothes
and hold us up to thy breast.

December 10 (Is.40:1-11; Ps.96:1-3,10-13,Is.40:10;
Mt.18:12-14)

The Lord seeks out the lost sheep, and it occurs to me that we must do the same.

The Lord opens His arms to all the world; He embraces all men, treating them all as His own. Can we love so? Can we take in even the least and most foreign as part of ourselves? (None are lost to the Lord.)

His kingdom is coming; it is upon us. The thought can certainly be overwhelming. Preparation must necessarily be made, for the time is short. But the hope and joy of the Lord sustains us, it carries us through this day - it brings us closer to His embrace.

And in the arms of the Shepherd we find protection - we all find a home.

The Lord's promise is glorious;
His love is all-encompassing.
And though we pass like the grass of the field,
in His Word we shall live forever.

(The Lord has taken this lost sheep into His arms;
may He find all those who are straying.)

December 11 (Is.40:25-31; Ps.103:1-4,8,10; Mt.11:28-30)

We rest in the hands of the Lord, who sits enthroned
above creation and who shows great mercy and love.

Great is our God, and our hearts should be set on Him;
if the Lord is on our side, who can be against us -
for He Himself has created all things. (Consider this.)
And He that is great is just as kind and merciful.

How wonderful is the Lord's forgiveness! How wonderful
is the rest He gives us from our sins. For He could
condemn us daily but does not repay us according to
our deeds. And today the Lord maintains my strength,
though I am a poor sinner.

While all others fall and are afflicted,
your children you sustain, Lord -
because they but call to you.

Praise you, Lord, for your mercy on those who believe.

December 12 (Zec.2:14-17; Lk.1:46-55; Lk.1:39-47)

Reading for the day speaks of God's prophets hewing down mountains; the gospel speaks of the greatest prophet, the hailer of the straight way - John the Baptist. And tonight on television I hear of Teddy Roosevelt and his aggressive breaking of monopolies and unprecedented support for the poor coal miners.

The above readings are preempted for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, but there, too, we hear in Mary's song that the mighty shall be removed from their thrones and the lowly raised up. She who was lowly has become the Mother of the Savior.

And there is joy this day, too, though darkness and rain are all about. For Christ comes into a world of darkness and our hearts leap at His presence, and so we speak His holy name.

Come, O Lord, give us a voice to proclaim
your name with boldness,
to celebrate in the joy of your presence.

Let the darkness of despair never overtake us.

December 13 (Is.48:17-19; Ps.1-4,6,Jn.8:12; Mt.11:16-19)

We cannot determine what God will do: He will do what He will do. Nothing is in our hands; all is in His. We must accept and follow the ways of the Lord, we must live by His commands, if we are to find our happiness. For He is all-wise and all-loving; we are in the Potter's hands.

And so I pray at this time of my life, in this Advent Season, a time which seems crucial to the direction I will follow, that the Lord clearly make His will known to me.

Today I discuss with a friend both marriage and vocation - committing oneself to another and committing oneself to God. Would I get married? Should I be married? What is God's will? Should I commit myself to teaching, or would that be ignorance of another call - the call of the artist (the musician, the writer)? Has God given me a gift which I keep in a box? And what of vows to the Lord?

Lord, you pipe to me,
and let me dance according to your call.

December 14 (Sir.48:1-4,9-11; Ps.80:2-4,15-16,18-19;
Mt.17:10-13)

Elijah has come, and the path has been laid - for Jesus has walked upon it. And we are all called to walk in the way of Christ.

Carrying His cross is not easy for a Bengali man with seven sons (one of whom is a former student of mine), whose young wife's memorial Mass I attend today (presided over by her oldest son). But we all must suffer.

I cry at my own sister's grave today, but I remember, and I know, the Lord turns all sorrow into joy: when the sorrow's so deep, we feel nothing but joy.

The way of the cross is not easy, but it is redeeming.

Watch over us and protect us, Lord.
May we see your face before we die.
And may we die in you,
that your glory will be ours.

(We are called to be humble servants in this world,
that we might reign with Him in the next.)

December 15 (Is.61:1-2,10-11; Lk.1:46-50,53-54;
1Thes.5:16-24; Jn.1:6-8,19-28)

All souls anointed by the Spirit of the Lord proclaim His glory, like Isaiah, and Mary, and John the Baptist. All are in service of Him who sent them.

The captives are set free by the hearing of the Word, and the speakers themselves are freed by the adherence to their call. And all are free in His kingdom.

So rejoice in the Lord; sing His praises.
Call upon His Name and you shall be free.

Had been anxious most of the day until I went to church to practice Christmas songs for Christmas Day Mass and to have our prayer meeting.

O Lord, may all souls proclaim your glory,
that your Word might go forth to the ends of the earth,
that your light might fill the world.

December 16 (Nm.24:2-7,15-17; Ps.25:4-9; Mt.21:23-27)

The Pharisees' eyes were covered; they could not see who stood before them, nor could they find faith.

It took but a donkey to speak to Balaam the gold seeker to open his eyes, but they who were of those whom he saw - the peaceful kingdom of holy Israelites - could not see, though He who was coming was there.

May we not be so blind in seeing your will for our lives,
O Lord;
may the signs you set before us be clear to our vision.

And may we step forth in love of you.

December 17 (Gn.49:2,8-10; Ps.72:1-4,7-8,17; Mt.1:1-17)

Once again I read the wrong readings at Mass - readings for the day rather than special ones for week before Christmas. The theme of penitence that leads to renewal seemed appropriate to me, after having made a special confession this morning, but the readings are those which trace the kingship of Christ.

Jesus is truly the Messiah, prophesied in Scripture and born in human generation in the fullness of time. He rules over all.

And He is most provident today, as in preparing for the Christmas soup kitchen I pray all be blessed by Him... then find several donations and service volunteers throughout the day. First thing this morning (on way to church), a friend tells me members of the choir will be there; at Food Bank, shopping for pantry food, partner offers finances for toys we find on sale there, and says others will donate more; fire captain informs parish and myself of toys available, and speaks of a personal contribution... it is wonderful to watch the Lord answer a prayer.

Lord Jesus, you sit enthroned above all,
and in righteousness you rule;
may your justice last eternally in our lives.

Praise you, Lord!

December 18

(Jer.23:5-8; Ps.72:1-2,12-13,18-19;
Mt.1:18-24)

God is with us. He has been born in our midst.
He walks in our presence.

Tonight found myself in a most unusual situation:
reading my religious poetry in a bar/restaurant.
Amongst the usual fare at these events, there I stood
speaking of Jesus (and proclaiming against abortion).
At the door a man said this took guts, and I guess
it's true.

I told myself Jesus spoke to all, and, surprisingly,
I found belief in this idea. (The fact that the smoke
was minimal helped.) Whether or not I should return
I cannot say - let it be in the Lord's hands.

O Lord, you send us forth as lambs in the midst of wolves -
guard and guide us always.
Let word of you reach all dark corners
of the universe.

Bring home your exiles.

December 19

(Jgs.13:2-7,24-25; Ps.71:3-6,8,16-17; Lk.1:5-25)

We hear today of two of the strongest men of God, both called from before birth. (Confirmation of my speaking out against abortion last night.)

It is strength I pray for this morning as I wake, knowing the demanding schedule I had ahead of me - from church to class to soup kitchen shopping to laundry to a play to proofreading... and all the details between. Though I nearly broke in the middle of the day, the Lord did hear my prayer, and all is done. (Could the spinach have helped, too?)

Contemplating the callings of these two great men, Samson and John the Baptist - how the Spirit of the Lord began to move in Samson, to save the Israelites from the Philistines; and how John makes ready the path of Christ - I understand more clearly the promise that is fulfilled in Jesus. And I rejoice in His presence.

Thank you, Lord, for the strength which comes from you. Sustain us in this life and bring us to the eternal life. We dedicate ourselves to you.

December 20 (Is.7:10-14,8:10; Ps.24:1-7; Lk.1:26-38)

She it is who may stand in the presence of the Lord:
Mary, the handmaiden of the Lord.

A virgin conceives and gives birth;
from such purity is born the Light.

And so with us is Jesus, even in this place;
even into this world of sin has come the presence of God.

And who shall come unto Him? Who shall know His calling?
They indeed who reflect such purity.

O Lord, when shall I be so pure?
When will I be free of sin?
How long, O Lord, how long?

Bring your presence even now into my life.
You are the gift I seek.

December 21 (Sg.2:8-14; Ps.33:1-3,11-12,20-21; Lk.1:39-45)

"He shines discreetly through the blinds..."

He smiles upon us, our lover, our song.
He watches over us with great care and calls us unto Him.
Though darkness is all about, the light of the Lord
shines through. And so we leap in joy.

Christmas soup kitchen... Threatened fights and grateful
souls. Children with presents and greedy individuals.
Selfless service and selfish leanings. But the Lord
looks through the window and engenders love.

The light is come into the darkness of this world,
and is set to dispel all evil. Let us celebrate
the Lord's grace and mercy, the blessing that He is.

O Lord, make us branches of your holy vine,
obedient to your call to love.
Forgive our trespasses, our falling short,
and draw us unto thee.

(P.S. In Confession this morning, priest spoke of our
fallen nature and how we are not sinless as Mary,
that even the saints struggled with the darkness
of this world.)

December 22

(2Sm.7:1-5,8-11,16; Ps.89:2-5,27,29;
Rom.16:25-27; Lk.1:26-38)

What is of greater importance, the house we build for God or the house God builds for us? The church in which our God favors us to dwell, the brick and mortar of our human toil - or the home the Lord makes for us in His heavenly kingdom?

The old covenant was etched in stone and, so, significant. But the new covenant is etched in the flesh of Jesus Christ and written upon our hearts and, so, transcendent.

And so this world which passes means little when seen in the light of God's eternal presence.

Elizabeth conceives a son in her old age - the law has a final holy offspring. But the old law will be silenced, Zechariah will be mute, and his son will cry out the way of the new covenant: A child is born of a virgin (a young virgin untouched by the world), existent before the law and superseding all laws, all earthly power - a child of God Himself and of His grace.

Heaven awaits us. The angels sing in peace eternal. Christ is born unto us.

O Lord, may we never fear the passing of this world we make;

may we accept the place you provide.

(In heaven, I know, the Lord will reign -
but has He here vows for me to take?)

December 23

(Mal.3:1-4,23-24; Ps.25:4-5,8-10,14,Lk.21:28;
Lk.1:57-66)

Again, the end of the old testament (even literally, Malachi being the final book) and the beginning of the new; and John the Baptist signals this turn: grace is come.

And the Lord sits refining our lives, preparing us for the kingdom, His hands molding us into light. And I feel those hands at work in my own life today as He teaches me to depend on Him for my daily bread.

Had been struggling to combat onset of illness the past couple of days by human means - eating, resting, etc. This morning in prayer the Lord suggests a bread fast to me. The idea would seem unreasonable, but I knew it was right. And I found strength and the accomplishment of the Lord's work (principally making final corrections and copying for registration *Days*).

The Lord also confirmed for me the importance of my religious practices in the process of purgation. I fasted today, knowing I shall not Wednesday (Christmas); and, also, my illness began to arise after I'd broken my fast Friday night (at a prayer meeting gathering). Our humble offerings are significant and are well-accepted by the Lord.

O Lord, hold me in your hands of light
and prepare me for your coming.

Help me to trust in and work with you.

December 24

(2Sm.7:1-5,8-12,14,16; Ps.89:2-5,27,29;
Lk.1:67-69)

There is a place for us. The Lord dwells in neither tents nor houses but is the builder of all dwellings, and He has made a home for us in Christ - He is our Church.

And He comes. Give glory to God.

Christmas Eve and I spend it with friends who make a place for me. The conversation turns to daily Mass, and I am surprised to learn of friends' attendance there. I speak well of the privilege of receiving Christ.

O Lord, may we enter the home you make for us;
may we appreciate your gift.
Root all that keeps us from you out of our lives,
that we might stand in your sublime beneficence.

(Note: Fasted this morning to make up for Friday night,
and healing is complete.)

December 25

(Is.52:7-10; Ps.98:1-6; Heb.1:1-6;
Jn.1:1-18)

Let us become children of God, brothers to the only Son.

Rejoice, for this day our Savior is born; this day the good news of peace has reached our ears, spoken by the very mouth of God. And we are one in Him, with Him.

Another blessed day with family. (I do so love to speak about Jesus.) And again a seeing of prayers being answered.

Praise the Lord, for He is - and He is good.

O Lord, let your peace be with us;
let your blessings be near us.
Gift us in your wondrous ways.

Merry Christmas!

December 26

(Acts 6:8-10,7:54-59; Ps.31:3-4,6-8,17,21;
Mt.10:17-22)

It is the Christian's call to die.
For this is not our home.

And not only to die, but to forgive those who kill us -
to love them.

St. Stephen's love called to the Jews, spoke their hearts
- but they refused to listen. (Though later, the great
apostle would come to hear and see.) The cross Stephen
bore led to the vision he had: Jesus comes to those who
serve Him.

(A deacon is neither priest nor layman;
he is but to serve both.)

The darkness that is this day take from us, O Lord.
The violence that pervades wash away.
With hearts set on you we shall conquer;
light comes to those who die in Christ.

December 27 (1Jn.1:1-14; Ps.97:1-2,5-6,11-12; Jn.20:2-8)

What has been seen has been professed,
and so we believe.

John saw and believed. Peter entered into the truth.
All saw and felt and heard - the apostles have known.
He is life.

Why should there be any difficulty in believing?
Why is there doubt?
Why might we sooner believe a lie?

And if I believe, why should I hesitate in giving
my whole life to Christ?

To the end, Lord.
To the end let me remain with thee.
Completely. Completely let me give myself to you.
Let your truth overtake me.

December 28

(1Jn.1:5-2:2; Ps.124:2-5,7-8; Mt.2:13-18)

There is no sadder feast day than this (the Holy Innocents); there could not be. And this morning, after receiving Jesus in the Eucharist at Mass, and confessing my sins, and kneeling before Him in the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament (in a Holy Hour dedicated to remembrance of the unborn) - no more deeply could I feel the pain. And in my simple praying of the rosary, no closer could God and Mary be to me... and I believed we could see the end of the sin of abortion. (I did, Lord.)

And yet my soul escapes like a bird from the snares of the hunter - the devil holds no sway - and a joy would later fill me. The children escape, and we escape by Jesus. We escape to heaven.

And art becomes a theme:

"What is art?" some say. I say, "What is a child?"
And the games of a child, of what use are they?
What purpose do they serve?

For an adult, such is art.

The heart of a child in all is sated by art.

And so, I think, is God by His children.

For there is no use to art, but this - to be human.

No art - no life.

O Lord, may we overcome the greatest work of the devil
by your presence and joy.

(I cast thee out, Satan, by the Name of Jesus.)

Save your children, Lord.

December 29

(Sir.3:2-6,12-14; Ps.128:1-5; Col.3:12-21;
Lk.2:22-40)

Feast of the Holy Family and wholesomeness is upon me.

We hold hands and pray the "Our Father" in church
this morning - we are all God's children. At Mass
and at prayer meeting I pray only the best, in God's
holy light, for all people.

And thoughts of respecting and honoring my own mother
and father bring a sense of rightness to my life.
There is an order in life, and following it invites
God's blessings.

O Lord, bless all families;
make them whole, keep them healthy.
Cleanse me in your wholesome light
and let me follow your righteous path.

December 30 (1Jn.2:12-17; Ps.96:7-11; Lk.2:36-40)

The lust of the world is passing away from my life;
I avert my eyes from destruction.

I hesitate to say because it has seemed so before,
but now I believe I have intercession from heaven -
by the grace of God I am being made pure of sexual sin.
Here at the end of the year the Pope has proclaimed
for Penance, I believe purity has found me.
And I find myself being born again.

On Christmas Day (and we are still in the Octave of
Christmas), I was visited by a greeting most similar
to that of the angel boy twelve years ago - the day
after crying most of the night (re my sister), he
stepped in my path as I began jogging in the park
and said, "Good morning!" (the morning I found my cat).
And on Christmas morning, returning from early prayer
at church, a boy (a little older and wearing a San Jose
Sharks hat), again addressing me directly, says, "Merry
Christmas!" I turn around soon after, and again I see
no one (though he may have rushed into a nearby store).

Is it the sign it seems, Lord?
Have you given me my Christmas present?
Am I pure once more?

By your grace, let it be so.
And let me grow in you.

(And I am jogging again, and hearing songs
I heard ten years ago - and I am filled with joy...
I turn away from the world and the Lord welcomes me.)

December 31 (1Jn.2:18-21; Ps.96:1-2,11-13; Jn.1:1-18)

Someone invites me to a party.
After I decline, he asks
if I will be home, alone...

A monk is never really alone.

The Word has come into the world,
the light that enlightens all people -
Jesus is here, always.

(And you never know how many angels
or saints
might come around...)

I find a certain joy in the radio and television,
but mostly in what John
in his divine poetry describes.

God is.

Mercy of the Lord and presence of His majesty,
be always with me.
Walk amongst us in truth, Dear Jesus.

January 1, 1997

(Nm.6:22-27; Ps.67:2-3,5-6,8;
Gal.4:4-7; Lk.2:16-21)

First day of this new year - 1997: the year of Jesus.
May God indeed bless us and shine the light of His face
upon us.

And God has blessed us through Mary, Mother of God,
who has brought Jesus into the world to make us all
adopted sons of the Father. And so we celebrate truly.
That which made the shepherds quake astounds all who
are born of the Spirit - that unto us a child is born
of a virgin.

God has blessed and honored Mary above all women.
Let us honor our Mother, too. And may her Son reign
in our lives this day and this year.

Lord God, thank you for all your gracious blessings.
Please continue to inspire me to do your work and your will.
Take my life, and bless this new year.
Make us abundantly fruitful in Jesus the Son,
and bring us to the eternal fruits of heaven.

January 2 (1Jn.2:22-28; Ps.98:1-4; Jn.1:19-28)

Jesus is the Christ.

Believe in Him. Abide in Him. Proclaim His Name.
And the Father will be with you.

None other is there, and no other way to follow.
But to proclaim Jesus as Savior.

Here is the Messiah who is to come; bow down before Him
and give Him due praise.

He will lead and guide you. He will baptize you
in the Holy Spirit and make you a son of God.
There is no confusion, no question, in Him.

The path the Lord sets is so very straight -
listen not to any other way.

Teach us, Lord, with your tongue of truth,
your word of glory.
Lead us, Lord, along right paths to you.

January 3 (1Jn.2:29-3:6; Ps.98:1,3-6; Jn.1:29-34)

How shall we see Him - He who holds the world
in His hands? How shall we become as He is?

The world is God's cradle; He comes as a baby to rest
here, and takes repose now in the Blessed Sacrament.
He is never far from us, though our eyes may not see.

I purify myself for the coming of Christ - I seek
wholesomeness. I wish to be as a child, a child of God.
And so I go to Confession and praise Him for His mercy
and seek His protection. And so as I pass my childhood
house, I could cry.

Return to us, O Lord.
Let us be one with you - let us live in you.
Keep us pure for that day.

January 4 (1Jn.3:7-10; Ps.98:1,7-9; Jn.1:35-42)

'Tis the night before Epiphany, and on the phone I speak with my cousin - the television king (producer). And on the television I watch the wise man from the East on *Kung Fu*. And I also speak with the mother of a friend who is uncomfortable in her new, rich parish - whose husband has given gifts to the church.

(At the soup kitchen several people bring gifts of clothes and food, and we speak of a sizeable contribution by the boss of one parishioner.)

It is the memorial of Mother Seton, to whom I look for wisdom and discernment, and in that spirit I pray the works of the rich and powerful will be good works of God and not the devil. I pray that the wisdom of the men of the East will be made complete in the flesh of Christ - may they come to His presence.

May we all follow Jesus to where He dwells and accept our calls to kingship with Him in heaven. (There is not much time, for night draws on... but He is with us.)

Be with us, Lord;
let us stay with you the night,
till morning comes and we see your light.

January 5

(Is.60:1-6; Ps.72:1-2,7-8,10-13;
Eph.3:2-3,5-6; Mt.2:1-12)

The Epiphany, and we three Eucharistic ministers bring the greatest gift of all - the Lord Himself - to those incapacitated in the local nursing home. (And there are three knives for the soup kitchen.)

This day the Lord's light shines to lead all those who seek Him, who seek truth. And the world bows before Him - and those of the world have no power over Him.

Today my car is stolen - if the Lord would have it... but I am not angry. Its significance I cannot yet say for certain, but I had been considering taking monastic vows - perhaps the Lord is seeing if I will give up all for Him. (Does He want me to, or does He want me to be satisfied as I am and not overreach myself?)

We give all to thee, Lord -
as long as your will is done.
Give us your light to guide us.

January 6

(1Jn.3:22-4:6; Ps.2:7-8,10-11;
Mt.4:12-17,23-25)

'Little Christmas' a Spanish friend calls it -
the actual date of the Epiphany
(twelve days after Christmas).

But today's readings are on the discernment of spirits,
of truth, and the Spirit of God that heals.

And a friend struggles with a problem, seeking
counseling, seeking help, from various and sundry sources
- but of one psychologist he says, "She's definitely
Christian," and perhaps that is most important.

And I myself seek an answer to the question posed
yesterday, though still unresolved. There is much I can
do in service as deacon in a parish. (Even this morning -
there is no priest for Mass, and I am the one who must
search him out... at the door, seeking a phone...) This
has been a large part of my character. But I feel myself
able to renounce the world - in poverty, chastity, and
obedience - and I think that if I could, perhaps I should.

O Lord, give direction to your children.
Help us discern the way you would lead us.
Come to us and heal us, Lord.
(Thank you, that I am not anxious.)

January 7 (1Jn.4:7-10; Ps.72:1-4,7-8,11; Mt.6:34-44)

Did not know God very well today: did not love well.
Anxiety and confusion and a lack of kindness instead.

Uncertainty about calling, preoccupation with worldly
difficulties... does not lead to loving others.

Shared myself very little, shared my talents less -
did not distribute the bread of life.

Forgive me, Lord, my hesitancy.
Forgive my distraction.
Lead me unto love alone,
and hands for service of you.

January 8 (1Jn.4:11-18; Ps.72:1-2,10,12-13; Mk.6:45-52)

I have not reached perfection in love.

Speaking last night to Benedictine monk, he mentioned that hospitality was very important in their community. Then this morning in his homily, the priest mentioned Benedict's rule about welcoming and loving all - seeing Christ in everyone. This is precisely the kindness I lacked yesterday...

The anxiety which remains is a fear, a fear which John, in his continuing sermon on love, tells us is overcome by love.

I am more hospitable today, and even have a rare visitor - though the winds of confusion did blow this morning... Questions remain, but I am calmer now. May Christ stay in my boat.

Lord, let me discern your calling.
May my mind not be closed to your good word.
Let us love and be of love.

January 9

(1Jn.4:19-5:4; Ps.72:1-2,11,14-15,17;
Lk.4:14-22)

It is not hard to love. Jesus has done it.
In His human life He lived the love of God,
humbly and completely.

Jesus became man that we might become God.
One with God He is and so could we be,
for God has walked amongst and is one with us
from the beginning.

Come and love the Lord and all He does.
In all things God works.

Let us live so that all is for good
because all is of you, Lord.

Let us live in your love.

January 10 (1Jn.5:5-13; Ps.147:12-15,19-20; Lk.5:12-16)

We have eternal life! Jesus is alive.

Bow with your face to the ground and beg the Lord
that He might show you the eternal life which you have.

What a wonder it is to know we have eternal life,
to believe in Christ the Lord. At the Name of Jesus
all *must* bow, because of such glory. His grace is
overwhelming. And His call to live with Him and be
one with the Father is beyond human understanding.
(We stutter in His presence.)

O Lord, may your presence be known to us.
In all things your life exists,
yet we are so often blind and outcast...

Make us whole and alive.

January 11 (1Jn.5:14-21; Ps.149:1-6,9; Jn.3:22-30)

Jesus is Lord. He is the Word; He is life.
Eternal life is in the person of Jesus Christ.

And like John the Baptist, we hail Jesus the Christ;
standing by, we rejoice at the sound of His voice.

Listening for His voice today, awaiting His call,
discerning His word... in Holy Hour for life, in
reading rule of St. Benedict, in serving at the
soup kitchen, and in consideration of publication -
His presence is overwhelming, but the sin in ourselves
and in the world can make it difficult to find.

I pray the sin that clouds our minds not be mortal,
that we be washed clean and made of light.

And as we decrease, as we lay down our lives, as we
die to self - we are able to intercede for others.
(Even so do I know this, first thing this morning
before the Blessed Sacrament.)

O Lord, come and wash us clean.
Take all that is of the world from us,
that we might live your life.

January 12

(Is.42:1-4,6-7; Ps.29:1-4,9-10;
Acts 10:34-38; Mk.1:7-11)

The Baptism of the Lord. The end of the Christmas Season and the beginning of Jesus' preaching (and healing).

Jesus is baptized not to be cleansed of sins (He had none), but that He might cleanse the water wherein we have all been made clean. (Just as Jesus came not to be served, not for any gain of His own - for He has nothing to gain - but to serve, but to bring gain for others by releasing them from darkness.)

Here is the One prophesied. Now is the day acceptable to the Lord. Let healing go forth from His presence. Let the Spirit fall upon all men like a dove.

And tonight we pray for healing, we pray for release from captivity which all ailments bring.

Set our feet at liberty, Lord;
let us walk with you.
Cleanse us in the water you made pure,
and in your blood and Spirit.

January 13 (Heb.1:1-6; Ps.97:1-2,6-7,9; Mk.1:14-20)

The kingdom is nigh - repent and believe.

First week of Ordinary Time and begins with the calling of the apostles. The Word will go forth... And we are also reminded that this is the year of Jesus, the true reflection of the Father - the only Son.

Reading St. Hilary today (in Office of Readings), I am reminded of my own writing, *The Four Corners of the Universe*, in its call for the wisdom of the Lord to guide its creation. And so I finally type up said work this afternoon. (Had been only handwritten.)

O Lord, make us ready to enter this new day and new year
in your Spirit, in your counsel.

May we follow you,
and so live in your light and guidance -
called as your children.

January 14 (Heb.2:5-12; Ps.8:2,5-9; Mk.1:21-28)

Jesus has authority over all that is - over all creation, over angels and over devils. All are obedient to the sound of His voice, for His voice speaks Truth.

And we are made one with Jesus; as His brothers and sisters, we are offered a share in that power. By His grace we are made as He is.

What glory awaits us! What power is ours in His Name! We might cast out demons. We might calm the raging sea and rebuke the wind. This world could be in our hands if our hands were hands of Christ, for this is God's creation. No matter how man has abused it, no matter what false authority he has taken - yet God rules and it is His Word that is true. And so if we abide in that Word, we have all truth and all power.

Lord, take from me all that is of this world,
that I might be of your Word.

I know what seems a curse in the human mind
may be a blessing in your will -
chastise and bring me to your presence.

Thank you for always watching over me.

January 15 (Heb.2:14-18; Ps.105:1-4,6-9; Mk.1:29-39)

The Lord walks amongst us, and so He can cure our ills.
Jesus is one of us and makes us one with Him.

So many are sick today - brother, mother, students,
supervisor... and now a headache is upon me. If I
were in union with Christ, I could cast out these evils,
I could do more than simply offer kind words.

I seek such communion with God, and pray I do approach
it. May you who read herein be well by the power of God.

Lord, let your healing graces flow through us.
Thank you for your sacrifice;
may we join your mission.

January 16 (Heb.3:7-14; Ps.95:6-11; Mk.1:40-45)

Today's first reading warns us to maintain a soft heart toward God's word - to listen to His voice - and the gospel shows us how God listens attentively to us. (The leper begged the Lord and He was "moved with pity" and granted his request.)

God listens to us. (Recall how Moses was able to intercede with God.) It is remarkable, His concern and care - His love. And in the person of Jesus we see and feel this most clearly, for it is become flesh and blood. How could we harden our hearts to such a God?

Seek. Call on the Lord. (He hears your voice.) And listen for His response. All calls are in vain but the one that's made to Him. And all calls are vain but the one that's sent by Him.

Speak to us, Lord, with your wondrous voice.
May our ears be open to hear your blessed call.

January 17 (Heb.4:1-5,11; Ps.78:3-4,6-8; Mt.19:16-26)

How the Lord speaks to me in the Scriptures at times.

Did not do a very good job of listening to the Lord yesterday. Instead, did fairly well at hardening my heart. Not very much kindness or openness, and when over a late and large dinner the Lord warned me against gluttony, I failed to heed Him. And so I was unable to rest in sleep.

As I enter the church tired this morning, I find the first reading expounding on discovering the Lord's rest.

Oh that final rest when all is done well, when we can say with Christ, "It is finished," and commend our spirit to the Father. When nothing is left to be done but rest in God. May our lives be lived so fully and obediently to find that perfect rest.

And this being the feast of St. Anthony the abbot, the founder of monasticism, we hear the gospel that led him to such a life: "Sell all you have and give to the poor, and follow me." And what of the money I have been accumulating recently? And the money I may get for my car? What would the Lord have me do with this? And would He have my life be as St Anthony?

O Lord, I offer you all my possessions,
and all my life.
I wish but to enter your rest.

Bless and guide us,
that we might bless and guide others.

January 18

(Heb.4:12-16; Ps.19:8-10,15,Jn.6:63; Mk.2:13-17)

Yes, we all are sinners. And in recognition of this we are able to come before His throne, where His sword divides soul from spirit, and find His blessed grace and mercy.

The priest at Mass this morning confesses his sinfulness; and while singing to the many patrons at the soup kitchen today, I think and remember my own sinfulness - how He has found me who was once lost, how I am no better than anyone else - and in this I find strength and boldness to sing to God.

Praise God!

(And last night I did enter into His rest.)

O Lord, you have not come to call the righteous,
but sinners.

In the light of Truth I say, "I am a sinner."
And I thank you for cleansing me.

(P.S. Watched an impressive Christian movie on TV -
Mrs. Minniver.)

January 19

(1Sm.3:3-10,19; Ps.40:2,4,7-10;
1Cor.6:13-15,17-20; Jn.1:35-42)

"Here I am, Lord."

Are we here? Are we truly here to do the Lord's will?
Do we do the Lord's will? Or our own? Are we servants
of the Lord?

Anniversary of abortion decision looming this week,
and priest speaks out against abortion. It is good,
the sword goes forth, but why does it seem this truth of
immorality is so seldom preached? Is this not our call -
to speak the Truth, even as Peter, as the Pope, does?

And discussion over ulterior motives of some who appear
to be entering a walk with the Lord. Some serve only
for their own gain - they are not Christian.

We are called to be servants and to speak the truth -
but is the word going forth?

Where are we, Lord?

Cast the temptations of sin and fear far from us,
that we might shine your light forth.

(The Lord is calling -
but do we recognize His voice?)

January 20

(Heb.5:1-10; Ps.110:1-4; Mk.2:18-22)

Yesterday I was sad as illness lingered about me - the Bridegroom was not with me.

This morning on my way to church, bundled up from the cold, I meet an acquaintance from the church. "No hat," I say. "It's O.K.," he replies. "You are strong," I comment, and he humbly shrugs off my attempted compliment.

From this encounter I take strength. I have Jesus as high priest, what need I fear? And I shrug off the oppression of demons and decide to rejoice in the Lord - in that joy I find strength.

And much do I accomplish on this holiday: resuming practice of music and writing of other works, I am refreshed by inspiration and ideas...

Give not in to the temptations of the devil; remember the almighty power of the Lord.

Lord, exalted as you are,
you care for us so graciously.
Send your angels to defend our souls;
help us find the place you set aside.

(Two notes: 1. Do not let the devil inflate your pride: all that is good is only of Jesus.
2. Idea to do collection of my songs translated, at least in part, into several (say 7) languages: *In Any Language*.
Appropriate idea for Martin Luther King Day.)

January 21

(Heb.6:10-20; Ps.111:1-2,4-5,9-10;
Mk.2:23-28)

The promise is sure; it passes beyond this veil which is upon us. Persevere until the end - your reward awaits.

We indeed have a great high priest, He to whom even the angels bow - He through whom and for whom all things were made. If we but knew that to which we are called... Have been reading Peter Kreeft's book on angels and noted that the cause of Satan's fall was His refusal to serve man - who is but of flesh and blood. But the Son of Man shows us the glory the Father has instilled within us, making us in His own image.

And the Pharisees seem as Satan's children, unable to recognize that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

O Lord, strengthen us to the end
with the fruit of your holy Word,
your holy Truth,
your holy presence in our lives.

With confidence let us know the promise is sure...
heaven transcends this earth.

(Recovery of stolen vehicle today: odd sense - not happy, not sad - much as when it was stolen... no emotion. Wondered at this and found encouragement that perhaps it proves my lack of attachment to things - have them or no is indifferent.)

January 22 (Heb.7:1-3,15-17; Ps.110:1-4; Mk.3:1-6)

A day of mourning for this country -
the day abortion became law in this land.

I watch a show on television whose conclusion is that attitudes and laws toward issues (abortion, contraception...) continually change through history... But for Christians the law does not change. For us "the Son of God remains a priest forever." And he gives us the choice: "to preserve life - or to destroy it."

The lie against the Holy Spirit abounds in this land as evil is called good and good evil. The smoke screen of Satan is thick. I must but ask anyone with even an inclination toward Christianity if they can even begin to imagine Jesus recommending abortion to any woman in any situation... It is no answer.

O Lord, the horror of what is upon us.
All is in your hands, I know,
but please let the light of truth shine from your throne
to dispel the abiding darkness.

Life is with you, for you are life.

January 23

(Heb.7:25-8:6; Ps.40:7-10,17; Mk.3:7-12)

Brothers and sisters, we have such a high priest.
He was here; He is in heaven.
He intercedes for us - even now.

Noticed doubts flying about me this morning - then
priest speaks of the cross and His suffering, His
sacrifice. Whenever I find doubts, I remember that
indeed Jesus gained nothing by His crucifixion, that
He did it out of pure love. When we doubt, we suspect
others of selfish motives - but Jesus gave all Himself.

Such a high priest have we!
He found no cure - the cup did not pass from Him.
Yet all were healed by Him.

(I note the providence of the Lord again today -
though I am anxious about many things,
the Lord's hand is in all things.
Oh that I would yield so completely to the Spirit
and so find peace...)

Lord, again, thank you for always watching over
and caring for us.
Let us join in your suffering,
that we, too, might be made whole.

January 24 (Heb.8:6-13; Ps.85:8,10-14; Mk.3:13-19)

The law of the Lord is written upon my heart and mind, and His peace is etched into my soul - having just come from a healing Mass wherein I received Jesus, went to Confession, and was prayed over and ministered to by the Holy Spirit.

The Lord says that our sins He "will remember no more", and indeed nothing is more wonderful than this. (Gospel for healing Mass was changed to the lame man being lowered through the ceiling, whose sins Jesus forgives.) Herein justice and peace do kiss.

I pray that the Lord might open my ears, take away my deafness (feast day of St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of the deaf), that I might hear His word and be obedient to His voice - that I might go forth from Him as His disciple.

O Lord, let your peace rest upon me;
remove from me all anxiety.
Let me stand in your grace
and go forth in your Word.

January 25

(Acts 22:3-16; Ps.117:1-2; Mk.16:15-18)

Conversion of St. Paul. And we see a living example of the old (Covenant) becoming the new. Let us all be so baptized and thus made new.

I continue overwhelmed, as I receive Jesus again this morning and sit with Him during our Holy Hour. (I think for a moment that my own eyes might be blinded by His Light.) During the hour, I pray for the conversion of the woman who heads the fight for abortion "rights."

And conversion is needed at the soup kitchen: in definition and employment of rules for service and reception of food, in deployment of evangelization and music ministry, in use of newfound funds... There is always difficulty, birth pangs, when an enterprise approaches a new level - but Satan shall not deter us.

And today it is one year since completion of my autobiography, which outlines my own process of conversion. (Thus I have also completed one full year of *Days*.) And before the Blessed Sacrament I rejoice at all the sin the Lord has purged from my life. (His grace abounds.)

O Lord, all things be in your hands.
You are greater and more powerful
than anything of this world.

Convert us truly to your way,
that we might celebrate, that we might see -
that we might master all purveyors of deceit.

January 26

(Jon.3:1-5,10; Ps.25:4-9; 1Cor.7:29-31;
Mk.1:14-20)

A new year of these days begins, and there is still greater progress to be made... my life still needs reforming.

"The world as we know it is passing away" and we must be ready. The readings at our prayer meeting repeatedly speak of the end of the world, and the need for patience as all is revealed in God's time. And at our Super Bowl party this evening I must restrain myself from rooting for my favorite team out of respect for an elder who is favoring the other team. (I was rooting as if I weren't rooting.)

O Lord, may our lives be so reformed
that you might call us forth
to do your will.

And may we be ready on that day
when all the world does pass away.

January 27 (Heb.9:15,24-28; Ps.98:1-6; Mk.3:22-30)

As all men die once and are judged, so Christ has sacrificed Himself once that all men might be forgiven - that on that day when His salvation comes, we might stand with Him.

But only if we overcome the ways of Satan in our lives, only if we adhere not to the prince of lies...

The sin against the Spirit is the greatest, and I find no more troubling sin than the lying tongue. I am more offended by my insurance agent's blatant lie (that an inspector would be out immediately to look at my car - it is now nearly a week) than by those who stole the car. And I, too, struggle with this sin as in my mind I seek excuses not to call someone back with whom I do not wish to speak.

O Lord, take this plague from mankind.
You are good, and none else.
Heal us of our sinful ways,
that we might know indeed your salvation.

(Lord, thank you for answering my prayer
and bringing a ray of joy into my day -
let no lie take it from me.)

January 28

(Heb.10:1-10; Ps.40:2,4,7-11; Mk.3:31-35)

I cannot but see how God's will is not done today - how I have not offered myself and said, "Here I am, Lord."

I have not done the will of the Lord today. The Blessed Mother advises patience with insurance company; I resort to anger and action. And at the same time I see how patience is mocked in the Desert Storm war - how the human will which desires to strike prevails.

Reading C.S. Lewis (*Mere Christianity*), he explains well the plight of mankind - in a condition gone bad, unable to find the perfect will of God, but rather perverting that will with our own... and so we do live in enemy-occupied territory, for the Dark Power does rule.

(How infrequently we ask, "What would Jesus do in this situation?" Are we really His brothers?)

Lord, forgive my blindness,
my lack of conviction in listening to you -
my taking matters into my own hands...
and save mankind from such a plight.

(Walking home from church this morning I see a young boy tiptoeing forward in light baby steps - but I heed not the sign to tread lightly; I cannot control my anxiety. Yet Jesus' forgiveness is offered forth.)

January 29

(Heb.10:11-18; Ps.110:1-4; Mk.4:1-20)

Oh the thorns of this world which choke the soul.
The anxieties, the worry and anger that hold us
to this world. Oh how blind we become.

But Jesus is there to forgive, to cleanse us
and make us whole again.

This morning I certainly need the absolution I find in
Confession. That grace is there if we but come to Him.
And I continue to need Him to calm continued anxieties
and injustices...

O Lord, that I might but bear fruit,
that my day might be worth living -
that the distractions of this world
shall not weigh upon my soul...

Forgive me, Lord.

January 30

(Heb.10:19-25; Ps.24:1-6; Mk.4:21-25)

We should not be afraid, brothers and sisters. We should not hide our light away. With full confidence we should come before the Lord and praise His name in all we do, for we are children of light.

So much I have done remains hidden. So much I intend is in the dark. But all must be revealed. "Things are hidden only to be revealed at a later time." Is that time upon me yet? I believe it is.

O Lord, let me bring your gifts out into the light.
May the light of truth banish all darkness away.
Give me strength, dear Jesus,
and the guidance of your Spirit.

(Let nothing be wasted.)

January 31

(Heb.10:32-39; Ps.37:3-6,23-24,39-40;
Mk.4:26-34)

Reassurance from the Lord that, in time, my work
may yet bear fruit.

We must remain firm. Our vision must be fixed upon
the Lord and His coming day.

Remember tomorrow.

O Lord, I thank you for your blessed grace and mercy
which nourishes and sustains us
in this world
and brings us a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

O Lord, make my steps firm;
may I come gradually to thee.

February 1 (Heb.11:1-2,8-19; Lk.1:68-75; Mk.4:35-41)

"Who can this be that the wind and the sea obey Him?"

It is Jesus. But believe.

The faith of our fathers saw them through the darkness of their time; the light of the promise remained with them until Jesus came to fulfill the Word.

And now in dark times we find ourselves again, as many turn from Him and His Word. But we must believe and speak.

No greater sin characterizes our time as does abortion. Praying the rosary during our Holy Hour this morning I thought to pray for the doctor and mother at the moment of abortion (during third glorious mystery). Then I realized it is the moment of conception that is the unholy moment. And why? Because of immorality. And why such immorality? Because of lack of discipline, of teaching. Parents do not discipline children. Schools do not discipline students. Lawmakers do not discipline the state or nation. All are left to judge for themselves. Why? Because no one really cares for anyone but themselves. And why does the devil have such a field day? I'm afraid the horrible truth I discovered is that the root is in the Church. The Church has primary responsibility for spreading truth, for teaching morality, and it is not. The Pope speaks, he rebukes the wind, but there is no faith. The bishops tend in different directions; the priests are afraid to offend their parishioners; the congregation looks the other way...

Does anyone but the Pope believe?

O Lord, take Satan's chains from our tongues.
May by faith we rebuke the darkness of this life.

(I believe though it seems quite bleak,
2000 will be a year of Jubilee.)

February 2

(Mal.3:1-4; Ps.24:7-10; Heb.2:14-18;
Lk.22:22-40)

The Lord has come, and been presented to us.
And He is present to us still.

In flesh and blood He came, humbled as a child -
under the law though far above the law. The cross
of this life He took upon Himself to redeem us from
this life's sins.

And a sword pierces the heart of all His disciples
(as it has the Blessed Mother). We are all called
to suffer with Him, to present ourselves to God.

This day, felt perhaps the strongest sense of compassion
I have known, while serving communion at the nursing
home. All externals fell away, and I was one with these
patients - I was able to get under the skin of those who
seemed so foreign. (We are all one.)

And it is a paradox that the closer we get to
the earth (as the animals who are so united to it),
the more humble we become - the more exalted we are,
the more we transcend this life.

Lord, thank you for coming into our midst.
Help us, too, to share in the plight
of our brothers and sisters

May all rest in peace.

February 3 (Heb.11:32-40; Ps.31:20-25; Mk.5:1-20)

We all have, or at least have had, demons within ourselves from which the Lord has released us and from which we pray He keep us free. We must remember always that that freedom is offered forth, and so find the joy it brings.

Today I see both film on Nazi Germany, perhaps the greatest demon of recent times, and a film about the gradual achievement of equality by blacks in sports in America - focusing particularly on the "firsts", those who suffered as forerunners. I am reminded of Martin Luther King's final speech, wherein he clearly stated that he himself would not enter the promised land (like Moses) but that as a people blacks would indeed do so.

O Lord, we need prophets to cry out the way
to a new world confirmed in your spirit.
I thank you for the Pope and his proclamations.

(I recall thinking yesterday that this century may be looked upon in disbelief by future generations for its absolute horror. "How could they have been so cruel?")

Heal us, O Lord.

February 4 (Heb.12:1-4; Ps.22:26-28,30-32; Mk.5:21-43)

Sin still clings to me, but I shake it off; by the cross
I am redeemed - I feel the nail marks in my hands. If I
could lay down my life in this writing, if I could become
as one of the saints, finding myself in God by forgetting
myself entirely - if I could die so thoroughly to this
life and bleed by the Spirit into the next...

O to be fed so on the bread of life, to become as Jesus'
body and blood.

Only faith will make us whole. Only faith will cast out
past illnesses. Only in faith do we remain close to the
Lord.

The priest prays our illness be gone.
I weep before the Sacrament, Jesus within.
I become one with the Liturgy.

Awake from slumber, ye of little faith;
in His saints the Lord awaits.

O Lord, may I be enveloped by your cloud
and so come unto thee
and be healed.

February 5

(Heb.12:4-7,11-15; Ps.103:1-2,13-14,17-18;
Mk.6:1-6)

The first reading mirrored my very thoughts of this morning. "Why such difficulty in sleeping of late?" I wondered. But I staved off any despair and found joy in my walk to church this morning as I recalled that "whom the Lord loves, He disciplines." I offered my cross to the Lord, and all became for the good.

Also, some minor words of discouragement I overheard from fellow (senior) parishioners I accepted also as a cross and chastisement from the Lord, and so found deeper patience in prayer.

We must indeed be schooled in the humble ways of Christ to find His blessed divinity. Bow low before Him, and you will know Him and who He is.

O Lord, may I always accept your way
and so find freedom in this suffering.
Please never remove your hand of chastisement
from my neck.

Bring me up in the way of your Word.
You are the teacher.

February 6 (Heb.12:18-19,21-24; Ps.48:2-4,9-11; Mk.6:7-13)

O to draw near to such as He...

Are we not His Church?

Are we not such as he?

Are we not called forth to heal the sick,
to praise His Name to the ends of the earth?

Does not His blood flow within us?

Lord, bless those who have shed their blood as thee.

February 7 (Heb.13:1-8; Ps.27:1,3,5,8-9; Mk.6:14-29)

Ran into an acquaintance today who has suffered perhaps the greatest abuse of anyone I've met - physical and emotional abuse, particularly from his family. He was expressing bitterness (though to me he did not seem to mean all he said), and I listened and sympathized the best I could.

Generally, I tried to be more hospitable and understanding toward others, working to fend off a coldness of heart I confessed this morning.

But there are limits to hospitality, too. Witness Herod. To please his guests he lopped off John the Baptist's head. We must always keep our heads when dealing with others.

And I am reminded, too, of a thought I had about the depth of immorality into which this society has fallen - particularly the cavalier attitude toward fornication and adultery. And I wonder at what it would take to draw us out of the pit, pervasive as it is.

O Lord, let there be hope for all.
Lift our heads to look upon you always,
and let us love one another.

February 8

(Heb.13:15-17,20-21; Ps.23:1-6; Mk.6:30-34)

Had been struggling with a dry mouth and throat this past week (the exact cause of which continually eluded me), which caused a restlessness and sleeplessness - particularly the last couple of nights. But in the ending of the letter to the Hebrews, and particularly in the finding of Psalm 23, I found encouragement and hope this morning.

The day was once again busy at the soup kitchen - impossible to find time to sing and difficult to find time to eat - but upon returning home, I was able to seek rest. It continued difficult for some time, the anxiety upon me being rather deep-set. But the Lord drew me to "an out-of-the-way place."

Lying in bed with my thermal underwear, thermal vest, socks, etc. on - I began to count sheep. After reaching somewhat past my age, I began to think about the invitation by those from a rehabilitation center to patrons of our soup kitchen today. I thought about telling them that the deeper you fall into a pit, the further you have to climb out. It would have been better to change yesterday, but today is better than tomorrow... and soon tomorrow will be yesterday. We cannot deny the knowledge of time's passing. God gives us this time to change our lives, to find His grace.

While thinking this, a deep peace (in regular, blessed breathing) came upon me, and truth and the face of God were near. This is the most fearful sense - in sinful moments of my past it has resulted in great horror - but tonight I asked the Lord to show me the truth.

In this moment of truth and peace, wellness came from the hand of the Lord, and I was prepared to cast off my thermal clothing. (Note: earlier I had prayed an angel's hand would but touch my throat, knowing it would be a simple thing.) In the past, these moments of insight into soul were closer at hand than now in my busy days.

O Lord, let my soul be revealed unto thee,
that I might dwell in thy peace now and forever.
Shepherd me into thy pasture.

February 9

(Job 7:1-4,6-7; Ps.147:1-6;
1Cor.9:16-19,22-23; Mk.1:29-39)

Let us do what we are meant to do; let us do it willingly. Let us serve the Lord in this world.

The Lord granted me health to serve Him well this morning at Mass, but tonight at the prayer meeting I quite lost my voice. (Meeting was rather quiet, prayers rather weak without my big mouth.)

Perhaps I will at least learn to restrain my pride...

The Lord heals those who are broken, He rescues those who sit in darkness - for He becomes like one of them, He walks in their land.

O Lord, save us from despair and sickness,
and help us, too, to bear the suffering of others.
May we praise you always who are our joy,
for you lift us out of this world.

February 10

(Gen.1:1-19; Ps.104:1-2,5-6,10,12,24,31,35;
Mk.6:53-56)

God speaks, and all comes to be.

My voice breaks a few times in reading this morning -
far from the voice of God are we.

Today is the feast of St. Scholastica, the sister of
Benedict; and reading of them both, my mind turns to
the monastery.

I see my (adopted) sister today for the first time in a
month, and I also meet with a woman whose daughter is a
nun...

There are two lights in the sky - the greater one
to rule the day, and the lesser one to rule the night -
and so are men and women in this life.

Lord, that all infirmity might flee,
and I might stand steadfast with thee -
shining your light so brightly.

Set me in place in your sky.

February 11 (Is.66:10-14; Ps.8:2,4-9; Mk.7:1-13)

It is the eve of Lent, the night before Ash Wednesday, and the Lord teaches me what is to be my concentration in this time of Penance: it is simply to take the practices I have already begun, already been practicing, and fulfill them properly - not in vain, as the traditions of the Pharisees, but in earnest, in fulfilling worship of God.

I have been lingering in bed after my wake-up time and moving toward bed too early at night. I have been rushing my prayers in the Liturgy and rushing to church in the morning. I have been neglecting music practice, some reading and writing exercise, and so, falling short of the command of the Lord. I must root out laziness and disobedience, deafness to His call, if I am to mature in the Spirit. Again, not that these works are ends in themselves, but that they are expressions of faith, proof of attentiveness to the Word, and, so, necessary if I am to "suck fully of the milk of her (Jerusalem's) comfort." (And on this feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, I find full healing.)

O Lord, bless this approaching season.
May we fulfill your will in our lives;
may we find our place on your holy mountain.

February 12

(Jl.2:12-18; Ps.51:3-6,12-14,17;
2Cor.5:20-6:2; Mt.6:1-6,16-18)

Why do I find such joy in Ash Wednesday? It is not the prospect of Easter and eternal reward, for I had not thought of this joyous season. No, it is in Lent itself I find joy, in the opportunity for penance. For in penance is the great truth that we are sinners, and that we have this time set aside to publicly acknowledge this fact is overwhelmingly wonderful for me.

And the Lord already begins to order my prayer life. And I am disappointed that the ashes do not remain on my forehead.

O Lord, may we all turn to thee and repent of our sin;
may we know the joy of your redemption.

February 13 (Dt.30:15-20; Ps.1:1-6; Lk.9:22-25)

To choose life is to choose the cross of Christ, for it brings life. Though death must come to this life, in Christ we find the eternal life. Whatever Jesus does prospers, and if we follow in His steps, and if, above all, we die with Him, we, too, will be raised on the third day.

Discussion this day with and about friends who are sick and seriously troubled... Yes, all is in the Lord's hands - we must trust absolutely in Him. But we must *trust*; we must participate in His will; we must desire His will indeed - and His will is always for our benefit. We must *take up* our cross. We must seek. We must *walk* in His way to find where He is.

Our first reading makes it so clear that we have a choice: life or death. People complain in despair so often, but it is certain: if we do God's will, we shall be blessed; if not, we shall die. And this death refers not so much to our bodies as our very souls.

Lord, place your cross squarely upon my shoulders,
that I might know the love it holds -
to die for all others.

(O the glory of dying to this world!)

February 14 (Is.58:1-9; Ps.51:3-6,18-19; Mt.9:14-15)

Today I fall short of the will of God; I limit myself from finding His full favor.

My sinfulness is before me always: my blindness,
my ignorance; my pride and so my lack of love;
my faithlessness and my fear. Why should I judge?
How can I expect His grace if I do?

Set free the slaves of your condemnation.

O Lord, let me not fast in vain.

(Today passes as if in a dream -
O Lord, grant me thy substance.)

February 15 (Is.58:9-14; Ps.86:1-6,11; Lk.5:27-32)

To give all that I have -
To offer all in service of Christ -
To set His will first in my life...
 what joy is this !

Therein is truth. Therein is life.
Therein is the restoration of my soul.

We serve at the soup kitchen today.
We soothe those who are troubled.
Many are pleased.

And oh that the Church might unite.

Lord, call me from the sinful state in which I sit
 into your holy presence.
And let us serve you forevermore.

February 16

(Gn.9:8-15; Ps.25:4-9; 1Pt.3:18-22;
Mk.1:12-15)

Thinking today about the parallels between Jesus and Noah. Mankind was saved through Noah in the ark he was called to build. His family (and us) and all the animals are spared by being joined to him. And so it is with Jesus. He is the only Son of God. All are saved by being one with Him. The ark by which He saves is His very body, and only those in this ark will be spared destruction. (And we are told they will be few.)

Also thinking that the cross of Jesus begins even with His birth - His becoming a body, assuming our sinful nature. This is perhaps the greatest sacrifice. And so our sinful bodies may now become whole and be our means to heaven...

The Lord promises Noah to keep His hand from utter destruction of human life; in Jesus is the promise of eternal salvation for those who turn to Him.

Lord, lead us through the wasteland of this world
to the promised land of heaven,
where we shall walk with you forever.

(And on that day the dead shall rise from their graves.)

February 17

(Lv.19:1-2,11-18; Ps.19:8-10,13,Jn.6:63;
Mt.25:31-46)

As the snow which accumulated the night before
slowly melts away...

I lie in bed all day,
nursing a sick stomach.

I must have sinned somehow,
but I cannot think of what it is...

Jesus, heal me.
Forgive me my sin against you.
I would that you come to me in my illness.

(All that is in me is emptied out.)

February 18 (Is.55:10-11; Ps.34:4-7,16-19; Mt.6:7-15)

At Mass this morning, realizing how empty my stomach was as I prepared to receive Christ, I recalled my reception of the Eucharist this past Sunday. It was the only time I can remember being aware of the possibility of not receiving Him well. (I remembered anger with someone the day before, and though I did not dwell on it, it did come to mind... perhaps this is why my insides needed to be evacuated - perhaps this was my sin.)

But today the Lord gives me life again - though it looked unlikely. He fed me with His bread, and my day was exceptionally full at work. And I am able to pray again. (Could not even pray yesterday.) What a blessing is prayer, is communication with the Lord - one which I take for granted.

O Lord, I forgive all who may have sinned against me.
I pray you will forgive me my sins
and water me with your Word.

February 19

(Jon.3:1-10; Ps.51:3-4,12-13,18-19;
Lk.11:29-32)

God relents. God forgives. God brings back from the grave. Repent, and know His mercy.

Confessing my sins and returning to the Lord (early to church again this morning), I feel as if resurrected from the grave. The purity of the Lord I pray penetrate me deeply - and His light I sense filling even my subconscious and unconscious mind. (Oh what a wonder to be ever so filled with His all-encompassing light!)

A fast day today (bread and water) after virtual fast of past two days, and my life - and digestion - are set straight again... and there is joy.

O Lord, may I always be responsive to your word
and your prophets.
May I be so humble that your will shall utterly fill me,
and I be one with you.

February 20

(Est.C:12,14-16,23-25; Ps.138:1-3,7-8;
Mt.7:7-12)

What riches are open to those who seek.

Evening Prayer became as intense, as close to God as I can remember being: I opened my mouth as a bird awaiting food from its mother, and the Lord filled me with bread from heaven - my mind filled with light; my mouth spoke the name of Jesus...

And even now as I reread the gospel, I hear His voice.

I have met a number of people who are familiar with famous individuals of various countries - contemplating this, I realize I know God: I know His Name (YHWH); His silence is upon my lips, and His Son is in my flesh and blood.

And as Esther intercedes in prayer for her people and her voice is heard by God, so I find my long-pleadings for our simple parish being answered to by the Lord: movement has begun, apart from me (though I shall help it along), to restore the church, to save it from extinction.

O Lord, you see my readiness to give my life to thee
and to your people,
and you bless my sacrifice.

Lead us on ever to higher levels of prayer and service,
till we meet with thee -
till we die.

February 21 (Ez.18:21-28; Ps.130:1-8; Mt.5:20-26)

When a brother knelt down between myself and another man before the Blessed Sacrament this morning and held our hands in prayer, I excused myself in anger and impatience - there was little room on the kneeler, and, after all, I had to read through today's Scripture before Mass.

I felt bad about the lack of love in my heart, and my guilt was confirmed when I stood at the pulpit to read and realized I had studied tomorrow's readings. My guilt was further confirmed by the content of what I read and especially the gospel.

Such a Pharisee I can be. So proud and lacking in the spirit of love.

I looked toward my brother during the sign of peace, but he was too far in the back of the church. At communion time, I had to retreat to the end of the line - because of a sore that's been on my lip the last few days (wanted to be last to receive cup) - and there I searched for my brother. It was strange. At first I did not see him, then he was right in front of me, waiting at the end of the line. He hugged me, as he always does, and I apologized. He forgave me easily and rejoiced at my penitence.

I received the Lord with a clear conscience.

O Lord, forgive my pride and strengthen my love -
raise me up in your way.

(Lord, I pray especially that I not backslide into past sins.
May your angels protect my soul.)

February 22 (1Pt.5:1-4; Ps.23:1-6; Mt.16:13-19)

The Church stands yet today,
and will till the end of the age;
for it is founded upon Peter's solid rock faith
and has Jesus as its cornerstone.

The word of authority is obeyed
by all who seek true wisdom.

And praise the Lord that today the keys
are left in able hands.

Shepherd us, Lord,
ever into your kingdom.
May your grace be upon
all those who feed your sheep here.

February 23

(Gn.22:1-2,9-13,15-18; Ps.116:10,15-19;
Rom.8:31-34; Mk.9:2-10)

Isaac did not die. Remember this. He was not sacrificed.

And Jesus is alive; He is not dead. Is not the purpose of the Transfiguration to plant this hope within us before the time of trial, so that we might say with the psalmist, "I believed, even when I said, 'I am greatly afflicted'" - that we might understand what it is to "rise from the dead"? Does not Paul express this when he says, "Christ Jesus, who died or rather was raised up." The Transfiguration sets our hearts on heaven.

Before new life there must be death. We must tear down before building again. I think to convey this to a young man whose mother recently died, as he stands in the rectory office where he works, as he looks at the walls and floor which have been stripped bare in preparation for repainting. And there is one white wall already complete, to show what will be.

Jesus is the most humble of creatures.
Give your life as He does, and you will find it.

I love you, Lord, for your sacrifice;
please take our very lives,
that we might live forever.

February 24 (Dn.9:4-10; Ps.79:8-9,11,13,103:10; Lk.6:36-38)

Daniel intercedes for the people of Israel.
In compassion He takes their sins upon Himself.
Stepping into the breach, though sinless Himself,
He seeks the forgiveness of those most guilty.

So it is with Christ. He is the true love that
lays down His life, without judging or condemning,
for those most sinful.

So must we love our brothers and sisters.

O Lord, save the souls of we who go astray.
Forgive us, Lord, we know not what we do.

February 25

(Is.1:10,16-20; Ps.50:8-9,16-17,21-23;
Mt.23:1-12)

"If I go on so mechanical (in prayer, worship)"...
I say to myself before the Blessed Sacrament, and there
is life in me - I taste the flesh and blood of the living
Christ I have just received. (And this manna will be
with us every day, until our feet touch the promised land
of heaven.)

There is hope, too, that this nation's sins,
which are as 'scarlet,' may become 'white as snow.'
(For this I pray.) I see an episode of a genuinely
religious TV series, and cry.

As for me, humility is the key - I am nothing.
I am no better than anyone else with whom I am one.

Jesus is the teacher.

Lead me, Lord, where you would have me be;
I seek your call these days.
Insofar as I surrender my will,
I may know you, Lord.

(Live and breathe, and bleed, with me.)

February 26 (Jer.18:18-20; Ps.31:5-6,14-17; Mt.20:17-28)

The human race continually seeks someone to blame, someone who will take responsibility - Jesus is that man (and Jeremiah and the prophets shared in that role with Him). Here is a man who but speaks truth, without concern for Himself. He lays down His life for others.

Preaching today as a solitary voice against the futility of the space program - people seem so set that this earth has a short time to live and that space is our next place to go. But this cannot be so. We cannot create our own environment. We are human, of the earth, and outside our atmosphere we cannot breathe. Yet pride and its conceit have a field day.

But there is hope for Jubilee. A brother is set free from the confines of an oppressive (for a Catholic) rehabilitation facility...

Lord, help us to speak your truth,
and to bear the suffering that comes therewith.
May we serve you and share in your cup.

February 27 (Jer.17:5-10; Ps.1:1-6; Lk.16:19-31)

The rich and the poor, the wicked and the just -
and an ICO (Interfaith Community Organization) meeting
to discuss welfare reform with mayoral candidates.
(Could not be more appropriate.)

Lazarus dies - is this what the politicians would have?
The rich man is condemned - is this what we say is their
fate?

The readings are cut and dried - and there is no way of
passing from side to side. But to me this issue is not
so obvious - it is not Cowboys and Indians.

Only the Lord knows; only the mind of the Lord can judge
- and He is invoked only to begin and end this meeting.
God is removed even from a roomful of church members and
leaders.

To me this is the crux: the society is striving to be
amoral, and so it easily becomes immoral, particularly
where children are concerned. And what we have are
children without discipline, without teaching, without
God - not knowing right from wrong - procreating without
responsibility. And it is our fault.

O Lord, soften the heart of Caesar,
and make firm the mind of compassion -
let your waters nourish our roots
and your sunlight make green our leaves.

February 28

(Gn.37:3-4,12-13,17-28; Ps.105:5,16-21;
Mt.21:33-43,45-46)

Still thinking of last night's meeting on the way to church this morning. I can't help but remember that with God all things are turned to the good, so that even if this is an evil law, with God on our side we could turn it to something beneficial. It could be a chance to repent ourselves and find new sources and means of operation.

Readings about Joseph confirm this thought: perhaps the greatest sign of God's providence (other than Christ Himself) is the way He worked in Joseph's life to save the Israelites. We know the evil his brothers have committed shall become a great good in God - and Joseph shall forgive them.

The power of God is greater than any political power. Jesus has the power to lay down His life, and the power to take it up again.

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."

O Lord, make us not anxious about the future;
lead us forth each day in your name.

Lord, pare away all unneeded thoughts and inclinations
from my own life,
that I might serve you in your vineyard,
that I might labor in your fields well.

March 1 (Mi.7:14-15,18-20; Ps.103:1-4,8-12;
Lk.15:1-3,11-32)

O the kindness and mercy, the love of God for His creatures. For while we were "still a long way off" He came and redeemed us. If we but turn to Him, He is waiting there.

Still there is sin to be rooted out of my mind and heart - the memory of my dissolute life yet does haunt me, and I fear a lack of forgiveness. So I offer prayer (particularly rosary during Holy Hour) for my sinful past and those with whom I spent it, that we who have been most prodigal might freely return to the Father and know His forgiveness. (May Mary and the saints pray it be so.)

My generation and this country have been such prodigal ones - but perhaps there is hope we may turn again to Him, and there will be celebration.

O Lord, thoroughly cleanse me from my guilt;
blot out all my sins.
Fulfill what you have begun in me
in your sacred mercy.
May all your children come unto thee.

March 2

(Ez.20:1-17; Ps.19:8-11; 1Cor.1:22-25;
Jn.2:13-25)

Because of what is "in man's heart," he must be disciplined. Thus the Ten Commandments continue as necessary to keep man in line. And Jesus - who is the fulfillment of Moses and the prophets, who carries the rule of law and call to repentance in His very flesh - reveals the chastisement due man in His whip of cords and His overturning of tables. And once He has been scourged and crucified for the sin of our hearts, His body will be raised again.

This morning there is a rather thick fog. At the cemetery the sky is gray as the tombstones. (There was a certain beauty to both.) This afternoon I went to the nursing home, where many are waiting to die. While I was giving communion in the rooms, the sun came out - all fog was burned away. (This is/would be the first Sunday for scrutiny of Baptismal candidates.)

Lord, by your cross the death of sin in our souls
is cleansed away, and we are made anew.
Chastise us with your word of truth.

(P.S. And there is wind this evening as I respond to a rebuttal of a letter I'd had printed in a Catholic paper: this earth is our home and heaven; space is a prideful temptation.)

March 3 (2Kgs.5:1-15; Ps.42:2-3,43:3-4; Lk.4:24-30)

"There is no God in all the earth, except in Israel."
Only washed in the living water are we healed.
Only the flesh and blood of Christ makes us whole.

It is a simple thing to come and receive His body
and blood; He is not far away that we cannot find Him.
Yet many refuse to come to Him and find life.

What shall we do when brought to the brow of a hill for
our beliefs? Only find joy in suffering for our faith.

O Lord, yet do I long for your healing graces,
that my pride will be taken far from me
and in humility I will wash myself in the river
that is you.

March 4 (Dn.3:25,34-43; Ps.25:4-9; Mt.18:21-35)

We all owe the Lord "a huge amount," do we not?
If we say 'no', we know not ourselves.

Program on TV about the death penalty and the film *Dead Man Walking*. Yes, the killer deserves to die for his crime - this is justice. This is the law. It is important to see this, as it is important to realize that we *all* deserve death for our sins - God would be just in condemning any one of us. But instead He has sent His Son to forgive our sins, to open His arms on the cross and invite us back to Him. We deserve death, but Jesus offers forgiveness. And no sin is too great for Jesus to forgive but the denial of God's goodness and love.

And so in Azariah's prayer of repentance and plea for mercy, God's ear is near, and He is pleased to respond. And His mercy is fulfilled in the Person of Jesus.

Jesus, that you have forgiven me my sins,
 though I do not deserve this -
 for your mercy I praise you
 and pray I shall always be so kind.

Let us live, Lord.

March 5 (Dt.4:1,5-9; Ps.147:12-13,15-16,19-20;
Mt.5:17-19)

Was thinking of today's gospel verse when I wrote last night's entry - and here it is today.

Jesus abolishes none of the moral law Moses set down. An eye is still required for an eye, a life for a life. But now Jesus has laid down His life to pay the price, and we are called to follow in His steps and carry the cross.

Praise God for His law and wisdom which keep us in line, which are life to those who follow them. But praise Him more for the sacrifice of His Son and the full payment of our sin against the law.

Teach me your ways, O Lord;
May I follow them closely.

And wash me clean of my sinful failings.
(Let them be cast into the trash.)

March 6 (Jer.7:23-28; Ps.95:1-2,6-9; Lk.11:14-23)

I'm afraid we are living in a time wherein man is losing all bearings on good and evil: he cannot call good, 'good,' and cannot call evil, 'evil.'

There are animals being cloned, colonies in space expected - man is set on complete control of life itself as he tampers with genetic material and puts himself to judge who should live and die. It is as if the Tower of Babel is being built again.

I feel the lack of faith in God, of trust in Him, very tangibly in others - that He is something outmoded, or at least whose use is passing.

But I know the power of the Lord is great; stronger than Satan and aware of his wiles is He. What He shall do I know not. I only pray disaster is not necessary.

Lord, you are close to me - I know you are there
and we are not far from you.

Breathe upon me, dear Jesus, your light,
that I might cast out devils in your Name.

March 7 (Hos.14:2-10; Ps.81:6-11,14,17; Mk.12:28-34)

The quintessential command, the heart of the law - love.
Of God, of neighbor, with all we are - from the four
corners of the universe comes this love.

Come out of the tomb you find yourself in - exhume the
mummy which has lain dormant for ages, and live, and
love. Life is in each of your neighbors; rush not past
them in blind distraction. Speak sincerely with them,
visit them often, take refuge in your brothers and
sisters... and live.

I am so much the machine - a worker set on a treadmill.
So coldly I brush past those in need of assistance,
focused so on my own concerns. But with a good friend
I travel to New York City - the land of insensitivity -
and with him I find sincerity, I find the time.
And because of him I buy a new guitar.
(I pray to God I put it to good use.)

I return also to the prayer meeting this evening - a play
at the meeting and I discuss a poem of mine, potentially
to recite. And with the children, and with my brothers
and sisters, I find light.

Lord, help me to love you with heart, mind, soul,
and strength -
take all the talent I have for your service.

Help me to love, and be of love;
I consecrate myself to thee.

("Speak the truth," the Lord saith to me this day.)

March 8 (Hos.6:1-6; Ps.51:3-4,18-21; Lk.18:9-14)

Seek the counsel and wisdom of the Lord, and He will provide all. The wisest thing we can utter is "I am a sinner." Then is the Lord close to us.

May the walls of Jerusalem be rebuilt in His Name. Torn down to the ground, we should not panic; His redeeming touch is close at hand. Excelling in His service we should not boast; nothing is done by us anyway.

Midway through Lent we reflect on our progress, or lack thereof. We stop to bow before Him, and again invite Him in.

O Lord, may our sinfulness be known to us,
that we might leave it all behind us
and enter into your promised land.

March 9 (2Chr.36:14-16,19-23; Ps.137:1-6;
Eph.2:4-10; Jn.3:14-21)

Exile and return, sin and salvation, the darkness of this world and light of Christ - the themes of Lent in the midst of the season.

I sin; yes, I am a sinner. In laziness I lay my head down. There is suffering, there is exile; I wander in circles, lost in my way. But direction does come, clarity of mind returns; in prayer and praise, in recognition of sin and of the power of Christ is a return to the fold. (Couldn't find my way to cemetery this afternoon - blocked by parade route. At prayer meeting this evening Christ is lifted up.)

I love Jesus' words in the gospel wherein He says He has not come to condemn, but to save. This is an important and truthful and light-bringing point: the world is already condemned; as it is it is dark and sinful - Jesus comes to bring it light. Do we accept that Light or not?

Lord, save me from my sinful self,
from this darkness into which we're born.
I seek your salvation.

March 10

(Is.65:17-21; Ps.30:2,4-6,11-13; Jn.4:43-54)

It does not take dramatic signs and waving of magic wands. In a simple moment Jesus could change the water into wine and transform us into what we are.

The reality of the kingdom is so close; it is most natural to our hearts and to our souls. When the Lord's light enters our minds, then we shall see how ordinary is that day - for the Lord has created us for that time and will bring us to life at that hour.

Lift up my head which is bowed down, my Lord,
that I might see thy smiling face
and enter into your presence.

March 11 (Ez.47:1-9,12; Ps.46:2-3,5-6,8-9; Jn.5:1-16)

The living water flows from the temple of the Most High. And Jesus is that temple; He is the source and substance of that living water. And we, His Church, carry forth His word and healing graces to the ends of the earth, growing in strength as we go forward.

It is Jesus who heals; it is the power of His Word that is the source of life for all our souls. Be baptized in His pool. Only immersed in the living water that is Jesus will we be made whole.

And I continue to seek the salvation from sin which Jesus brings. I desire the rush of His water to uproot the dark weakness which clings to my heart.

O Lord, may nothing worse overtake me;
may I be thoroughly healed and forgiven my sin.
Pliant to your Word, let me walk through this world,
bringing light by the power of your cross.

March 12

(Is.49:8-15; Ps.145:8-9,13-14,17-18; Jn.5:17-30)

The prisoners shall come out from the darkness; the dead shall rise again, and by the mercy and compassion of the Lord the just shall know eternal life. Already we have passed from condemnation, and we shall live again.

I feel as if in a prison sometimes, seeing but through a mirror darkly. The Lord seems hidden from my eyes; to a greater or lesser degree His glory ever escapes me.

By the word of truth only are we released, and the Word brings the cross. But one day I know I shall wake in His presence; that day the darkness will be removed from my eyes and I will see Him as He is - the only Son of the Father. And we shall be one with Him in the Father and with the Spirit.

Lead us on, Lord, into thy blessed light.
I know we are of thee.
Simply, we are thy children,
and nothing more.

March 13 (Ex.32:7-14; Ps.106:4,19-23; Jn.5:31-47)

Do we truly believe?
Or are our minds fixed on temporal things,
are we blinded by the distractions of this world?

The television, cars, computers - are not these and other
possessions and desires the idols of this Western world?
Is it not these which occupy our minds, which possess our
thoughts, which remove our attention from the Holy One?

If we desire Jesus, if we have the love of God in our
hearts, we will seek and find Him despite these
distractions.
We will reach out to Him and find that He is reaching out
to us.

O Lord, take any semblance of the golden calf
from my heart and from my life.
May I live in purity and strength with thee.

Take the anxiousness and unbelief from me.

March 14

(Ws.2:1,12-22; Ps.34:17-21,23; Jn.7:1-2,10,25-30)

The origins of Jesus are as our own, and yet how set apart - how holy He is from eternity. He is the Son of the Father, of whom all men of the earth are so jealous; He is the pure One who sparks their envy. And so does He suffer their abuse to save their souls from condemnation.

This morning I find needed rejuvenation as I come upon our priest and my little brother in prayer and praise before the Lord as I enter the church. As I woke this morning I was filled with question about the worth of my devotions, particularly my earlier rising. Should I not rather find rest in bed? (I must dread becoming mechanical.) But what joy and confirmation of my call I found in company with my fellow disciples this morning. I plan to join them for the Liturgy of the Hours tomorrow morning.

(This also awakens ideas of joining Benedictine monastery, whose life is set on Liturgy of the Hours. I believe I need and will find my joy in brotherhood.)

O Lord, form us in thine image.
May we find the joy of suffering the cross with thee.
Let us be so blessed to know you in the flesh.

March 15

(Jer.11:18-20; Ps.7:2-3,9-12; Jn.7:40-53)

"No one laid hands on Him." No. Not now. But soon,
very soon His blood would be shed. That time is upon us.

But He shall be guarded. And we, too, shall know
protection on that day, that day we must offer our lives.

(Liturgy of Hours with priest this morning - first time
sharing this sacred prayer. And though quite simple,
quite special - giving strength.)

Lord, watch over us as we share in your blessed cross -
its shadow does now overtake us.

March 16

(Jer.31:31-34; Ps.51:3-4,12-15; Heb.5:7-9;
Jn.12:20-33)

The time had come for Jesus to die. It was time for the Word to go forth to the Gentiles, and so Jesus, whose mission was to the Jews, knew it was time for His disciples to take over. Jesus would die and be raised up; and after being raised He would send the Spirit to write the name of the Lord upon the hearts of all His disciples, that they might follow Him, that the seed He planted might grow in them.

So many men have passed through time in Jesus' name, carrying the Word forth to all generations. There have been holy men and women carrying their crosses across all these twenty centuries. This is the family of God, the city of God - the kingdom of our Lord where we truly dwell. In the holy land with the angels and saints of heaven we find our true home.

O Lord, let your name be written on my heart,
that your will might be done in my life,
that I might grow into the man you would have me be.

March 17 (Dn.13:41-62; Ps.23:1-6; Jn.8:1-11)

In the Old Testament, under the Law of Moses,
the innocent are justly set free. In the New Testament,
in the grace of Christ, the guilty are set free...

Thank you, Jesus, for forgiving my sin.

(P.S. Someone finds a red hair upon my scalp -
I've always felt like an adopted Irishman.)

March 18

(Nm.21:4-9; Ps.102:2-3,16-21; Jn.8:21-30)

Yes, as Moses showed the people their sins by mounting a (bronze) serpent upon a pole, so Jesus reveals the coldness of our hearts in mounting the cross. But more than simply showing us our sins, both also mark the overcoming of sin. For the serpent, which is the manifestation of the Israelites' cold hearts, is captured, is frozen in bronze upon the pole; and in the crucifixion Jesus, too, not only clearly illustrates the depth of man's depravity, but also conquers sin itself, death itself: by surrendering Himself utterly to the power of darkness - seen in His death upon the cross - Jesus destroys Satan's power. For though nailed to a cross, never is He overcome - ever is He in heaven, ever is He going to His Father's home.

And so the Lord releases all those doomed to die in their sin by showing the limits of its power to kill - by calling all beyond this world.

And my own sins remain upon this plane; in this place I walk in darkness. Yet I have no fear, for Jesus leads me out of here, into the Father's arms.

O Lord, in your cry upon the cross
you mine the depth of our depravity
and open the door to release.

Set me free, dear Jesus;
let me not belong to this world.

(Jesus has conquered this world:
He has frozen its power in time,
as He enters eternity.)

March 19

(2Sm.7:4-5,12-14,16; Ps.89:2-5,27,29,37;
Rom.4:13,16-18,22; Mt.1:16,18-21,24)

Solomon, the son of David, is but the shadow of what is fulfilled in Jesus, Son of David, Son of God. Jesus fulfills the promise not under the law or as mere human progeny, but under faith and in grace. Jesus, though humble as the son of Joseph is, of course, the only Son of God.

On this feast of St. Joseph, husband of Mary, we celebrate Joseph's humble and obedient care and guardianship of Mary and her Son. With trust and in faith he led them through the snares of this world by the word of the angels.

We are called to do our part in guarding the Word of Christ and protecting His children. I am pleased to find the Lord blessing my little brother and his family this day, and I find words of guidance from the Lord as to my own call.

Open my heart to your voice, O Lord,
and the hearts of my brothers and sisters.
May we live as a holy family,
trusting in your promise.

(Have been meeting with two brothers and our priest these past few mornings for prayer and praise in church. May the Lord strengthen our unity and make us holy men.)

March 20 (Gn.17:3-9; Ps.105:4-9; Jn.8:51-59)

God is not dead and neither are His children;
they live eternally with Him.

Asked for chastisement today and the Lord answered
my prayer. Received a ticket for passing a stopped
school bus waiting for a delayed student ("others are
going...he's not pulling over..."). Things seemed bleak,
particularly upon learning of the penalty. (But I do
need greater patience...) And I must go to court.

Thinking about it most of the day. Doing my laundry
this evening, I wondered if the Lord could forgive me
and take away all penalties if I promised not to do it
(or anything like it) again. I realized that accepting
forgiveness and being truly penitent can be the most
difficult task - then you are bound by your word, by your
soul. Under the law, you pay mere temporal penalties,
which can often be repeated but do not lead to a change
of heart.

And the Lord gave me means of forgiveness: if I cancel
my collision I can make up the difference of the penalty;
and if I drive properly and trust in the Lord, I won't
need collision and I won't acquire any more points...
And the humble grace of His chastisement is upon me.

All is turned to good in the Lord, for He is alive
and always offering His grace forth in every situation.
Trust in Him and His promise.

Lord, you live eternally
and you know all things -
live always in my heart and soul.

March 21 (Jer.20:10-13; Ps.18:2-7; Jn.10:31-42)

O that the wicked might never triumph, that the mockery of the wayward ones, of the proud and arrogant, might become the dust of emptiness it is - that the Lord and His servants need not suffer at the hands of the enemy...

But the cross is imminent; it is wrought into the life of every Christian. It is only this which will bring pride to its knees.

Jesus will soon be captured; His day to die will come. He will be given over to the taunts of the wicked, to their murderous hands - and many will be saved thereby.

O Lord, may we triumph in love over our enemies.
May the hatred of this world never find a place in us.
May we truly believe in the way Jesus reveals.

(Thank you for redeeming me from my pride and anxiety -
for today I drive in grace,
and obedience brings blessing to my day.)

March 22 (Ez.37:21-28; Jer.31:10-13; Jn.11:45-56)

Before the day of the Lord's apprehension we are assured of the peaceful kingdom God will provide. After the sorrows of the coming week, we shall know Jesus' resurrection glory.

Dramatic irony, so much a part of the lives of we limited humans, is also so much a part of the Scriptures. Caiaphas knows not what he says, but he portends correctly that Jesus will die for the nation - though not the Jewish nation per se, for the children and the kingdom of God are universal. This is what their deed shall unknowingly wrought.

O Lord, may all thy suffering we know this week
in our penitent souls,
that all thy glory may be ours
when thy kingdom comes.

March 23

(Is.50:4-7; Ps.22:2,8-9,17-20,23-24;
Phil.2:6-11; Mk.15:1-39)

Passion Sunday, and the glorious celebration of palms is soon forgotten in the suffering, in the torture of our Savior.

It occurs to me that there was one moment in which God was silent, in which He who sustains all with His Word refrained from speaking, refrained from acting. In this moment He gave absolute freedom to man to do as he would - and he crucified the Son of God.

In the moment Jesus was abandoned, the Father was silent; and man spoke most clearly.

Do you see what you have done by your sin?
Do you see what your will leads to?
Has the sacrifice of Jesus opened your eyes
to the darkness within you and made you penitent
before the Lord?

Or do you go on insulting Him?

Lord, may we be humble;
may we be silent before thee.

March 24 (Is.42:1-7; Ps.27:1-3,13-14; Jn.12:1-11)

A few days before His own death, Jesus sits at table with a man He raised from the dead. (The poignancy of this strikes me.) And many have come to believe because of this man who was raised from death. And so Jesus must die - then all will come to see and know. His resurrection will bring light to man.

The Truth brings light and it must shine forth - of the evils of abortion, of the corruption of man's way, of the justice Christ brings... Though a wicked tongue of judgment must ever be avoided, the truth must come to light - and those of truth will accept it.

O Lord, I speak your truth in many ways today -
to friends and students and acquaintances...
forgive and heal any wickedness of my tongue:
may I quench no smoldering wick.

Prepare me for burial in the fortress of your truth.

March 25 (Is.49:1-6; Ps.71:1-6,15,17; Jn.13:21-33,36-38)

From birth we are called by the Lord. Before we were formed in the womb our lives were known by the mind of God. Some are called to prophesy the truth; some are of deception. (And one would be crucified for our sins.)

As I prepare to visit a monastery this Easter weekend, I wonder - could this be God's plan for me?

Lord, let me place my life in your hands.
May I fulfill your holy plan.

From thy quiver take my life
and shoot me as an arrow through darkness.

(Note: On the moral collapse of Western society:
it *is* difficult for the rich man to enter
the kingdom of God.)

March 26

(Is.50:4-9; Ps.69:8-10,21-22,31,33-34; Mt.26:14-25)

"I will praise the name of God in song."

Though it is raining this morning, I see students carrying musical instruments to school (must be band day) as I return home from church. I myself take my guitar to school to play with a friend. In song I proclaim the name of the Lord. Despite a predilection for secular sounds, the word does go forth and, I think, may have served to convert a few hearts.

Though the darkness is all around the Lord in the Scriptures today, yet His face is set like flint, and yet the psalmist encourages us to be joyful - for the light in the darkness is sure.

Lord, as you celebrate the Passover feast with your disciples,
 night falls as betrayal looms.
Yet you are not afraid,
 for you shall see that the darkness does pass away.

(And the sun did shine today.)

March 27

(Ex.12:1-8,11-14; Ps.116:12-13,15-18;
1Cor.11:23-26; Jn.13:1-15)

Holy Thursday - Mass of the Lord's Supper.

And now He is taken.

Tales of swords and clubs and war and violence today.
And though now He is taken, He leaves a remembrance:
He leaves His Body and Blood.

And He leaves us a sign, a symbol of service:
He bows down to wash the feet of His disciples.
And my own feet are washed tonight. And I think
of Jesus washing my feet, and I am overwhelmed.
And this is the absolute service we are called to -
in priesthood or religious life, and in all our lives.

Lord, call your children into blessed service;
sustain us with your sacrament along this way.
Let truth reign
and love be the order of the day.

May we not slumber in our cross.

March 28

(Is.52:13-53:12; Ps.31:2,6,12-13,15-17,25;
Heb.4:14-16,5:7-9; Jn.18:1-19:42)

Good Friday, and subdued and somber we pray throughout the day... and we cry.

What greater tragedy, what greater horror could there be than this: that God Himself is crucified by human hands, in human sin? And what greater love could there be than His acceptance and forgiveness...?

So real is the weight of these days becoming to my soul. And I continue to prepare for tomorrow's journey to the monastery.

O God, how is it we could have nailed you to the tree?
O God, how is it you could have forgiven me?
Though death is all around,
by your love you rescue me.

March 29

Holy Saturday, and I've arrived at the monastery where the vigil Mass is at 4 a.m. tomorrow - no Mass today, no readings.

The sky was so dark and the air so foreboding this morning - truly it felt like Holy Saturday. Occasionally rays of sunlight would peek through, but soon the dark would return. And here at the monastery this evening there is fog.

About this life there is something familiar, something natural. How well it shall continue to dovetail with my own, time will tell.

A thought: our greatest, most important work of art is our own life. And of that life God is the architect - He has the perfect plan. But we are the builders and we must execute that plan. (Has not Jesus done this perfectly?)

Thank you, Lord, for bringing to fulfillment
the Father's plan for your life -
now we shall reap its benefits.

March 30

(Acts 10:34,37-43; Ps.118:1-2,16-17,22-24;
Col.3:1-4; Jn.20:1-9)

Easter Sunday, and we now understand that Jesus had to rise from the dead. Alleluia! He is alive.

Easter Vigil, beginning outside the church around a wood fire - two and a half hours in no time. Mass for the day at 9:00. (Readings above reflect this Mass - rather than nine of vigil.) And prayer (and walking) throughout the day. Even eating of food seemed as prayer...

This is a place of peace where being is most important. It is much as I was ten years ago, and I feel very at home. What shall come, the Lord knows but I haven't decided. But the blessings of this Easter Day are plentiful.

Priest reminds us Easter lasts fifty days and this is but the first - this is a thought to remember.

Jesus, my Lord, remain with me,
and let me live with thee
in peace,
in love,
and in joy.

(And Happy Birthday to my sister.)

March 31 (Acts 2:14,22-33; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-11; Mt.28:8-15)

Into the Octave of Easter, and a coming to terms with the resurrection of Jesus: *His* body knew no corruption; He is risen from the dead, and so may we be with Him.

Peter proclaims the truth, founded in Scripture, as others promote lies and distortions. Much as today, when untruths are professed widely via the media, while the truth is suppressed by devilish forces... (This is true of abortion today and of so much else.) But the power of the truth, the power of His resurrection cannot be destroyed.

And it is reassuring to know of the hope for the immortality of our bodies, since I suffer some stomach ailment today - perhaps produced by "liberal" theology preached by priest at Mass this morning, casting doubt on Jesus' divinity (returned home in snow and rainstorm this morning) or by own physical weakness. But whatever the source - I know I shall find victory in Christ.

O Spirit of Truth, go forth to the ends of the earth,
and bring your children into obedience
and understanding of Christ the Lord.

April 1 (Acts 2:36-41; Ps.33:4-5,18-20,22; Jn.20:11-18)

As I arrive at church early this morning, the ground in front is covered in a thin sheet of snow. The snow is white, untouched, for I am the first to walk there.

Inside the church I praise the Lord on end with my parish priest, who has been alone the past couple of mornings. I myself had been longing to sing "Hallelujah" to the Lord - and His risen presence is in our midst; the gift of the Holy Spirit is with us.

(But what of the temptations I find in this society,
and what of the sickness now in my stomach.)

O Lord, make yourself known to us;
come and visit your disciples.
Leave your Holy Spirit with us
to guide us ever on the path to you.

April 2 (Acts 3:1-10; Ps.105:1-9; Lk.24:13-35)

Wonderful things are happening here, are they not?
And they are centered around the breaking of the
Eucharistic bread.

I miss morning Mass for the first time in the better part
of a year because of a stomach ailment that keeps me in
bed and away from all food for some twenty-four hours.
(After evening Mass I find it necessary to eat in order
to gain strength.)

And I am still trying to come to terms with the monks'
standing (and having the congregation stand) during
the consecration of the Eucharist - that most solemn
of miracles. I could not do so as it is and do not
believe there is provision for this, though I must
research a little further.

It is in this moment we encounter Jesus,
and this brings me to my knees.

Raise me up to praise thy name, dear Lord,
but may I never forget thou art my Lord.

April 3 (Acts 3:11-26; Ps.8:2,5-9; Lk.24:35-48)

Penance must be preached, yes, penance for all our sins - wrought in ignorance, yet still disposed to culpability.

Indeed, how ignorant we are. Had already been thinking this morning how all our sins are really born in our ignorance. ("Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.") So often we act as Satan's tools, unaware of the darkness we make.

Even the purveyors of immorality so entrenched in Hollywood, and the starlets and stars who are formed by their hands, are so ignorant of the tangled web of lust and greed and pride they weave. And so we must forgive and call to repentance all who stray.

We are but weak and ignorant men;
O Lord, how canst thou have called us
to such glory.

(And we know that for sinners there is hope -
for one who has stood as a sinner
is now with God, the Father.)

April 4 (Acts 4:1-12; Ps.118:1-2,4,22-27; Jn.21:1-14)

Jesus has the fish he'd caught and shows the disciples how many fish they shall catch by listening to His word.

It is, of course, St. Peter who hauls the catch of fish ashore. It is also Peter who stands up in the Spirit and catches the first number of significant fish - baptized men. He fearlessly stands in the temple and preaches that Name so disturbing to the priests, the Name they thought they'd crucified. But no. No, says Peter: He is alive. And by the truth of his word, many fish are caught - and will be caught.

I must eat fish myself today (though it is a fast day) to regain strength, that I might serve the Lord once more.

Revive me in thy Spirit and in thy grace, O Lord,
that I might join the work of Peter
and catch fish of my own.

May I rise from the grave
and enter into your joy.

April 5 (Acts 4:13-21; Ps.118:1,14-21; Mk.16:9-15)

Into the whole world goes the Word, and though it brings persecution to the speakers, it cannot be hindered.

Reading also today of early persecutions of the Church by the Romans. The mindset of pagan practice in these times is remarkable - the idols are much the same as those in the Old Testament world (in which, in a sense, they still lived - though they were able to persecute in a seemingly more "reasoned" way). But the outstanding sense I find is the power of the Spirit and the unity of these believers, and in all believers.

And the Word continues forth; and the world is brought to light - and the Light shall separate its children from darkness.

O Lord, grant us wisdom to see thine hand at work,
but mostly grant us the power to proclaim your Word
and the faith to know its promises.

(And today I pray devoutly for an end to abortion.)

April 6

(Acts 4:32-35; Ps.118:1,2-4,16-18,22-24;
1Jn.5:1-6; Jn.20:19-31)

On this Sunday when Thomas finds absolute faith in Christ, I believe I have finally found and accepted without fear, without doubt, the answer to the question which has plagued me so long. I sought truth on the matter and have opened my heart to hear the answer to my prayer. I know it is truth because it comes with great sadness - though the news is ultimately joyful.

I shall not marry. This is what I hear, and I resign myself to the fact. It is painful, as the truth is. (I think of Jesus' words to Peter that when he shall be older, another shall come and bind him and take him where he would not go.) But it is the answer to a long-held prayer, and so it is a great gift; thank God all illusion falls away.

I should have fully realized this long ago. And as I contemplate the sacrifice, I see Debussy's *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* on TV, and a brother reads of the seven brothers' torture in Maccabees at our prayer meeting. Though it does seem so deeply sorrowful, even now despair is not possible - for now Christ is with me. He it is I shall marry, and so my loneliness is turned to joy. So absolute joy awaits me, though I cannot shout it out here.

The cross you bless us with, Lord, teaches us who we are,
and so brings us unto life in heaven,
where I know I will see you, my Lord and my God.

April 7 (Is.7:10-14; Ps.40:7-11; Heb.10:4-10; Lk.1:26-38)

Celebration of Annunciation. (March 25 fell during Holy Week.) A child shall be born of a virgin.

In hearing the gospel today, I notice the angel's informing Mary of Elizabeth's pregnancy, which comes after telling her of her own call and before Mary's acceptance. I imagine the angel's tender assurance in this passage, helping Mary to understand and believe.

I know the Lord's annunciation of my own calling is upon me and shall become clearer in these fifty days. I pray He shall be so tender and understanding with me, and that I, too, might find such faith as she who is the model of Christians.

May it all become quite real, Lord,
your own flesh and blood in my life.
Modify my days to be in accord
with your Word.

April 8 (Acts 4:32-37; Ps.93:1-2,5; Jn.3:7-15)

We must not allow suspicion and fear to creep into our souls; we must ever remain open to others, all others, trusting in the Lord to set things right.

Today there is a distrust and a fear in my spirit, and this lack of love for others leads to sin. I am sick and weak this day, with a lack of breath, and so I stand not in the confidence of Christ.

But I hear the true teacher speak; I hear Him tenderly and gently instruct Nicodemus, himself a teacher. And I believe He concludes by letting Nicodemus know that he will understand the power of the Spirit when Jesus Himself is lifted up. (I only pray Christ's true light will dawn entirely upon me.)

O Lord, may I practice your will in my talents openly and in love.

As I do so, let your light of truth fill my mind.
(An artist for thee let me be.)

April 9 (Acts 5:17-26; Ps.34:2-9; Jn.3:16-21)

The Lord is good. He hears our prayers and sets us free.

I am set free twice today (at least): once in Confession, and once in trial.

Freed from sin I proclaim that if the Lord sets you free, you are free indeed - there is no need for shame. And most wonderfully the Lord hears my prayers for an honest judge, and to be honest myself, as I face trial for my moving violation (passing school bus). I had thought for some time what to say to the judge, then called upon the Holy Spirit as I was about to go up - and He gave me the words.

I pled guilty and simply said that I wanted the court to know I did not endanger anyone's life. In what was to me a miraculous moment, the judge looked up at me a moment, saw something, and reduced the charges to careless driving (two points instead of five) - which was to me eminently fair and just. I rejoiced at the Lord's blessing.

This experience convinced me that, as I know a priest has an office, so does a judge - an office which is not affected by personal sin: he still has the power, for all power is from God.

And continuing my gospel reflections - I wonder to realize that this most famous passage of theology is actually an intimate teaching at night to a man who is himself a judge. That which is used for such public conversion is actually a call to very personal conviction.

O Lord, may we always stand in your light.
May we be so set free from all chains of this dark world
by the truth of your word
and not judge one another.

April 10 (Acts 5:27-33; Ps.34:2,7,9,17-20; Jn.3:31-36)

Peter gives the testimony that is from above about the Man from above - as Jesus convinces Nicodemus he must be born from above to find life eternal.

But as for me I struggle with laryngitis and have difficulty giving testimony to the One who has given me life. My morning praise with our priest is almost muted, as is my proclamation of the Word (though somehow I manage) and my tutelage of students. Yet the Word goes forth.

And now I must find rest.

O Lord, I believe Nicodemus does rest with you.
I pray your Word penetrate the hardened hearts
of all those in power in this world.
May I see the renewal your Spirit brings.

April 11 (Acts 5:34-42; Ps.27:1,4,13-14; Jn.6:1-15)

Whether whipped or praised it does not matter;
what is important is that we dwell in the house
of the Lord.

No voice today. No lecturing, pantomime and writing as
teacher; manage, too, to shop for soup kitchen (would be
easier if I had the faith to multiply the loaves). I do
not yet understand the significance of this phenomenon,
but it has made me see how much my voice is part of my
work and call. Perhaps it may humble me...

But, again, on we go - voice or no - into the arms
of the Lord who feeds us.

Lord, that I could trust in you so
that it would not matter these things...

Thank you for the grace to remain with you.
(Let me come to you for my healing.)

April 12 (Acts 6:1-7; Ps.33:1-2,4-5,18-19,22; Jn.6:16-21)

Jesus is with us; He is before us always. Have faith.

During Holy Hour I find my attention distracted somewhat, but repeatedly I look up - and Jesus is there. (The winds of this world can bring difficulty, but with Jesus we are unmoved and find ourselves ever where we ought to be.)

I see my brother today (who is up from Florida), and my voice gradually returns - enough to pray for his soul. (Mighty is our God, and if we are in right relationship with Him, all is well and will be well.)

And on this day I serve at table, we hear of the institution of deacons.

Lord, your power be ever with me to guide me;
with faith in you all evil is overcome.

Let us be at the shore we are approaching.

April 13

(Acts 3:13-15,17-19; Ps.4:2,4,7-9; 1Jn.2:1-5;
Lk.24:35-48)

For our sins, He died.
To take them away, He waits
for us to turn to Him.

He is the intercessor,
and we are called to be like Him -
praying with the weapons of light and love
for all on the face of the earth.

There is time;
He has granted opportunity to us.
There is reason;
He has clearly shown us the way.

Now we must act on His call.

O Lord, make us true servants
to cry out the way to thee.
Forgive the sinfulness that keeps us away.

April 14 (Acts 6:8-15; Ps.119:1,23-24,26-27,29-30; Jn.6:22-29)

At the very end of his sermon this morning, the priest says that the readings (gospel) which follow this week could "change your life." (He looks directly at me as he says it.) And I believe him.

I seek today. I seek not to work for perishable food. I seek to turn to Jesus and genuinely and completely offer Him my life. I seek His direction.

I fear entrenchment in the work I do. Though it may be beneficial to others, though I offer it to God... yet it is not (it seems to me) the work of Christ. And in my break in the middle of a busy day (and night) of teaching - I again contemplate what it is the Lord would have me do - I again offer myself to be a laborer in His field.

What else have I but my life to give?
And what else will suffice but this flesh and bone?

May I stop and turn to you, Lord;
trusting in you may I offer my life.
Fulfillment of my call is what I seek -
speak to me this week.

April 15 (Acts 7:51-8:1; Ps.31:3-4,6-8,17,21; Jn.6:30-35)

It is so, is it not - Jesus gives us life.
Here is the Bread we need to survive.

Take refuge in Him; hide beneath His wings.

And oh the power in the words Stephen speaks:
"Lord, do not hold this sin against them."
Is this not what brings us to heaven?
Is this not that which conquers death
and brings us to life?
Greater love has no man than this,
and it is love which gives life.

(Seeking to find the call I feel upon me, I think of Mary
and her troubled heart at the angel's greeting - for how
can she understand? How can she know to trust this
which she has never known? And I remember the angel's
reassurance re Elizabeth, and I believe that Mary must
have prayed for her sister to be fruitful, with all
her heart I think. And so when her good prayer is
answered, she believes, and gives her life.)

O Lord, looking back we cannot go forward
or we shall walk into a wall.
Convict my heart of the path onto which you lead me -
be my bread of life.

April 16 (Acts 8:1-8; Ps.66:1-7; Jn.6:35-40)

The Lord raises up all who are bowed down,
who are bowed down to His glory;
His miracles abound in faithful hearts.

Give us this day our daily bread, O Lord.
Lift us up this day in joy.
To your call keep us obedient, Lord;
let your word go forth.

O what joy to eat His body and drink His blood
every day of our lives! Amen.

(Note: Watching film re Cesar Chavez and the UFW
and their struggles against the powers that be -
through suffering goes forth truth.)

April 17 (Acts 8:26-40; Ps.66:1,8-9,16-17,20; Jn.6:44-51)

And where is my obedience?

(To a foreigner I, too, go today
to beg forgiveness -
thereby perhaps to show the Christian attitude.)

Draw me closer, O Lord,
for I am a forgetful soul.
How soon your grace and my resolve may escape me.
May the food which nourishes me each day
remain with me.

April 18

(Acts 9:1-20; Ps.117:1-2,Mk.16:15; Jn.6:52-59)

Saul is struck blind on the road to Damascus,
and I am, too, on Kennedy Boulevard.

In the afternoon I see a red light too late, for as I hit the brakes, my car slides on the wet road into another. There are no injuries, and the damage, though significant, is not beyond repair - but I am afraid; I am blinded. I thought my car and driving protected by the Lord, but of late, incident follows upon incident... and so I must somehow avoid what could happen next.

But it is not immediately apparent to me what the Lord is telling me. I seem to be doing well. However, perhaps my prayer and fasting is but a knocking upon the door, perhaps these practices fall short of the threshold, and the Lord would have me enter into His house. Is the Lord calling me to conversion of life? I cannot ignore the signs, though I am unclear of the way.

Lord, let me not continue blind to your call.
Let me not continue in ignorance and error.
May your conversion be complete in my soul,
that I might fully partake of your food.

April 19 (Acts 9:31-42; Ps.116:12-17; Jn.6:60-69)

He has the words of life, and we are the body of Christ, living in His word. By this Word Peter raises the dead, and by this Word even to this day we are fed.

The Church is at peace (re gospel), but I am troubled as I seek the Lord. For the first time this day I could see myself serving as a priest - but also this day are grave doubts wrought by my own weakness.

I am searching in fasting and prayer and service. I am seeking a change. I should like to give up my teaching, my car, my life - but there is no certainty in me. How much do I seek in vain?

There is a world of peace and service in Jesus;
how shall I find myself at rest with God?

I do not wish to leave you, Lord,
but to find your presence -
calm our troubled hearts,
and let us rest in you
and in your Word
(a word so few speak this day).

April 20

(Acts 4:8-12; Ps.118:1,8-9,21-23,26,28-29;
1Jn.3:1-2; Jn.10:11-18)

We are the sheep not of the fold of Jews;
we are the Gentiles called by the voice of the Lord.

And we hear.

Do you hear Him calling?
Are you His sheep?
Are you indeed children of God?

He is the cornerstone rejected by the builders.
He is the Messiah prophesied for the Israelites;
He is from the living God, the Son Most High,
and for us, too, He has come, and calls.

Good Shepherd, gather us into your one fold.

(The priest changes his sermon this morning to a personal
and local reflection on vocations after I inquire of him
my suitability to the priesthood. "Why did you change
my sermon?" he asks. But still I see how unsuitable I
am.)

April 21 (Acts 11:1-18; Ps.41:3,42:2-3,43:3-4; Jn.10:1-10)

In prayer this morning I am convicted of my own attempts at entering the sheepfold other than through the gate, of the slander and deceitfulness (and pride) of my tongue. I stand at the doorstep to wickedness and grave sin, and must turn and flee. And I find penance.

I allay my guilt of speaking not well of, of judging, priests; I am granted the opportunity to humbly serve our foreign priest this morning. To rectify my deceitfulness I directly approach a superior at work, whose permission I sought not to use some equipment in a doubtful manner. And so I escape the circle of sin...

To be a deacon - is this the conclusion?
As I descend from the podium (after reading), as I do every day at Mass, and step to my place in the pew, I feel most comfortable as a bridge between clergy and layman. (If a priest, I might lose this grace.) And I am reminded of the 'go-between' nature of my character.

May we enter always into your sheep gate, O Lord,
and hear your blessed voice.
Make even we who are strangers, of your fold.

April 22

(Acts 11:19-26; Ps.87:1-7,117:1; Jn.10:22-30)

The sheep are gathered together, and the gathering grows. Until this day, the Church Christ founded continues to grow, and He watches over it.

How things develop and move through time. Yet all time is one and we are connected directly to those who came before (however far back) and those who will come after (however far forward). The Church is one and there is no snatching it from the Father's hand.

And we as a Church must choose love and choose to enter by the sheep gate. Today I think about how we have a choice. In an anxious moment, I could have gotten angry and raised my voice (or worse) - but I chose instead to speak even more kindly and with love. And confronted with a shortcut that is blocked, I could have forced my way past a fence (as many do) - but I chose to go around.

Speaking last night (and today) about the plight of the black man in this country, I think he now has a choice - anger in retribution for past injustice... or - and it is not easy, but in his capacity - to forgive.

We as Christians following in the footsteps of our Lord are called upon to do as He did - to suffer for the sins of others though not guilty ourselves, that they might be saved. This is painful, but redeeming.

O Lord, bless your Church unto this day
and bring it to a bright future
in the light of the New Jerusalem.

April 23

(Acts 12:24-13:5; Ps.67:2-6,8; Jn.12:44-50)

The Word goes forth, the Light goes out... to the ends of the earth; and that Word is like food for a starving man. (And if that man refuses to eat, can he blame the soul who extends his kindness of causing his demise?)

And the bushel is edged off my own lamp this day, as I read a couple of pieces the Spirit has given me to a group at college. It is refreshing to me because, though I am afraid of pride, I begin to realize the truth - that it is not I who have written these poems, etc. This is what I must learn: that I am promoting the Holy Spirit and not myself.

O Lord, let me go forth only in and of your Spirit;
only as one with you and obedient to your command
is anything I do worthwhile.

Let my soul proclaim your greatness in humility.

(Note: I am inspired to sing "Magnificat" with priest this morning; then my penance (from another priest) is to thoughtfully say the "Magnificat".)

April 24 (Acts 13:13-25; Ps.89:2-3,21-22,25,27; Jn.13:16-20)

As He served, so must we serve;
as He died, so must we die.

"No slave is greater than his master,"
and He is ours.

So we know the limits of ourselves;
so we are released from vain grandeur -
for He is all.

But I am grieved this day by such lack of acceptance
in the Church for the one He sent - and so for Him,
and the Father. Bishops and theologians rebel against
the Pope and the cardinals, against the Fathers of the
Church, against the teaching of the ages - seeking to
take matters into their own unholy hands. I am grieved
that it is so much in the priesthood. (But I yet respect
their authority.)

The hard words of truth are so far from the mouths
of your chosen ones, Lord;
they will not die to self or to the world.

And so, what fate have we?
How shall we serve?

Lord, you know who raises his heel against thee.
Cast him out, and bless your children of light.

April 25

(1Pt.5:5-14; Ps.89:2-3,6-7,16-17; Mk.16:15-20)

Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God
and He shall bless you;
the gifts of the Holy Spirit shall flourish in your
life
and so the Word will go forth.

St. Mark, the evangelist. I've patiently waited for this day to expound upon humility and dying in Christ. In the readings it is mentioned, and in a song I wrote inspired by Mark's gospel ("Weightless Crucifixion"), I witness that as Christ is gradually drained of physicality with every healing and grace-filled teaching, so He gradually grows to spirituality - returning to the Father.

Lately, my prayer has been to remain faithful to Christ unto death, knowing that such utter love is needed to complete my (or anyone's) call. Jesus had a death to die, and so do we.

Reflecting on my life and the stages of its movement, it seemed to me I might be in the final one - one of wisdom and the patience of bearing the birth pangs. (Every seven or eight years seems another step.) Though this may not mean a physical death, it may at least mean a death to sin in a call to serve Christ.

And today I handle serpents (the temptations particularly of attractive women), rebuke the arrogant, and speak in a new tongue (of humble love after having been angry with a man). It is signs like these that follow those reborn.

Lord, may I know the sweetness of death in you,
for in it is life in heaven.
Humble me that I might perform thy exalted works,
works that are only of thee.

(P.S. I speak in tongues of the Spirit in prayer, too,
calling for healing of human tragedy.)

April 26 (Acts 13:44-52; Ps.98:1-4; Jn.14:7-14)

Doing the works of He - how do we?
Where do we find the faith
to be with Him and so the Father?
How shall we find that place?

To be as the Son
through a purifying fire we go -
but these persecutions matter nothing.

So More and the good bishops and monks go to death,
as Paul and Barnabus suffer in joy.
So the church is heated to blasting this day,
to purge out the dross.

And I am emptied of food...
And this morning I see below the posts of a gate
(as I pray before a statue of the Blessed Virgin),
the lines of dirt and rust that have fallen on the
sidewalk
through many cleansing showers.

(And surprised am I to turn around at Mass this morning
and see my childhood friend and his father -
today is the anniversary of the death
of my religious mother.)

O Lord, even here where we stand beneath the rains of heaven,
cleanse and purify us body and soul,
that we might prepared be
for our holy communion.

April 27

(Acts 9:26-31; Ps.22:26-28,30-32; 1Jn.3:18-24;
Jn.15:1-8)

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. He is all to us. He is the source of life for us. If our faith rests in Him, what is not possible? (The thought is overwhelming.)

And He is so close to me this day. Though simple and unexceptional, in prayer and song this morning, afternoon, and evening, I feel His presence clearly. (In singing a song of my own, "Branch of the Vine," I am almost frightened.)

What convinced the apostles of Paul's faith but his conversation with Christ? What does John tell us but to believe in Jesus? And what does Jesus say but to live in Him?

I want to be one with Jesus.

Lord, I worship and adore you;
O Jesus, be my spouse.

(At prayer meeting this night only women and a child - somehow naturally holier and of love.
We all must be so submissive to Christ
to find the reality of His presence.)

April 28

(Acts 14:5-18; Ps.115:1-4,15-16; Jn.14:21-26)

We are not of Adam, nor of the earth and its paganism.
We are of the new Adam. We are of Jesus, and if of Jesus,
then one with the Father - He the Creator of heaven
and earth. On things above may our hearts be set.

Where shall I go? What indeed shall I do?
How shall I realize my potential?

O Lord, let your Word travel to every shore.
Let the light of your truth penetrate all hearts.

Thy kingdom come,
and in *your* love let us stand.

April 29 (1Jn.1:5-2:2; Ps.145:10-13,21; Jn.14:27-31)

(St. Catherine of Siena - thus the special first reading...

which tends to disrupt the logic of the liturgy of the day, but, I suppose, must open us up to the Spirit speaking.)

God is light. In Him there *is* no darkness.

Tonight I attend a writer's group and read the lyric for "Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder" - if the eye is of light, if it is pure and of God, then indeed all is beautiful. For life itself is a wonder.

We go on through this world, and though there is persecution and suffering, and though we are beset by sin at every turn - Jesus' peace is with us; He exists to bring forgiveness. And by His light, and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we accomplish the work of the day and are brought into unity with Christ in the Father...

O Lord, give us this day our daily bread
to sustain and strengthen us.
May we turn to you always for the light of forgiveness
and come to know your peace
even in a dark world.

(Come back around to my heart, dear Lord -
let all souls return to you.)

April 30

(Acts 15:1-6; Ps.122:1-5; Jn.15:1-8)

Because they lived as branches of the vine of Jesus, the apostles, and especially St. Peter, were empowered to sit on the judgment seats of Jerusalem. And so does the tree (the Church) continue to grow to this day, yet founded in Jesus.

Though I have yet to discern the Lord's call,
I do find a confidence growing within.
Soon I may be able to stand in decision.

Lord, may the grace of your living water
 cleanse and strengthen
 my branches -
that your works be accomplished in me.

May 1 (Acts 15:7-21; Ps.96:1-3,10; Jn.15:9-11)

Our joy is indeed made complete in Him who sends us...
To the nations goes the Word of God.

Though the readings do not reflect it, this is the
feast of St. Joseph the Worker; and to stand so strong,
as Peter before the council, do I seek today.

I say good-bye (for a time) to a tutoring job at one
college today, and begin to sense the vacation I've been
desiring (but won't I miss work?): I begin to breathe.

And this morning, though it is cloudy outside, there is
light in my eyes - I understand the eye as the lamp of
the body; I sense the purity of vision. And considerable
temptation I withstand without a second thought, with no
effort (but love).

What hast thou in store, O Lord, for my soul?
How greatly shall you bless me?
What will you do with my life?

I shall go where you lead me.

(The triptych I painted, "Children of Vision," upon which
Children of Light is based, has but eyes of light in the
third frame... Is there a way home?)

May 2 (1Jn.5:1-5; Ps.57:8-12; Mt.10:22-25)

(Readings of feast of St. Athanasius.)

Indeed, I feel strangely persecuted this day. I seem to see mockery in all about me at school today - even those I walked and jested with as friends. It began in class with a troublesome student, spread some there, and continued outside the doors... The pursuance continued in dreams this afternoon.

But fellowship found in prayer meeting this night, wherein nun speaks of repentance and need to weep for our sins and others'... I will bear the sins of others, for I believe Jesus is the Son of God, and His work is not burdensome.

I love you, Lord;
 shepherd me home -
 at your feet I humbly seek mercy.

Make me like you.

May 3 (1Cor.15:1-18; Ps.19:2-5; Jn.14:6-14)

Philip and James. And all the apostles are sent forth in Christ to reveal the Word of God. We go forth in our separate worlds, in our separate lives, but all as children of God and doing His will - for we have seen Him.

We have seen Him and we know Him, and we know nothing else is significant but to bear fruit in His Name.

And what glory to see the answer to our prayer, to see His hand at work in our lives and realize how faithful He is. To be as the Body of Christ - what a phenomenal call to be in Him and so the Father.

Though persecution may abound, yet light surrounds us - of light we are.

O Lord, what glory to have seen you,
to have thus known the Father -
found this faith in us
and send us forth.

May 4 (Acts 10:25-26,34-35,44-48; Ps.98:1-4;
1Jn.4:7-10; Jn.15:9-17)

Now come the nations. Praise the Lord!
They, too, are made one in God's love.

We must accept all others, be one with all our brothers
and sisters - in such unity is love. For we are not
alone in the Lord; none are excluded from His love.

Some difficulty, from pride, in fellowship.
A separating from and looking down and askance
at others produces anxiety and distraction.

I see clearly the other side of peace is unity. If in
striving after peace in oneself, one cuts oneself off
from others - never shall one find peace. It is in
seeing we are one with others, others are a part of us
as we are all a part of Christ, and in Christ there is
no separation, that we discover true peace in ourselves.
To do this we must love.

I see I need to enter communion with others; I see its
necessity for my fulfillment. I must lay down my life
either in marriage or communal life - by myself I am
incomplete: in lack of unity is lack of love and, so,
of God.

Thank you, Lord, for your revelations to us;
let us live your love in completeness -
let us lay down our lives for one another.

May 5 (Acts 16:11-15; Ps.149:1-6,9; Jn.15:26-16:4)

In bearing witness there are trials, certainly, but there are always consolations. The Spirit consoles us in all things, even as Paul is consoled in the hospitality of Lydia.

Shopping for food today, a Columbian man recommends nutritious food, which I pick up at his suggestion. I buy, too, an organic bee product at a health store...

The Lord provides for your needs. He places in your path those who will guide you and nourish you. His eye is watching o'er your way.

Where shalt thou lead me, O Lord?
And how shall I fend for myself?
It is but true that we need only choose thy path,
and all shall follow suit.

May 6 (Acts 16:22-34; Ps.138:1-3,7-8; Jn.16:5-11)

At the point of death, how many have turned from their sin. And so we turn the other cheek, that they might be released from their prison of ignorance and violence - that they might be saved.

Watching a program about the occupation of Tiannamen Square... brave as many souls may be, and sincere as is their attitude - only Jesus grants liberation. He must permeate the people; then they shall be free.

O Lord, set us free from the prison which holds us,
the sundry prisons of this universe -
when will the prince of this world be condemned?

("He has been condemned,
for I live -
turn from your sin.")

May 7 (Acts 17:15,22-18:1; Ps.148:1-2,11-14,Is.6:3;
Jn.16:12-15)

There is in the hearts of all men a longing for the truth. All are children of the one Father, and all seek the face of Him who has begotten them.

Jesus is the only way to finding what man seeks. For He alone is truth; He alone is one with the Father; and He alone sends the Spirit of Truth to speak to men's hearts.

He alone is risen from the dead.
Praise Him!

O Lord, bless and protect me as you do.
Send forth your Spirit to instruct me in all things,
for I am deaf and in need of your Word.

I believe in you.

May 8 (Acts 1:1-11; Ps.47:2-3,6-9; Eph.1:17-23; Mk.16:15-20)

He will return, and He is here.
Though ascended, He remains,
and works in all who profess His Name.

In all ways and in all things the Lord may work in
your lives. In anything you do and wherever you are,
the Lord may be present. He is today, and so I praise
His Name in joy.

At church - in praise and worship, prayer, Mass,
and picking up a ring a woman'd dropped; at work -
in guiding students along even lines (of writing);
at cemetery - planting flowers; in cleaning house
and clothes, and on the phone; at poetry meeting -
where light is shone... yes, everywhere and in
everything the presence of Christ is known.

Ascension Thursday last year I wrote how we must go
'out' to others rather than look 'up' for Jesus -
and today, this is done.

(I've been so preoccupied with 'what to do'... but today
I see the many ways Jesus may work in one's life.)

Lord, this is my life -
take all I am.
A child let me be for you.

May 9 (Acts 18:9-18; Ps.47:2-8; Jn.16:20-23)

Beginning of novena of prayer in anticipation of the coming of the Holy Spirit, and I feel very much in tune with the character of these days. The joy about to fall is with me now, and I feel ready to give birth to the Spirit in my life.

Throughout Lent and this Easter Season I have been praying steadily for direction, for discernment, and I am hearing the answer of my prayers. It has been a long road, but fulfillment is nigh. Soon no questions will I ask.

"There are many of my people in this city," says the Lord. And to speak to those around me, whomever they may be, the Lord does call me.

Lord, I praise you for the joy you give me,
for being so faithful to me
and hearing my prayer.

Bring to fulfillment your word in me.

May 10 (Acts 18:23-28; Ps.47:2-3,8-10; Jn.16:23-28)

Because He is with the Father, our prayers now go directly to the Father, who loves us as He loves His Son. And it is the Holy Spirit that now empowers our prayer so.

Father, I ask for an end to abortion,
for an end to divorce,
and adultery, and fornication.

I ask for an end to greed,
an end to pride and envy -
a coming of your kingdom, O Lord.

Let it be so.

(And by prayer, in union with the working of the Holy Spirit, I conquer stumbling blocks today - I am not afraid.
And while bowling, after doing poorly I think to pray - and when I pray I do well (and witness to this also).
Not that I care how I play, but I am strengthened in faith and joyful to see the Lord at work in my life.)

In strength let me speak your word, O Lord.

May 11 (Acts 1:15-17,20-26; Ps.103:1-2,11-12,19-20;
1Jn.4:11-16; Jn.17:11-19)

The Lord watches over us, and sends us forth.
He chooses us to do His will, and His will is love.
His mighty messengers guard our path and lead us onward.

Angels are about me like ants at a picnic (or in my
kitchen). The helpless and the homeless and the sick
and diseased desire our prayers. And will we love them?

Upon the end of a fruitless venture in my car, stopped
at a light a woman with a can and a sign approaches me.
(Again, I hadn't seen her when I drove up, and the road
was rather deserted.) I gave her a dollar and commented
it seemed a dangerous area. I asked her if she had a
place to stay. She said, "For now," and asked me to pray
for her - said that was more important than anything
else. Her name was 'Zenia'...

Thought she might have been an angel, then, watching
TV this evening (prayer meeting suspended), a show
about angels' work sort of confirmed my thoughts.

What is the Lord saying? I have a guitar and a voice.
And I teach foreigners (xena) ESL. And prayer is all-
important...

Lord, I pray I shall find my proper place at your table;
I pray you shall prepare me so.
Bless all those in need of your love.

(The Lord prays the best for us
and so do our mothers -
are my songs and writings my children?)

May 12 (Acts 19:1-8; Ps.68:2-7,33; Jn.16:29-33)

There is a fire to be lit upon this earth;
the Holy Spirit brings the flame,
and we are the wood to be consumed.

The sacrifice of the cross
is fuel for the recreation of man.

(Two cents I find upon the altar rail before the candles
placed near the Blessed Sacrament
as I prepare to play guitar and sing and praise
this morning -
is this fuel for the fire of my call?)

O Lord, may our voices which call upon your Holy Spirit
be heard and answered in earnest.
Let your fire fall upon us.

Alleluia!

May 13 (Acts 20:17-27; Ps.68:10-11,20-21,33; Jn.17:1-11)

Poignant readings, as both Paul and Jesus prepare for the coming of the end of their lives on earth by laying down their lives to their followers. These words instruct us how intent we must be on accomplishing the will of the Father. (It also evident that we are Jesus' body, we are called to continue His work - even as Paul is like Jesus - for Jesus says He is glorified in us.)

I attend a presentation on self-publishing this evening, still considering what the Lord would have me do - particularly with *Children of Light*.

Lord, may I live up to your call;
may your will be accomplished in my life.
Let no stone remain unturned in my search
to live in your presence.
Let all that would be done, be done in thee.

(Note: the daily duty is completed -
novena continued, soup kitchen shopping done,
Mass, prayers, Confession, music, writing...)

May 14 (Acts 1:15-17,20-26; Ps.113:1-8; Jn.15:9-17)

Called to love, called to serve -
we are chosen for this by the Lord.

To find our place in the hand of the Lord,
we must lay down our lives
and surrender our wills to the Spirit.

The Lord blesses my writing today, finishing two short
works, and organizes songs for potential performance.
I sense the bearing of fruit upon me.

O Lord, where thou would have us be,
let us be,
happily.

All your children draw into your fold.

May 15 (Acts 22:30,23:6-11; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-11; Jn.17:20-26)

If the Lord should come and stand before you
or simply send His angel to speak at your side -
how could one bear it?

If the Lord should reveal to your heart
all the love He holds for you,
and all the love you must hold for others...
How - ?

(All I have are tears and a fear of its awesome wonder,
and the weight of its beauty.)

But if He should not,
of what worth would be your life?

(This passage is a prayer answered by the Lord,
who is always with us.)

Lord, thank you for thinking of me
even as you were about to die.
And thank you for speaking aloud,
that even my too-human ears
might hear your voice.

Let me be where you are, always.

(Epiphany of light and of peace
in the midst of disturbing clamor.)

May 16 (Acts 25:13-21; Ps.103:1-2,11-12,19-20; Jn.21:15-19)

Almost against my will I go to Hoboken tonight and sit
amongst the poets of modern nihilism. They read paeans
to Allen Ginsburg; I recite songs of innocence -
and come home racked with sobs for the lost souls.

Are there lambs here to be fed, O Lord?
Is there purpose to my witness?

O Lord, save these souls so led astray;
free these slaves to a chained master.

(A rose of life I offer you...)

May 17 (Acts 28:16-20,30-31; Ps.11:4-5,7; Jn.21:20-25)

Who can know the mind of God
and the things that are done by His grace?
God looks down on all
and orderest all things -
all is infused by His holy light.

All that Jesus did was a miracle,
for He Himself was marvelous.
And, too, now all things are wondrous,
for all is under His Spirit.

Come, Holy Spirit,
let your fire of life now fall
and illumine the hearts of men
with your purity.

(Step by step we walk into heaven,
but oh how we are constrained
until the time is fulfilled -
the things that make for heaven!

Alone in a room we wait.)

May 18 (Acts 2:1-11; Ps.104:1,24,29-31,34; 1Cor.12:3-7,12-13;
Jn.20:19-23)

The power of the Holy Spirit,
the power to fill the room in which we dwell,
the power to make us one in His Name -
the power He gives to proclaim salvation.

Here is the fulfillment of Scripture
now going forth,
calling all Jews under the sun;
and the disciples, once fearful, now become bold.

With Pentecost comes the end of the Easter Season
and a return to Ordinary Time. May we, renewed,
now go forth to preach His Name with all our lives.

Hallelujah!

And a sign is given me this day: after watering the
flowers upon my sister's grave, I look up to see how
much light they might still have today. Around the sun
in a perfect circle is a rainbow. The circle was wide,
and whole. I marveled at it for a good ten or fifteen
minutes. As I was leaving the cemetery, it disappeared.

(And I get a new light switch in my music room.)

O Lord, fill us with that power from above.
Send us forth as children to proclaim your Name,
in love and unafraid.

Your hope is with us.
(Eternal life awaits us.)

May 19 (Sir.1:1-10; Ps.93:1-2,5; Mk.9:14-29)

Entering into Ordinary Time, it is appropriate to see Jesus in the gospel coming down from the mountain after the Transfiguration, and now having to deal with the problems of the earth again.

Yes, He walked the earth like you and I, but now - and always - He sits on the throne at the right hand of God, far above us and our human ways, possessing all wisdom and understanding and power.

(And as a storm thunders outside my window, I know all things are in His hands.)

Today a friend shows considerable wisdom and ingenuity in fixing the hood of my car; my students score well on their practice tests; and I read the wise words of a respected (and true) theologian.

O Lord, may we enter upon your call with all wisdom and grace.
Heal me, Lord, of all sin and disease,
and let it never come back again.

(In the Lord are we blessed.)

May 20 (Sir.2:1-11; Ps.37:3-5,18-19,27-28,39-40; Mk.9:30-37)

Why is it with difficulty I trust in the Lord?
Why is it with hesitation I turn to Him in time of
distress?

He is certainly there, and blesses those who love Him -
but I am sometimes lacking in that love.

This morning as I pray in penance before the Blessed
Sacrament, the children play outside the church in the
school playground. I cry. (It is innocence we lack.)
And I go to a park to see my friend's young son in a race
- many children about...

What can I say? If I but had humility, and love,
and innocence - and trust in the Lord...

But driving today I find a sense that I need not worry
where I am - wherever I am the Lord watches over.

O Lord, let us turn to you and trust in you
as an innocent child.

May 21 (Sir.4:11-19; Ps.119:165,168,171-172,174-175;
Mk.9:38-40)

In need of wisdom today. In need of discernment.
Played a couple of songs at an open mike in a bar
in Hoboken (one a capella, actually). Continue to
question if this is a place for me - religious songs
in a bar? Also, my guitar playing skills do not measure
up. All I can think is perhaps to play *the Children of
Light* songs there and see - failed to play one tonight.
(Or perhaps a monastery is the only place they'll fit.)

Wisdom is wonderful, nevertheless. It is a blessing
to follow the law of the Lord. I only pray the voice
of wisdom become clearer to my mind, and that I will
learn better to take refuge in her.

Let me be with you, Lord.
Let all who are for you be as one.

O Wisdom, my guide, be with me.

May 22 (Sir.5:1-8; Ps.1:1-4,6,40:5; Mk.9:41-50)

In an unexpected hour of prayer, I turn my eyes inward and call on the Lord to reveal to me what conversion is needed. I find an inhospitability, a lack of openness and love. I cannot honestly invite Jesus into my home because I do not invite others into my home. My heart remains cold and my mind dark to the Lord's presence. (I am reminded of Benedict's rule regarding hospitality: greet others as Jesus.)

And in consideration of last night's failings, I realize I neither sought nor accepted the counsel of the Lord and His wisdom, but vainly and futilely asked insight of others: wisdom of the world. I see my lack of confidence in Christ, my reasoning away His call - my hesitation, my lack of courage in doing His will is sad and must be cast out. I must stand and walk with Christ and the Spirit.

Finally, in contemplation of the angels and saints of heaven, seeking company with them, I find unity with all and the peace which passes understanding. With mind and heart on heaven, the things of this world are transcended.

So, I must greet all brothers well and be in union with all God's children, but not linger in the throes of this generation - and cast out all its evil in me.

O Lord, none is perfect, and so we grow.
Indeed, let us grow to maturity in you,
obedient to your hard words.

Let me not be afraid to stand naked with you.

(Note: With the changing of season to Ordinary Time, the robe which clothed the crucified Christ above our altar was removed - I noticed this yesterday but failed to realize its significance re baring my soul (in song).)

O how many straying Catholics there are!
(Yet, a remnant remains on earth.)

May 23 (Sir.6:5-17; Ps.119:12,16,18,27,34-35; Mk.10:1-12)

Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
Gloriously redeeming is the fear of the Lord.
(May it cleanse us so.)

Was speaking with another about an acquaintance/friend who to no one's knowledge (especially not mine) had separated from his wife some time ago. It seemed he spoke to no one about his situation, and I expressed my concern for his emotional state. Another said how sometimes people don't feel they can trust anyone. (Yet a friend *is* a needful treasure.)

I find myself in uncertainty about a friendship, and require discernment to know the direction it should go... Forgiveness is necessary, but repeated betrayal must be avoided.

And, re gospel, had a dream last night in which I realized a father's, and specifically my own father's, sacrifice for his children. Parents lay down their own lives, their own dreams, for their children.

How selfish am I in not bearing children?

O Lord, please keep desire for your Word
and fear of your presence
close to my heart,
that I may lay down my life according to your command.

Remove all selfishness from me.

May 24 (Sir.17:1-15; Ps.103:13-18; Mk.10:13-16)

We are all God's little children.
And all are redeemed by His Son. Hallelujah!

Thinking of the dent in my car, I rejoice in the Lord's forgiveness - for where sin abounds, His grace abounds all the more. And I am filled with joy as a child.

I find my pick on the altar rail after receiving Communion. We pray in our Holy Hour for an end to abortion; and I see in the wood of my dresser an image of the Queen of Heaven, pregnant, praying in a womb. (I also finish a work of art of the exposed Blessed Sacrament.)

Our Mother shall give birth to God's children, the Church - new hope is upon us. Her Son shall hold us in His arms, and we shall be one again in the peace of His presence.

Lord, take all violence from us;
let us live as your blessed children.
Bless the lives of all those born of you.

May 25

(Dt.4:32-34,39-40; Ps.33:4-6,9,18-20,22;
Rom.8:14-17; Mt.28:16-20)

Trinity Sunday, and the earth is baptized by a steady rain which falls throughout the day...

Two hours of prayer and praise and Mass this morning in church - we are called to be one with God who is One.

Two hours spent in bringing Communion to a local Home - baptisms in church as we leave; joy as we serve.

Two hours of prayer and worship in church this evening. And before I go, an hour of reflection at home, during which time I discern the benefit of moving expressly toward Christ and heaven (e.g. no marriage, no 'career' in teaching - contemplating summer sabbatical...). And during powerful prayer meeting, confirmation comes - particularly in readings. (Holy Spirit will speak; be not forgetful hearer; sit at feet of Lord; be willing to suffer.) A call to trust in God.

All day the rain falls; and all day I call upon the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

O Lord, baptize me and bring me to new birth.
Let me walk the strait path to you.

(The promise of heaven awaits;
do not delay)

May 26 (Sir.17:19-27; Ps.32:1-2,5-7,11; Mk.10:17-27)

It seems impossible. On this Memorial Day it seems impossible that America could be redeemed of the sin it is mired in. For killing is routine in abortion mills; adultery is flaunted in its mass media; stealing and lying are condoned as necessary; and parents are sequestered in the loneliness of nursing homes.

It seems impossible. But it is so that when we confess our guilt, when we acknowledge temptation and weakness, when we call upon the Lord - He redeems us from the dead.

And I find hope for my own life today: I spend three hours in the church, playing two of the albums of *Songs for Children of Light*, and feel I could play two more (if not all, if not all day - if not eternally...). A few people wander through the church (though the doors should have been locked), and I think of how in the temple at Jerusalem singers and musicians played all day and night... This would be inexpressible glory for me, (Indeed, today I am filled with a peace beyond words.)

O Lord, I would intone in your presence always -
I pray there be a way.
I would give up all to follow thee.

(Praise you for this foretaste of heaven!)

May 27 (Sir.35:1-12; Ps.50:5-8,14,23; Mk.10:28-31)

In the church for five hours today, playing and singing albums 3 and 4 of *Songs for Children of Light* - and it is as if no time passes. (This is my freewill offering to the Lord.) And now the pastor has given me permission to open the church doors.

I also give a little extra money to charity, and tutor a student gratis... but what is any of this worth if I expect return - no return is its own reward, for no greater gift is there than trust in the Lord. Still seeking to give my life to the Lord, but He accepts no bribes, so we must be genuine.

A new writing is upon me - *The Will To Love*.

In you we have all things, Lord;
increase my faith.
Guide me through as blindly I walk,
knowing nothing but what you show me.

(Nothing exceeds His revelations, dear friends -
the beauty of His hand at work in your life:
yield to it.)

May 28 (Sir.36:1,4-5,10-17; Ps.79:8-9,11,13; Mk.10:32-45)

Before Mass, found a dime and lit a candle.
During Mass, crossing guard in pew behind me whispers,
"Peace, James," though the priest skips this rite.
After Mass, I find another dime, but the candle doesn't
light.

I agonize over decision whether or not to teach another
class beginning in a couple of weeks. I wonder if I
shouldn't play music in church every day all summer.
Should I take a sabbatical? Though I'd prayed much, I
could not say 'yes' or 'no' to supervisor. After saying
'yes', I agonized even greater - becoming weak from tears
on this fast day.

Found consolation in idea to play all the albums of
Songs for Children of Light on anniversary of sister's
death (June 20), and possibly print up copies of book
of lyrics.

But even now I suffer intense pain of a splitting
headache.

God is glorious, and all glory must, of course,
go to God - this is my first thought this morning.
But what pain it does take to find His glory.

O glorious God, forgive the weakness of my will.
May I come unto your kingdom;
 please guide my way.
(Let me not suffer separation from thee.)

May 29 (Sir.42:15-25; Ps.33:2-9; Mk.10:46-52)

What wonders there are to see in the world
of God's making - if only our eyes were open!

How little we know of the Hand of God at work in
the world; how poorly we seek His will and His Word.
If we but called out to Him - what wonders we would know.
For it is in His grace to answer our faith.

O Lord, speak and make the world new.
Let us join our wills with yours
 and pray for the peace of the world.
The power of prayer to you could end wars,
 could open hearts -
 could bring heaven to earth.

O Lord, hear our prayer.

May 30 (Sir.44:1,9-13; Ps.149:1-6,9; Mk.11:11-26)

Purity. I pray the Lord give me purity.
Singleness of heart to follow His call.

Humility. Humility I desperately need
to temper my pride-threatened soul.

Grace. His mercy ever upon us
we must desire.

If He should come seeking fruit upon me,
would He be pleased -
is He today?

O Lord, prune and nourish this fading plant
that I may flourish in your Name
and bear you abundant fruit.

The joy of your forgiveness be upon me
and work ever through me.

Amen.

May 31 (Zep.3:14-18; Is.12:2-6; Lk.1:39-56)

The Lord is come.

Visit us, Lord,
and may your Mother intercede.

(In the crucible of His grace,
He purges me this day...

I sweat in the heat of the day;
at the soup kitchen, I field surrounding trials;
and I play to His Name in church.

And His joy does visit me in forgiveness.)

June 1 (Ex.24:3-8; Ps.116:12-13,15-18; Heb.9:11-15;
Mk.14:12-16,22-26)

In this new covenant of the body and blood
of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are made whole.

This is the bread which came down from heaven -
this is the Bread of Life.

The Word is now flesh,
and remains with us
until the end of the world.

Alleluia!

O Lord, remain with us;
become so real to us -
let us not be blind to your presence.

(Thank you.)

June 2 (Tob.1:1-2,2:1-9; Ps.112:1-6; Mk.12:1-12)

Tobit weeps. And the sky weeps all day -
what does the sky lament?

This is not our world.
God owns all.
We are but stewards,
and if not faithful we shall be destroyed.

Jesus is very real; the Son has come.
In the flesh He is, flesh like our flesh - simple as this.
And we need no crystal ball to know His way.
His way is one of suffering, and if we are stones of
His house, we know the way - His word is near to us
(even in our mouths).

Mustn't this be what the Pharisees could not accept:
"He is but a man like us. Where is the fire from
heaven?"
This simplicity is a suffering they could not fathom.

(Priests spend so much time in church, become so familiar
with Jesus - this familiarity brings grace and strength,
but may also breed a callousness. Yes, there is great
wisdom in seeing how human He is, but forget not He is
the Son of God.)

May we share patiently in your suffering,
in your rejection, Lord -
so shall it be if we are stones in your temple.
(And so shall we know you.)

June 3 (Tb.2:9-14; Ps.112:1-2,7-9; Mk.12:13-17)

Who would put God to the test?

Man, yes, man is tested - tested and tried.

Tobit is tested; he is stricken -

but he will emerge triumphant.

For nothing is left in darkness with God,
and those who are of God shall see light.

I play my music for some ten or eleven hours today.

I passed the test and am prepared to play all ten albums,
some seventeen hours, on the anniversary of my sister's
death.

Our lives are God's, and we must give them to Him.

(He is our Father.)

O Lord, grant me the patience to find my way

through all obstacles,

to see your hand at work in all things.

May the darkness which surrounds us but cleanse us.

June 4 (Tb.3:1-11,16-17; Ps.25:1-9; Mk.12:18-27)

Striking readings, subtle relationship, pointing out importance and significance of faith and prayer and how resurrection is witness to both.

Because Sadducees believe not in resurrection, they would die in their sins. But the faith evidenced in the devout prayer of Tobit and Sarah will save them from the death they wish upon themselves; their lives will be resurrected from the grave of despair. Tobit will see again and have his life blessed with joy; Sarah's life will transcend the (fullness of) death of seven husbands - she will marry successfully. (And we shall marry successfully to Christ in heaven.)

O Lord, hear the prayer of this poor sinner:
redeem my life from the grave!

(Of late, and today, I become increasingly aware of heavenly presence of angels and saints - of that life beyond death. And though St. Anthony informs me that he has not reached final glory in heaven, this understanding opens my eyes to the steps I yet have to take on earth, and makes real to me the life beyond and the unity of this life and that.)

June 5 (Tb.6:11,7:1,9-14,8:4-7; Ps.128:1-5; Mk.12:28-34)

Giving all to God. I don't know. How do we know?
I am offered full-time teaching work today. I accept it.
Is it of God? I also bring my songs to copy center to
print up a hundred books, and look toward my all-day
concert. Is this the way?

Childhood friend says today he doesn't want to waste his
life. Feels he should give up *all* to God - sell all...
but has wife and child... Same thought in my head. But
sometimes the Lord doesn't want us to go that far; he may
just be calling us to increase our love for Him, to move
toward Him further... (Perhaps it is we who want to give
up everything.)

I do know we must remain in prayer. We must continually
offer ourselves up in truth and faith (as Tobiah does),
and the Lord will guide us - and bless us.

Take our lives, O Lord,
entirely unto thee.
May we love you with all our souls,
with all our lives.

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

Sacred Heart of Jesus, washes us clean.
His blood pours over us, and makes us new.
His love becomes the foundation of our lives.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, bless all my ways.

June 7 (Tb.12:1,5-15,20; Tb.13:1-2,6; Mk.12:38-44)

Almsgiving seems the theme of the day - Raphael confirms Tobit's penchant for giving alms, extolling the virtue of such charity, and Jesus tells us of the widow's mite.

Even as I wake today I think of what I might do with all the extra money I will have from teaching so many hours - how will I be a good steward of this income? I realize that I could run the weekly soup kitchen on 50% of my tithe alone... I am joyous at what I might be able to do.

Today is also feast of Immaculate Heart, and the purity of that glorious heart which is one with Jesus our Savior fills me body and soul... I offer myself and my prayers to the Lord.

Glory to you, O Lord.
Indeed, all glory be to you, Most High.
It is right to give you praise
for your generosity to us.
Make *us* so generous.

(Tonight I practice songs in altar area,
facing Blessed Sacrament - playing for Jesus.)

June 8 (Gn.3:9-15; Ps.130:1-8; 2Cor.4:13-5:1; Mk.3:20-35)

Jesus comes to plunder the house of Satan, who has held us in chains so long because of sin, and so we rejoice in faith and proclaim His Name, unafraid. Now, though the body die, though this tent fade - the Spirit lives.

Heal us, O Lord.
Iron out our sins.
And send us forth in your Name.

(Missioner priest visits us this day with poignant homily... And in readings at prayer meeting this night - the cross brings Christ's protection from all anxiety.)

June 9 (2Cor.1:1-7; Ps.34:2-9; Mt.5:1-12)

Emphasis seems on persecution, on suffering,
and the blessings it brings.

First full day of work - eight hours of teaching.
And trying to work out printing of book.
And shopping, and cooking.
And calling on the phone...

But little time for formal prayer,
and little time for music preparation.

I don't know what it means (was even given an office
today) - or where it shall lead. But I accept the
weight of the work and bear up under it -
and I pray the Lord's hand be in all things.

Blessed are you, O Lord,
and your words to us.
Bring blessed comfort to the sorrowing.

June 10 (2Cor.1:18-22; Ps.119:129-133,135; Mt.5:13-16)

Amen. Yes, the Lord is risen and is our Savior -
and this light we must shine.

I grasp significance of "salt" metaphor used by Jesus;
for salt draws out the flavor from food, and so we must
draw the goodness from people - in shining our light,
we reveal the thoughts of their hearts.

I believe I do this well in teaching today - drawing
interest in study from those who've been apart from
school - but at poetry meeting in Hoboken I am indeed
"flat." (It seems such a vain town; perhaps it is I
who am vain...)

O Lord, give me wisdom and direct my steps,
that I may shine where you would lead me -
that I might know the 'yes' of your presence
in all I do.

Take this child of light.

(I was actually 'yes' and 'no' about going to Hoboken.
Conclusion: Hoboken is vain and reflects my own vanity.)

June 11 (Acts 11:21-26,13:1-3; Ps.98:1-6; Mt.10:7-13)

The blessing goes forth to the ends of the earth,
and what joy to see the Word received. On this
feast of St. Barnabus, we celebrate the glorious
call to apostleship.

I pray today for all apostles of the Lord, especially
those missionaries on the front lines, and I know that
those who pray play a role in the going forth of the
kingdom. And I find joy in the reception of my words
by my students as I begin another new class today.

O what joy it is to imagine the Word of the Lord
reaching the hearts of all mankind!

O God, bless us with this vision;
 bless us with this call,
 to participate in the coming of our Lord.

Bless all your apostles with your light.

June 12 (2Cor.3:15-4:1,3-6; Ps.85:9-14; Mt.5:20-26)

The Lord's light shines - let all illusion
be removed from our eyes.

The veil may be even upon the eyes of the priests of God
- you must be holier than that. In the sacraments you
receive even from those priests' hands, you will find a
movement toward glory; you will find the call to
holiness.

We are on our way to court;
let us settle with our neighbors.

O Lord, when we stand before you,
somehow give us the grace we need
to live so perfectly with thee
in eternity.

June 13

(2Cor.4:7-15; Ps.116:10-11,15-18; Mt.5:27-32)

"Anyone who looks lustfully at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his thoughts."

My left eye becomes irritated and grows red as I finish a class I've taught for the last six months. These classes I teach are for women on welfare, and at times it is difficult for my eye to remain pure. In situations of such potential temptation (by the attractiveness of many) I suppose I have been rather strong - perhaps remarkably so - but I am certainly far from perfect. And I wonder, "Is this a temptation to be avoided (by letting teaching assignments go)?"

And though I do find joy in teaching and could make a case for its worth, yet do I question if it isn't of worldliness, and if the Lord isn't calling me to die to it to find a holier call.

Let me see if I cannot conquer temptation.
And let me seek to discover this more severe call.

O Lord, help me die to the world
and all its distractions -
that I might be found in you.

(St. Anthony, pray for me in this quest.)

June 14 (2Cor.5:14-21; Ps.103:1-4,8-9,11-12; Mt.5:33-37)

The Lord *is* kind and merciful. He removes our sins from us. Wherever we stand, He is able to cleanse us.

This morning the Lord instructs me, reminding me that if the heart is true, then so will all else be. This is what my concentration should be upon; for it does no good to chase situations, saying 'yes' and 'no' to sundry possibilities for action: make the heart good and the whole tree will follow in goodness.

Make my heart clean and my mind clear, Lord,
that I might rightly follow you.

Take all question from me.

June 15 (Ez.17:22-24; Ps.92:2-3,13-16; 2Cor.5:6-10;
Mk.4:26-34)

Jesus is the seed of heaven - the tiny, humble seed planted in time, in human history, from which the kingdom of God sprouts and grows gradually. In this time His kingdom is growing, is forming itself according to the will of the Father. We can take great confidence in the Spirit as we watch the kingdom grow in our own lives, and in the life of the world.

There is no need for fear or anxiety. All is well in the hands of the almighty Sower, who gives all growth. Look not upon the visible world and its darkness; it matters not if it ends today or tomorrow. Set your heart on the invisible world and live there - it is not subject to this world or time.

O Lord, what fruit shall I bear as a branch of your vine?
Let all be done only according to your Word.
(It is marvelous to see your Hand at work in our lives.)

June 16 (2Cor.6:1-10; Ps.98:1-4; Mt.5:38-42)

Such is the call of Christ - to lay down one's life.
It is not the call of any other man or religion,
not even the Jewish law.
For its golden rule is to die for others.

How few take to heart Christ's words to turn the other
cheek;
how little it is taught.
How foolish in the eyes of this world is such self-
sacrifice.
But this is the call.

If we believe it not, if we practice it not,
we are not Christians.

Such love we must strive to find.

(Extra miles I walk this day for my supervisor, at my work.)

O Lord, accept our offerings this day;
accept the work we do.
Join it with your sacrifice,
that it might bear fruit.

June 17 (2Cor.8:1-9; Ps.146:2,5-9; Mt.5:43-48)

O to love all!
O to love.

So does God love, so is His generosity -
so open is he.

This is freedom, to share so in God's love -
to be free of all concern for self.

Someday, perhaps, we will know His love so thoroughly;
someday, I pray, we will be so free.

Take all stinginess from me, O Lord;
may I give without counting the cost.

June 18 (2Cor.9:6-11; Ps.112:1-4,9; Mt.6:1-6,16-18)

"God can multiply His favors among you so that you may always have enough of everything and even a surplus for good works."

I can certainly witness to the reality of God's favors upon those who give. As said before, it was when I began tithing that the work and pay I've found began to markedly increase. That increase continues - beyond my understanding or expectation.

All is truly in His hands, and His gifts are marvelous to behold. I only pray I will always be a good steward of whatever gifts He deems to give.

O Lord, you hear the prayers of he who believes,
he who comes to you in the depth and sincerity
and privacy of his heart -
take this my life, O Lord.

June 19 (2Cor.11:1-11; Ps.111:1-4,7-8; Mt.6:7-15)

Re not rattling on: had been offering up penitence for missing prayer last evening (exhausted from work and preparing for tomorrow's marathon performance in church), and wondered if I could make up for it - I seemed to in a moment's time.

And considering Paul's passion for his church in Corinth, I longed in prayer to realize such love for the students placed in my care - particularly after some irreverent words by them yesterday. Then, during class, I found myself preaching to them to judge what they read, be careful what they take into themselves. Encouraged them to realize the God-given soul they possess and nourish it properly.

The Lord is good.

Lord, teach me to love.

I see how true it is that loving others is loving you.

Forgive my blindness and let me realize such love.

(And watch over me tomorrow, Lord.)

June 20 (2Cor.11:18,21-30; Ps.34:2-7,18; Mt.6:19-23)

Entered church before 7 a.m.; home 3 a.m. (next day).
Fifteen hours of music played during that span.

I pray I store up treasures for heaven.

On this the anniversary of my sister's death,
I undergo the suffering of this marathon -
the pain of my hands helps to distract
from the losing of my voice.

But the Lord delivers me - His priest brings water...

Lord, take this moment of eternity
and draw it unto thy kingdom.

June 21 (2Cor.12:1-10; Ps.34:8-13; Mt.6:24-34)

I am powerless today, drained of physical strength and energy, and it is true that I do find a certain strength in God - in a sharing in the glorious cross of Christ.

As I leave church (attended a later Mass at another parish), I see another man suffering. It is a man I know from the soup kitchen. (One who will more often than not create friction and dispute.) We both suffer "hangovers," but I understand that the Father sends His rain on the just and on the unjust, and that suffering may be good or bad - I offer mine to God.

Then (shortly after) upon entering the soup kitchen late, I stop at the door and overhear the sounds of service - it is a beautiful moment for me. I enter and just stand near the door, able to do little else, and one after another patron comes to me with good news: one man is three months into an alcohol rehabilitation program; another has been called again for work; a woman is now away from an abusive man and in a good shelter; and the man who'd given me problems a few weeks back returns, humble and smiling, and I assure him of forgiveness.

We must die before we can go to heaven.

Lord, increase my trust in you and your providential care.

May I serve you always, and so know your fruitful blessings.

Bring me to the heaven you allow me to glimpse in this day.

(Note: Realized last night, actually early this morning, my limitation. My singing of *Songs for Children of Light* always seemed to strengthen rather than weaken my voice. But in the last couple of hours, I had to laboriously draw breath to continue. Was out of breath - giving up the ghost.)

June 22

(Jb.38:1,8-11; Ps.107:23-26,28-31; 2Cor.5:14-17;
Mk.4:35-41)

He calms the raging waters; and the passion of our lives
is cooled by His gentle grace.

I decide to continue to play *Songs* in the church
on Friday afternoons through the summer, offering
a tranquil refuge from the troubles of the world.
And I myself am cooled by an air conditioner which
usually sits in my closet through the summer...
(I get oxygen for my out-of-breath body much as I
remember my sister getting support from the machines
in her hospital room as she lay in a coma.)

A thunderstorm rages, but only briefly, and the air
is cooled.

All things are new for those who have died in Christ.
(Mass intention this morning for my religious mother.)

(Lights go out as I write - finish by candlelight.)

Lord, you are our light in darkness;
you are the life within us.
May our faith in your power
see us through all the troubles of life.

(From ground zero, you restore us to life;
keep me in your service.)

June 23 (Gn.12:1-9; Ps.33:12-13,18-20,22; Mt.7:1-5)

To remove the speck from my brother's eye.
How shall I?

We are called to do so - it is so.
The Lord tells us not to judge, yes,
but so that we might genuinely help our brother -
not that we turn a blind eye.

How shall I see clearly enough to aid another's vision;
where shall I acquire such power?

In the Lord it waits - it is reality.

Lord, give me the words to say to those in need;
grant me the discernment to do all in your will.
Let your Spirit alone work through me.

(At cemetery today, there is peace -
and though I am sad to leave,
joy is near at hand...

I must go forth in Christ.)

June 24 (Is.49:1-6; Ps.139:1-3,13-15; Acts 13:22-26;
Lk.1:57-66,80)

The hand of the Lord is upon him whom He loves -
upon His child.

The readings and the psalm all speak of how intimately
God knows His own, how they have His heart. Indeed, it
is the blood of Jesus which courses through our veins,
and Jesus has been known to the Father from all eternity.

Have been thinking how real God is, how real Christ is -
as real as our own flesh and blood. This is His universe
and we are His creatures - and so much more... we are His
sons.

All is in God's hands, and He molds us.
And in the fullness of time He brought forth John
to herald the coming of Christ.

O Lord, that we might indeed know you so intimately,
and fulfill your call for us.

(Also, anniversary of Medjugorje visions...
this is a window unto heaven.)

June 25 (Gn.15:1-12,17-18; Ps.105:1-4,6-9; Mt.7:15-20)

Living under the covenant, we are protected -
we may rejoice.

Living as God's children, as children of faith,
we have not only the law as our guide,
but the blood of Christ as our salvation.

And so blessed, we should bear fruit for the kingdom.

O Lord, I thank you that you prune my tree
and make me a child of your holy covenant.
For the deep wonders of love you perform in my life,
I praise your name.

Keep me ever from straying into falsehood.

June 26 (Gn.16:1-12,15-16; Ps.106:1-5; Mt.7:21-29)

Those who have Christ know two things:
that God would be justified in their condemnation,
and that He rejoices in their salvation.

If you have Jesus in your heart, you know His call;
you know that though you don't deserve it,
He saves you.

Even Abram became unsure and, because of doubt, sinned.
But now one greater than Moses and all the prophets
has come,
and His Word carries the weight of authority.

We are of Jesus, and so God resides in us -
and we doubt not our fate.

Lord, use me the best way there is,
that your word might be fulfilled in me -
may I stand unafraid before the whipping winds
and torrential rains.

(I am unaffected by the threats of violence
and the temptations to the hatred of prejudice.)

June 27 (Gn.17:1,9-10,15-22; Ps.128:1-5; Mt.8:1-4)

Farewell Mass and reception for departing priest whose blessings are many but perhaps whose most singular gift is of healing.

And so as before I lost my confessor, now I lose my morning prayer partner.

I pray the Lord bless his many gifts and continue to fulfill his growth as a holy man of God.

Lord, bless all your servants with humility and grace,
that your Church might be whole.

(Speaking with a pastor - of another denomination - he said he'd been praying I'd become a priest. I told him I'd greatly settled on the diaconate, and during our conversation I was called to wait on tables. (Reception had run out of soda.)... And I just recalled - saw a young man with a book on deaconship today; told him I, too, was going to become a deacon.)

June 28 (Gn.18:1-15; Lk.1:46-50,53-55; Mt.8:5-17)

Abraham must have been in prayer, must have been seeking the Lord - and so when he saw the "three men" he must have recognized them, if not as actual angels, at least as being a sign from God.

Abraham - the father of the promise, the father of the faithful - has always seemed the most humble and obedient servant of God to me. Today's first reading is appropriately juxtaposed with the gospel about the faith of the centurion. Such is faith - trusting in God, being absolutely obedient to His word. No second thoughts - pure acceptance of what God sends.

The Lord sees me through some difficult service. In encouragement to prayer, by a widowed friend who appears behind me (while at the Blessed Sacrament), I find restoration to grace.

Thank you, Lord, for your healing touch.
In you and in your word, let me trust.
(In this we find life.)

June 29

(Acts 12:1-11; Ps.34:2-9; 2Tm.4:6-8,17-18;
Mt.16:13-19)

Loose us from the chains which bind us,
which bind us to this earth;
and even on this earth corruptible,
may Peter provide the keys to freedom -

in your Name, Son of the Living God.

(In Jesus there is victory...

As I distribute communion in rooms of nursing home,
Mets trail 6-1, late in the game.

While in a friend's room, they score three times.

By the time I've finished my rounds,
they've won the game.

(Return to friend/patient's room for end.))

June 30

(Gn.18:16-33; Ps.103:1-4,8-11; Mt.8:18-22)

Something unusually mystical and beautiful about today's first reading: God thinking, sharing His plans with Abraham, Abraham conversing with the Lord as the angels move on to Sodom... It is particularly reflective of God's chosen relationship with man - Abraham is a kind of Adam, an image of God to whom the Lord listens, whom the Lord loves. I see a wonderful light upon this scene. (Of course, God knows Abraham will show concern for Lot and his family ("ten") who live in Sodom. But I think He finds a joy and a satisfaction in Abraham's understanding of and belief in His justice.)

God *is* just, and I seek His justice in changes that occur at my job... Yet do I seek that more severe call, wherein I may perhaps have nowhere to lay my head. (I am so tired today, it seems I do.) Our priest leaves tomorrow after three years here - such required obedience to change must leave one with a sense of such homelessness.

O Lord, keep me in conversation with you.
Let your justice flow down upon my life;
let your hand always be at work in my days.
(It is a marvel to behold.)

July 1 (Gn.19:15-29; Ps.26:2-3,9-12; Mt.8:23-27)

A violent storm arises today around me and within me at work as I grow angry at the injustice and disorganization I've undergone. My hours are cut in half, but classes are doubled up, in the latest stage of this debacle. I suppose I have another chance to escape this situation entirely, but I probably will not do so. Jesus calmed me yesterday, and He will calm me again.

Our fire and brimstone preacher says his final Mass for us this morning with appropriate readings. (I pray I shall employ his teaching of applying your talents.)

With the Lord I can endure all things; I only pray He lead me out of sin and darkness.

Lord, be with me and guide me -
take my life;
may I trust in your power over all things.

July 2 (Gn.21:5,8-20; Ps.34:7-8,10-13; Mt.8:28-34)

God hears the cry even of the demons, even of the son of a slave girl, even of an afflicted man like myself. I cry to Him for decision and direction re my job - another opportunity to leave it altogether. But I accept half time (fifteen hours), and after the decision is made to continue, my forehead is warm with holy concentration. (A sure sign from the Lord.)

God surely cares for all who call upon Him, granting them their requests - for He would see all creation blessed. (For it is His own.)

Thank you, Lord, for your providential hand.
Give me work and give me rest
according to your Word.

And bless all who cry out to you.

July 3 (Eph.2:19-22; Ps.117:1-2,Mk.16:15; Jn.20:24-29)

I think many want to believe; I think they struggle against unbelief but are afraid to let go of doubt and trust. Sometimes there may be circumstances which offer justification to the mind of the unbeliever. There may be something the Church teaches that they do not understand, or something a priest has done that has sent them home dismayed.

We must be careful not to let in to facile excuses for unbelief. If a family member does something inappropriate, do we leave the family? If we are loyal to our flesh and blood despite their failings, how much more should we be loyal to the family of God. Of them Jesus has said, "*These* are my brothers and sisters." Or do we think the Church on earth is perfect? No. We are all of us sinners being built as the house of God and so must bear with one another with understanding and joy.

(Student today in class expresses dismay with certain Church teachings.)

O Lord, I believe;
help my unbelief.

May we say with St. Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"

July 4 (Gn.23:1-4,19,24:1-8,62-67; Ps.106:1-5; Mt.9:9-13)

Mercy.

May the Lord have mercy on me and on this country
in which I dwell;
for here are men blind to their sin.

O Lord, give light to my eyes,
for I am a sinner.

(Tears help my vision,
and so should a song -
but what of a woman?)

July 5 (Gn.27:1-5,15-29; Ps.135:1-6; Mt.9:14-17)

"All that the Lord wills He does."

"Ours is not to question why..."
and yet so do the Pharisees. And yet so do many.

Isaac would have blessed Esau;
the Lord had chosen Jacob -
as the Lord wills, so He does.

Who are we to argue? Should we not learn obedience?
Do we really think our thoughts are above His own?
Is it not to demonstrate the glory of His ways
that He does as He wills?

Heaven *is* far above us;
it is an entirely new wine skin.

Don't pour your darkened ideas into its confines.

Lord, let me follow *your* ways.

July 6 (Ez.2:2-5; Ps.123:1-4; 2Cor.12:7-10; Mk.6:1-6)

The prophet suffers mistreatment, but must proclaim the truth nonetheless. This is His call.

And in this world, whatever success we achieve, we fall short of the glory of God. Whatever our accomplishments may be, they do not attain to heaven. And so - though it is important to fulfill all the Lord has called us to - we must always be contrite of heart.

I feel the Lord's hand upon me as He teaches me to trust in His power, to remain humble before Him. I sense Him drawing me forward to a fulfillment of His call for me in the world, which is glorious insofar as it is of the cross, but means nothing without Him.

Set my face like flint, Lord;
let me go forth into the world
to share your Word.

You let me know the limits of my labors,
and the limitless nature of your kingdom.

July 7 (Gn.28:10-22; Ps.91:1-4,14-15; Mt.9:18-26)

The Lord is watching over; His angels are all about us.
He wakes us from the sleep of death, ever bringing new
life.

Jesus wakes me from darkness today and enables me
to catch up on so much postponed work. I am up
and doing again.

What vision would He engender in me - we are children
of vision, children of light.

Make this place holy, O Lord.
Thank you for guiding my dreams
(of eternity).

July 8 (Gn.32:23-33; Ps.17:1-3,6-8,15; Mt.9:32-38)

How shall I be sent forth into the harvest?
How shall I struggle to see the face of God?
What has God in store?
How shall I speak?

Practicing music in church this evening, the setting sun comes through a small stained glass window and shines directly upon me, briefly, while playing "In Your Eyes" (in the eyes of God). Afterward, as I return the mike stand to the altar, I feel wonderfully comfortable, and am filled with joy...

Earlier I had come to think how all (even the various parts of my fragmented life) is one in God.

O Lord, give me the strength to wrestle through life
and come to the vision of your face.
Send me forth to speak for you.

July 9 (Gn.41:55-57,42:5-7,17-24; Ps.33:2-3,10-11,18-19,22;
Mt.10:1-7)

The reign of God is at hand,
and I am far from its presence.

So wrought up with anxiety about the schizophrenic activity of teaching two classes in one room at the same time (with sundry other problems), my soul becomes choked by the thorns of this world. I am far from the Lord's peace. (I need a vacation.)

But if Joseph could find forgiveness for his brothers, perhaps I can find release from this prison of anxiety and make straight the way of the Lord.

Cast this unclean spirit from me, Lord;
I do wish to dwell in your holy presence.

July 10 (Gn.44:18-21,23-29,45:1-5; Ps.105:5,16-21; Mt.10:7-15)

I do find forgiveness and peace today,
even as Joseph is reconciled with his brothers.

Things had gotten so bad I was considering quitting work today, of shaking the dust of the place off my feet - of walking. Instead, I am able to bring (and find) peace.

I confess my anger and anxiety, and - though I had not spoken my consideration of leaving - he [the priest] tells me the Lord wants me to stay at my job. I accept his word, find opportunity (by the Lord's grace - I was able to perform the kind deed of acquiescing to/confirming our elderly Eucharistic minister's request to ring bell at his pew... he had originally asked me and I was indifferent, then I went over and encouraged him) to fulfill my penance before Mass began, and proceeded to have a full and cheerful day at work and a relaxing evening watching the Mets come back and triumph over the Braves.

The Lord's ways indeed are marvelous, as today's dramatic first reading exemplifies, and as my experiences throughout the day confirm.
(And His sacraments are most wonderful.)

O Lord, in famine I come to you,
and you feed me with the bread of forgiveness and grace.
Continue to watch over and bless me, O Lord.

(Though slavery awaits the Israelites (eventually),
yet their slavery will lead to freedom and greater blessing, as does the cross of Christ.)

July 11 (Gn.46:1-7,28-30; Ps.37:3-4,18-19,27-28,39-40;
Mt.10:16-23)

"The salvation of the just comes from the Lord."

The Lord gives Jacob a home and rest in his old age; and today I find a home in church as I play my music again for a few hours (for a few, seemingly appreciative people), and rest and relaxation spending the day with my childhood friend - a much-needed respite from tension.

Today I play *The Innocent Heart* and *Remove the Mask of Lies*. And in the morning, afternoon, and evening a young child figures prominently - and I keep games I play and watch (golf, baseball) in the background as I think and speak about the Lord.

The Lord certainly hears our prayers, and watches over the wholehearted, delivering them from trials when He comes.

O Lord, I know the trials we endure
 lead to salvation.
Give me the grace to endure till you come,
 and open my eyes again to see your face.

July 12 (Gn.49:29-32,50:15-24; Ps.105:1-4,6-7,33; Mt.10:24-33)

It is best to judge not, but forgive - as Joseph did in tears for his brothers, as Jesus does for us all. But I conceal a knife of envy and condemnation in my words. I must bring all wrongs to judgment, not seeing my own wrongs - such as this condemnation (such as reading the wrong readings this morning).

Oh that I could be like my teacher!
Oh to be like dear Jesus!

I do, however, find myself gaining in confidence regarding publishing and performing, putting forth my music and writings. I am growing in the knowledge and ability to speak of the inspiration that is of the Holy Spirit. I fear less the reproach of others. I am learning that I must present these works for the glory of God.

O Lord, take the sword of prideful self-righteousness
from my soul,
and let your sword of truth alone
possess my being.

Watch over me indeed, O Lord,
that I might always give voice to your word.

July 13 (Am.7:12-15; Ps.85:9-14; Eph.1:3-14; Mk.6:7-13)

How the Word goes forth.

Amos was called from the field, the apostles from their nets and tax stands... and all of us as His adopted sons. The Word is for everyone - all are one as children of God - and all are called to proclaim it.

It might sound odd - or even frivolous - but I found myself 'prophesying' the final three innings of the Mets game, which has just ended, and it turned out just as I has asked. This means nothing in and of itself, I know, but I do use these games as a kind of practice for prayer. (Though they are far from the ends of my prayer.) Seeing God work teaches me about the power of prayer (much of which I do not see the direct result of).

Did I tell you yesterday that I was praying at my sister's grave - I'd been discussing her death earlier and was in some doubt - when I looked up and saw clouds in the form of a cross, spanning about as far as the eye could see...

O Lord, it is wonderful to see you care for your disciples
and send them forth in your Name.
Send me, too, Lord.

July 14 (Ex.1:8-14,22; Ps.124:1-8; Mt.10:34-11:1)

The more the Israelites were oppressed, the more abundantly they grew. The more we lay down our lives and die for Christ and our brothers, the more we find ourselves. The seed must fall to the earth to produce fruit.

I must escape my selfishness to find Christ.

You are our strength, O Lord;
let us prosper in your Name.

July 15 (Ex.2:1-15; Ps.69:3,14,30-31,33-34; Mt.11:20-24)

Are we appreciative of the gifts God gives us?
Do we acknowledge the favors He grants?

How blessed are we! Moses is a sign of salvation,
being rescued from the waters, and Jesus is the
fulfillment of our salvation. The Jews had the law;
now we have, most of all, the Blessed Sacrament -
that blessed gift, the real presence of the grace of God.

Oh that the Lord not wail over us for our ingratitude.

And today I purchase a four-track machine:
I pray I use it wisely and for God.

O Lord, draw me from the waters of this world
to stand in your presence and serve you.

July 16 (Ex.3:1-6,9-12; Ps.103:1-4,6-8; Mt.11:25-27)

The Father reveals Himself to the Son, and the Son reveals Him to us. He reveals Him to Moses, and to all His children who are in need of Him. If we have seen Him, we have seen the Father.

How well do I know the Father? How close is His Name, the silent Word, to my soul? And how clearly do I see and love Jesus?

There is a lack of love in me for my fellow man, and so how close can I be to Him?

O Lord, make me kinder.
O Lord, set my heart on Him above.
O Jesus, lead me to the Father.

(P.S. I hear tales of oppression from my welfare students today.)

July 17 (Ex.3:11-20; Ps.105:1,5,8-9,24-27; Mt.11:28-30)

The silent Word of God is what leads us forth.
The silent Word of God is all-powerful.
God is simple and wonderful because He is;
without Him we are not.

And Jesus' yoke is what leads us on
in that sacred, simple power.

God is life, yes, and without Him we have no light.
Only in Him are we led to freedom;
only in Him are we alive at all.
This world is slavery, slavery to sin,
and all are sinners -
but Christ, the Word made flesh, leads us on to life.

So much passion and anxiety in teaching today,
under the yoke of slavery I sweat -
but soon I may be set free,
if I can find my place in the Word.

O Lord, order my days according to your Word;
let it be your yoke in all things.

May I rest in you to find new life.

July 18 (Ex.11:10-12:14; Ps.116:12-13,15-18; Mt.12:1-8)

We must be prepared for flight from this world.

Weekly confession today - always serves to cleanse the inside of the cup. Today it does bring peace.

In church playing music four and a half hours,
it rains as I play *Cleansing Human Frailty*.
(Still trying to break oppressive heat of late.)

We are all sinners and in bondage. But Jesus - as He is even Lord of the Sabbath - indeed has power to release us. This Lamb is eternal freedom in the eternal kingdom.

O Lord, teach us your ways and your greatness.
Protect us from all the harm of this world,
our Savior, our God.

July 19

(Ex.12:37-42; Ps.136:1,10-15,23-24; Mt.12:14-21)

"He sternly ordered them not to make known what He had done."

This is key to Jesus' ministry (and all who follow in His steps). He seeks not recognition or adulation - for that comes alone from God.

I know this is how I must approach any ministry of my own; and as I learn patience, and as I seek wisdom, I know it must be God alone in whom I trust, and in His will working through me.

There is a sense of this deference to God in the Israelites' flight from Egypt; for they, in a moment's notice, moved en masse from where they'd been for hundreds of years - a move reminiscent of their father Abraham's move from Haran.

And in time (not immediately) they would come into the Promised Land. And now all peoples find redemption in the Son of their line.

(Shhh... Don't tell anyone - Jesus is the Son of God.)
And so the Word goes forth...

Jesus, lead me in your humble steps,
which lead alone to heaven.

July 20

(Jer.23:1-6; Ps.23:1-6; Eph.2:13-18; Mk.6:30-34)

The Shepherd of the sheep, the Pastor of the flock -
Jesus the King.

And what kind of shepherds are we?

Readings speak throughout of the good shepherd;
tonight at prayer meeting a member tells a story
of a priest who'd failed as shepherd, and from
death was given another chance; pastors changing
flocks throughout church (our own priests exemplar)...

It had been several weeks since we'd had a full meeting
on Sunday night, primarily because of my lack of faith
in people's coming and so my lack of preparation.
I went ready for a meeting tonight, and we had
a full night of prayer and praise and worship.

Thank you, Lord, for my brothers and sisters.
Make us one in your one flock;
let me not be alone.

July 21 (Ex.14:5-18; Ex.15:1-6; Mt.12:38-42)

Signs are not so easily borne, nor are they necessarily easily remembered; witness the Israelites' escape from Egypt. The greatest of wonders they would experience - the parting of the Red Sea - came with pain, and would soon be forgotten. And does not Jesus (the Word made flesh, the most marvelous sign Himself) stand before the scribes and Pharisees? And yet they could not see.

All the miracle and all the sign you need is ever before you. Here is life - neglect it not.

Indeed my own searching for signs from heaven has made me blind to the gifts He indeed gives us.

O Lord, may I grasp not at vain straws of supposition,
but be firmly rooted in the miracle that is you.

(The world is quite real, and Jesus has become so for us -
reject not His humble presence.)

July 22 (Sg.3:1-4; Ps.63:2-6,8-9; Jn.20:1-2,11-18)

Mary Magdalene. (Oh that I might remember how I have been set free as she!)

Where is my Lord? I search for Him today (to remove my sin and set me on His path.) I stay an extra hour in church, praying the rosary, and as I ready to leave, it seems Mother Mary's statue is weeping. ("Don't cry," I say.)

Why do you cry, Mother?

And I clean my house for some three hours -
oh that my lands might be set in order!

Lord, may I find you (my love).

(Curious Note: After reading through the complex directions of my new four-track recorder last night, this morning found my car wrapped over by cassette tape... which continued across the sidewalk.)

July 23 (Ex.16:1-5,9-15; Ps.78:18-19,23-28; Mt.13:1-9)

It is a marvel that this generation of Israelites, who would so repeatedly grumble against the Lord and doubt His providence - and be denied access to the Promised Land - this generation would produce the fruit of so many later, faithful generations.

I continue to feel myself on the verge of producing fine fruit for the Lord. The wastefulness gradually limited, now perhaps I am ripe for the Lord's hand to work in my life.

Come, Lord Jesus, and use my talent.
Purge me of sin,
that I may enter your Promised Land.

July 24 (Ex.19:1-2,9-11,16-20; Dn.3:52-56; Mt.13:10-17)

What do you hear? What do you see?
I hear the rain falling; I see the darkness of the day.

And I know the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament;
so I go to Confession before Mass,
asking my confessor, who sits in light, reading,
to hear my sins.
(I want to be prepared to meet Him.)

If I were a prophet, would you listen?
I tell you, Jesus is Lord.

...And it rains all day today,
and darkness covers the land -
but somewhere light shines.

With you, Lord, there is light -
with you alone.
May my heart come through the darkness to find you.

July 25 (2Cor.4:7-15; Ps.126:1-6; Mt.20:20-28)

Feast of St James, apostle martyred for the cause.
(And my own namesake.)

I feel the brokenness of which St. Paul speaks as I play my songs this afternoon to a virtually empty church. And the lack of attendance serves to humble me, as Jesus would have James and John and the other apostles humble.

But the sense of rejoicing is also present as I play for Jesus and the angels and saints of heaven...

Clearly I perceive in the readings how the suffering and death of Christ leads to life. (We shall live again.)

O Lord, keep me in thy stead
of holy men;
let me die in you.

July 26 (Sir.44:1,10-15; Ps.132:11,13-14,17-18; Mt.13:16-17)

Jesus is both progeny and progenitor of the house of Israel, of the chosen ancestry. He who was and is before David is also offspring of his children. And so He reigns. This we see and know.

In prayer before exposed Blessed Sacrament with brothers and sisters this morning, I felt the Holy Spirit descend - I felt our prayers rise. In the silence I sensed the Life. (We are privileged, blest children of God.)

We rejoice that you are amongst us, Lord.
Make us your children;
and thank you for those who have come before.

July 27 (2Kgs.4:42-44; Ps.145:10-11,15-18; Eph.4:1-6;
Jn.6:1-15)

We are one in the body of Jesus the Lord;
we all eat of the one Bread -
indeed, we are what we eat,
for we are Jesus.

In one holy family we thrive,
brothers and sisters here and in heaven,
and someday we shall all be as one.

I am patient with my companion as we distribute
communion in nursing home today, bearing with him
lovingly. And this evening at our meeting, I am
overwhelmed by realization of all our oneness in Christ.
(Mary is closely related to Him - she is His mother -
and so are we related to Jesus, who hears our prayers.)

Enter in to the one family of God.

O Spirit, may we yield to your working in our lives,
and so be one with Jesus,
who feeds us all our lives -
who is ours.

July 28

(Ex.32:15-24,30-34; Ps.106:1,19-23; Mt.13:31-35)

Visited the family of a brother who moved down the shore a couple of years ago. Spent most of day with his kids (four - four to twelve years old). Hadn't seen them in over a year. Noticed how they'd grown, and not just physically - they are maturing into heavenly form.

It does, however, seem that all kids are predisposed to the idols of television figures, music figures, and figures of the most horrific action characters. Don't know - can only hope the allure is only skin-deep and has no lasting effect.

O Lord, cast out all dark illusions of this world,
that we all might grow into *your* kingdom.

(The ocean in which we swam, though not pure,
was not contrived by human hands.)

July 29 (1Jn.4:7-16; Ps.34:2-11; Jn.11:19-27)

(Special readings for feast of St. Martha.)

Oh how God loves us!
He has given His life for us.
He has offered His Son to us
to show us His love,
and we must respond in kind.

For He holds eternal life,
and all who come to Him will live so.

I continue to realize I have no wife in this world,
as all considerations of possibilities prove their
vanity. It is hard, for my heart is weak and easily
broken... but it is a cross that brings redemption.

Love sometimes must bleed so - we must taste of death.
But I do believe with Jesus I will never die.

Lord, your love is all-encompassing
and lightens our deepest fears.
Help us to love without counting the cost
or return.

(Your comfort is redeeming.)

July 30 (Ex.34:29-35; Ps.99:5-7,9; Mt.13:44-46)

The pearl of great price drives me onward.
Expectation of the kingdom instills purpose in my soul.
And a confidence grows.

I become unafraid of the holiness of the Lord.
I find myself in greater readiness to face His glory.
Putting aside all sin,
I strive indeed toward His kingdom.

And what is left behind bothers me not.
Greater confidence do I find in resolution
to do His will. I am ready to wake from sleep.

Tonight in practice of *Thoroughfare* from *Songs for Children of Light* (the pearl of great price I am rediscovering), the songs come alive, become real. I believe the equipment I have been gathering will be put to use.

O Lord, shine your light upon me
and upon my face,
that I may radiate your love alone.

Fulfill my work in your name.

July 31 (Ex.40:16-21,34-38; Ps.84:2-6,8,11; Mt.13:47-53)

The House of the Lord is that which we seek.
The Dwelling of God is our desire.
But have we the obedience to follow where He leads?

The Lord teaches the Israelites obedience as they travel through the wilderness, dependent upon Him for their every move. It is such obedience which leads to the Promised Land, which leads to the House of God.

May we work as diligently as Moses to build the kingdom of God; may we be wise stewards of His gifts.

(Despite a continually running nose and repeated sneezing, I make it through my eight-hour class today by the grace of God. But shall I make it to God's house tomorrow?)

O Lord, lead me forth;
 may in obedience I follow thee.
May I be learned in the reign of God.

August 1 (Rom.8:1-4; Ps.81:2-6,10-11; Mt.13:54-58)

We have left the land of Egypt;
Jesus has removed our sin
and the condemnation that goes with it.
(In Confession I find such freedom today.)

If the Lord would grant me two things,
my neighbors might not know me:
As Bernadette's flesh is uncorrupted,
I wish to find such purity of heart;
And if I could follow the Lord's call completely,
what could He not do through me?

(In singing this afternoon, I find the power
of *Songs for Children of Light*...
And my sickness disappears.)

Lord, I believe all things are possible with thee -
set me free from sin,
and let me stand in strength.

(Jesus is real.)

August 2 (Rv.7:9-14; Ps.40:2,4,7-10; Lk.22:39-44)

(Mass of Precious Blood of Jesus.)

Can we not wait with Him one hour?

And of what is Jesus afraid? What would He avoid?
Physical pain? Humiliation? Do you think so?
No. Jesus wishes not to see the sins of the people
played out upon Himself. He would they had no sins.
It is suffering for Him to see how His flesh and
blood have gone astray. (Come home, prodigal son.)

And who are those who will come to the Blood of this
sacrificial Lamb and wash themselves clean of their sin?
We who have mutinied must return and beg His grace.

(Notes: Watched some of newer version of *Mutiny on the
Bounty* tonight; had to offer criticism to new
priest this morning; (pardon expression) a drunk
comes to front to orchestrate music and prayer at
soup kitchen; as I lose attention at Holy Hour,
people behind begin incessant chatter... brand
new priest praises blessing of Holy Hours in his
first Mass with us; erstwhile friend speaks of
desiring to find full grace of Jesus; I clean
out refrigerator bloodied by thawing meat.
(In patience we must turn to Christ.))

Lord, save me.
Jesus, forgive me;
wash me clean.

August 3

(Ex.16:2-4,12-15; Ps.78:3-4,23-25,54;
Eph.4:17,20-24; Jn.6:24-35)

The Bread from Heaven must be our concentration.
Jesus is Lord.
What God gives we must accept;
in faith we must believe in Christ.

The Lord gives me a special blessing of prophecy twice
tonight at prayer meeting. His power fell upon me.
The Spirit seemed greatly with me.

Despite the temptations of the 'old man,'
I continue to trust in Him more and more.

Lord, feed us with your Bread;
may it strengthen us for eternity.

August 4 (Nm.11:4-15; Ps.81:2,12-17; Mt.14:13-21)

Continuing to sense the intensity of the power of the Spirit in prayer this morning, I questioned in some awesome fear how I would handle it if the Lord did bless me with such gifts - but only a few steps later (on way to church), I realize it is only God who does anything wonderful.

I sympathize with Moses' agonizing responsibility - would that all men were prophets - for it is only Jesus who could so fully give His life in care for all others. Only He could satisfy our hunger.

Lord, though your call and its power is fearful,
I wish not to turn away from it.
Thank you for taking all fear from me -
may I stand in your presence and serve you
and your flock.

August 5 (Nm.12:1-13; Ps.51:3-7,12-13; Mt.14:22-36)

Though even they have their shortcomings, the Lord chooses who He wants for His own. He makes it clear Moses is chosen, as is Peter, the Rock of the Church.

It is nothing in us that makes us worthy of His call; we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

But with the Lord, we may walk on water.

(Once of the Holy Spirit, does Peter not do so?)

I notice today a small part of the first reading - that Moses married a Cushite woman. (Thus his siblings' presumption that he is less than chosen.) And I must confess that despite so recently stating a resolution to single life, I find myself again contemplating marriage. (A woman who'd expressed an interest in me a year ago returns to my mind.) There is something appealing about the beauty and self-sacrifice of the sacrament of marriage. I begin to understand the Christian significance of such unity and devotion. (I think also my regular reception of Communion and Confession have instilled a thirst for sacraments in my soul. I yearn for further graces.)

Lord, let thy will be done,
but remain with me always, I pray.

August 6 (Dn.7:9-10,13-14; Ps.97:1-2,5-6,9;
2Pt.1:16-19; Mk.9:2-10)

The Transfiguration.

How oh how shall I stand before the glorious majesty
of the Lord?

Only through His love for me will I be made able.

O Lord, overwhelming is your presence to the mind of man.
Enable us somehow to stand in your all-powerful light.
(We shudder at the thought of your glory.)

August 7 (Nm.20:1-13; Ps.95:1-2,6-9; Mt.16:13-23)

How ungrateful our hearts are.
How we do contend with our Lord.
It is tragic.

And today we see our greatest leaders, Moses and Peter -
who both have gazed upon the countenance of God -
falling short of His glory.

Why must we make life so bitter for God and His chosen?
Why must He suffer? Why must we sin?

Be not concerned for the things of this earth;
judge by God's standards.

In your hands let our lives be, O Lord.

August 8 (Dt.4:32-40; Ps.77:12-16,21; Mt.16:24-28)

With power He calls us forth,
and in humility we must live.

If I lay down my very life, if I die to self,
I know I shall live.

I am bled clean in song today as I finish my summer music sessions in the church. A kind of death is upon me; I know not what the future will bring. But I offer this music to Him, if He would have me play again.

Let your greatness shine through my life, O Lord.
Obedient to your Word,
let me see you come.

(The weight of the day is upon me.)

August 9 (Dt.6:4-13; Ps.18:2-4,47,51; Mt.17:14-20)

If we but gave our lives to God...
If we but trusted in Him...

But do we?

And so how can we triumph?

But Lord, I do believe.
And I do believe I shall triumph in you.
(Hear my prayer -
I will remember you.)

August 10 (1Kgs.19:4-8; Ps.34:2-9; Eph.4:30-5:2; Jn.6:41-51)

We must remove all malice from ourselves -
this is bread for life.

Some disputation with a friend yesterday, though not serious (just enough to key into second reading) - and what seemed a potentially serious confrontation with priest is cleared up, and our conversation(s) ends with his saying, "I love you."

And I remember once laying down to die beneath a tree, but the Lord woke me - and as I walked away, the wind blew intently... and I cried for the call upon me.

Conversion is still necessary.

Lead me forth, Lord;
take my life.
May the wind of the Holy Spirit
bring us to eternal life.

(Without kindness we are nothing worth.)

August 11 (Dt.10:12-22; Ps.147:12-15,19-20; Mt.11:25-30)

Yes, indeed the Lord is glorious, and He blesses me this day with rest and refreshment in recreation as I make my annual trek to the beach and boardwalk with my friend's nephews.

I look upon the wonders of nature and of man as gifts of God and celebrate His provision of funds for us to enjoy life. And I have a full day of vacation and reflection.

On the sky ride that carries us back toward our car, I look out at the ocean and the sand beneath and over at the remarkable rides with their spinning lights and turning carriages - and I am prayerful.

Thank you, Lord, for your rest,
for your blessings -
all is of only you.

August 12 (Dt.31:1-8; Dt.32:3-4,7-9,12; Mt.18:1-5,10,12-14)

Is it not a child who knows it is the Lord who leads him forth?

Does not a child have the humility to be so obedient to God?

Is this not why their angels behold the Father's face?

With no strength today of my own, it is only the Lord who does my work - principally soup kitchen shopping and house cleaning.

Into your kingdom lead us, O Lord.

Hear our prayers that your will be done
and that we remain obedient.

As a child let us take rest in your arms.

August 13 (Dt.34:1-12; Ps.66:1-3,5,8,16-17,20; Mt.18:15-20)

The wonders we might know in the Lord are unbounded,
if we but ask in His Name.

O the mighty wonders Moses performed in the Name of God -
the glorious majesty he knew by his obedience.
And so blessed might we all be,
if we but join our voices as one.

I find a peace in prayer this day;
resting in the Lord
and open to His silent Name,
I am uplifted...

No one knows of Moses' burial place,
for he is in heaven with God.

Lord, take us to your kingdom
when here we are through.
Let all be accomplished in Thee,
and keep us strong to the end.

August 14 (Jos.3:7-11,13-17; Ps.114:1-6; Mt.18:21-19:1)

How wonderful to be an Israelite and witness the mighty wonders God performed! How blessed are His people!

And how wonderful to know such forgiveness Jesus offers; how blessed are those who forgive as He does!

I feel today a certain lack of forgiveness for my brothers, for all those I meet and with whom I associate - and so am driven to Confession. Why so cold? Why so curt? Where is the love? Who could tell I am a Christian man?

I wish I were not so short with people -
but they seem to love me anyway.

(Irony: passed TV show in which teacher goes for 'sensitivity' training...teacher of physics, which I taught yesterday to GED class... but did spend time on phone talking to a woman friend recently widowed.)

Jesus, help me accept your forgiveness
and offer it forth.
Then shall I be at peace
and happy.

August 15

(Rv.11:19,12:1-6,10; Ps.45:10-12,16;
1Cor.15:20-26; Lk.1:39-56)

The Assumption.

Much thought and prayer about and with Mary of late.
Reading a book about Medjugorje; priest sharing his
love for and relationship to our Mother... beautiful
homily today.

Wouldn't it be marvelous to be as we profess Mary to be -
body and soul in heaven? (And mustn't she be to be
appearing in light?) Sometimes the glory of the Lord
is overwhelming...

The Queen stands in gold by the Lord's side,
and we are called to join them in paradise.

Lord, call my name in proper order
to the fruits of heaven;
may I be so lowly as to find your glory.

August 16 (Jos.24:14-29; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-8,11; Mt.19:13-15)

The children of God come to Him;
they serve Him, and He blesses them.

When we declare our allegiance to the Lord
and carry through with our ideals,
we are as children of the Lord,
blessed with His gentleness.

But if we should turn from His way
and hurt one of these -
gentle the Lord is not.

May humble we be before the Lord
and feel His hand upon our heads.

(In assisting the priest with his garment at Benediction
this morning, I feel, perhaps for the first time,
what it is to be a deacon.)

O Lord, may we be your faithful children;
let us not be led astray.

August 17 (Prv.9:1-6; Ps.34:2-3,10-15; Eph.5:15-20;
Jn.6:51-58)

The feast is set:

His body is the bread we eat,
His blood is the wine we drink...
and we are filled with good things.

There are those who are sick today,
but His Spirit is indomitable.
And our praise resounds,
and our prayers echo in the halls of heaven
(where we shall live with Him
and sit at table to eat with Him
eternally...)

A friend in the hospital cannot stomach food,
and though she weighs only seventy pounds -
the Lord has not left her.

Lord, you are food indeed -
may we feast upon your flesh
and not the blood of idolatry
this world offers.

(Irony - in consideration,
the Lord's hand is uniquely in every day:

Five years ago, though faithful to my Catholic duties, I was also attending a 'nondenominational' church with the above-mentioned woman. I remember she told me her mother believed Jesus was *really* in the Eucharist. I couldn't believe it. (Seemed I'd never heard it.) But today I distribute blood at a Mass her mother attends; and at hospital room she spreads out food before her daughter, who was wont to read a chapter of Proverbs a day.)

August 18

(Jgs.2:11-19; Ps.106:4,34-37,39-40,43-44;
Mt.19:16-22)

Why do we turn back to the things of this world?
Why do we set our hearts on them?
Why are they so difficult to leave behind?

Though we know the Lord will bless us and increase us if we leave behind sin and the things of this world, we yet hesitate to follow Him. Though so many times He has revealed His faithfulness to us, again we forget and turn away.

My day is preoccupied by the frustrations of trying to get repaired that principal of all modern possessions - the car. And I deal not well, I rise not above, these difficulties.

How shall I leave the world behind?

May the things of this world possess me not, O Lord.
May I be generous with all I have...

And may sin be gone.

August 19 (Jgs.6:11-24; Ps.85:9,11-14; Mt.19:23-30)

The Lord speaks peace to me this day
as in Him I hope.

The troubles of yesterday disappear...
as the turn signal which went out on me on the way
to inspection yesterday (and caused me to be rejected) was
working again today -
and as I sit and wait for my belts to be replaced,
I read more of book on Medjugorje (Wayne Weible).
I am transported and time passes with hardly a notice.

Perhaps it was Confession this morning which led to
such grace, but I found confidence in the Lord again,
giving all things and whatever happened to Him...
and so I was blessed.

Trust in the Lord;
He is speaking to you.

For all your blessings I thank you, Lord.
Take all things,
that all things be done in thee.

August 20 (Jgs.9:6-15; Ps.21:2-7; Mt.20:1-16)

It is a true king we have, whose generosity is great,
who welcomes all desirous of His reign.

Glorious is our God!
None could take His place.

Remove from yourself all bitterness;
celebrate the joys of others.

(Though it rains today, I am at home in the Lord.)

Lord, we bless you for your generosity to us;
make us all one in your reign.

(We are all one in His kingdom.)

August 21 (Jgs.11:29-39; Ps.40:5,7-10; Mt.22:1-14)

Few are the elect.

Many are called. Many hear His voice, and their prayers He answers. Many know His hand at work in their lives. But how few truly give their lives to Him and follow Him as He asks. Few are ready for His kingdom.

Jephthah acted as a judge for Israel. The Lord blessed him in battle. Yet foolishly He broke the law of God by sacrificing his daughter, thinking it proper to fulfill an unsound oath.

Is my own life prepared for God? Can it be made so?
Am I ready to drop all I carry and follow Him?

So much confusion remains in my heart and mind;
so much direction do I lack. And what of purity?
Shall I find the needed wedding garment?

The Lord requires our lives -
only then will we enter heaven.

O Lord, why do I fall so short of your glory?
Why do I flounder so?
Let me enter into your will
and follow it to the end.

August 22 (Zec.2:14-17; Ps.146:2,5-10; Lk.1:26-38)

Queenship of Mary.

And yet the readings speak more of Mary's call to give birth to the Son who is to come and the joy He brings to the lowly.

Today I visit a pilgrim image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas and of the unborn. I find the image of a pregnant Madonna reminiscent of the image I recently recognized in the stain of the wood of my dresser - which happens to be below a pro-unborn collage I made some time ago.

Life is what Mary gives us through her Son;
and perhaps through prayer of the Blessed Mother
and in patience waiting,
I may find my way
to join her in the kingdom.

Mary, may I be born of you
and be one with your Son.
Dear Jesus... bless the children.

(I find the message that I must write to fulfill my call.
This has been virtually all I've done over the preceding
months. I must get to work.)

August 23

(Ru.2:1-3,8-11,4:13-17; Ps.128:1-5; Mt.23:1-12)

How she humbled herself and so was raised up,
dear Ruth, the great-grandmother of David.

In a sense, I leave my people today and spend the evening
with the Hispanic community at the wedding of a friend,
and serve as best I can. And is this potential deacon,
this servant, to wed into this clan?

This morning as I come into church, what do I see near
the sacristy? - A full statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe,
which our new Hispanic priest has just placed there.

And our Holy Hour for the unborn seems more complete.
(Surrounded are we by holy images and objects, and by
the presence of Christ; and in this asylum, there is
protection, there is peace.)

Lord, hear our prayers;
lead me along right paths to thee.

August 24

(Jos.24:1-2,15-18; Ps.34:2-3,16-23; Eph.5:21-32;
Jn.6:60-69)

The choice is given; we must decide.

Jesus confronts His disciples with truth - do they want to leave Him; Joshua tells the people to choose whom they shall follow.

Much of our lives are filled with choices; this is endemic to the human condition. We are free - God has made us so - and so must decide how we shall walk. But do not fear - ask the Lord and He will guide you with His wisdom.

I find calls to decision upon myself: am I to marry and take the path of a deacon? The time draws nigh to decide. (But one day at a time...)

Spirit of God, direct my steps in this world to you -
I choose life and the smile of a child...
lead me to the kingdom.

August 25 (1Thes.1:2-5,8-10; Ps.149:1-6,9; Mt.23:13-22)

Jesus sits upon the throne
and delivers us from the wrath to come -
Hallelujah!

And so we are joyful who trust in Him
and exalt Him above all in heaven.

Two grand slam home runs in a makeshift stickball game;
eight yogurts bad and, so, eight for free;
won't be finished (dinner) till eight tonight, a friend says,
and he is right;
and encouraging conversation with a female friend.

(I don't know what it means either.)

Praise you, Lord, for your glory,
for your presence everywhere.
Watch over and guide your children.

August 26 (1Thes.2:1-8; Ps.139:1-6; Mt.23:23-26)

How different the attitude of Paul from the actions of the Pharisees which Christ condemns.

Selfishness must not rule us; truth alone must reign in our hearts and in our lives. Suffering may come from it, but God is with us.

Even before prayer this morning I'd been reminded and found consolation in the fact that we need but make the heart good and all else will follow.

I pray that the conversion of a former student will prove genuine and lasting, and for the return and reconversion of a friend.

I visited the bed of a suffering elder brother today, who, despite the weight of his pain, was able to exhibit his joyful sense of humor.

(If we had but faith...)

Lord, plant your Word firmly in my heart
and may I follow it through this world of darkness
to your eternal light.

August 27 (1Thes.2:9-13; Ps.139:1,7-12; Mt.23:27-32)

How far astray leaders can become - to the point of killing the Son of God - and yet how true they can be in their example. Be as Paul. Be as Christ has called us.

(A reflection: I recall when I was a child I thought about the year 2000 and that I'd be forty years old then - it seemed significant. And now as that time is upon me, as I have but two years of my youth - according to Church demographics - I begin to sense how short life is and how little time I have left... there is an end to it (and time goes faster as we grow older).

But 2000 is declared the year of Jubilee by our blessed Pope, and so hope reigns with these passing years. (In fact, this writing is to cover these few years leading up to this Jubilee.) And so, may new birth come from this sense of death.)

Lord, make us worthy of our salt.
Indeed, let it be your Word at work within us,
and from deep within, through our whole being,
may it bring new life.

August 28 (1Jn.4:7-16; Ps.90:3-4,12-14,17; Mt.23:8-12)

The great Wisdom of God tells us to humble ourselves;
the great Wisdom of God calls us to love.
And so shall we be blessed.

Hallelujah!

In his insolent pride, St. Augustine sinned resolutely;
broken by the love of Christ, he was bathed in the Light.

Thank you, God, for loving us,
for saving us from our sin
when we call upon your Name.

May we prosper in your light.

August 29 (Jer.1:17-19; Ps.71:1-6,15,17; Mk.6:17-29)

I painted a picture some time ago of John the Baptist's head with mouth wide open in exhortation. And I come across tonight as such a brass wall of prophecy as I exuberantly present a teaching at prayer meeting.

Having spent the day in blessed prayer with a woman friend (an antidote for the Herodian malaise) at the Blue Army shrine, I rushed to the meeting excitedly and without an opportunity to question my thoughts. (I taught and read of the Four Corners of the Universe.) My hair probably appeared like Einstein's.

And as Jeremiah and John were called from the womb, I discuss with my friend my memories which go back to the womb.

Bless us, O Lord.
Take our lives as thou sees fit,
and make us ready for death
as John must have been.

May we dance with your angels and saints in light.

August 30 (1Thes.4:9-12; Ps.98:1,7-9; Mt.25:14-30)

Let us make progress, brothers and sisters, in the Lord;
for there is progress yet to be made.
To use our talents, to work for the Lord -
let us answer His call.

I'd been thinking about a sculptor/architect I saw
on TV who had odd-shaped, sculptural buildings placed
about on the land he owned; then I thought as I walked
through the rosary garden praying yesterday that what
better sculptures could one fix about than those stations
for the mysteries...

Today the gospel re the talents leads me to consider
my own sculptures/stages for the ten albums of *Songs*,
which I dream(ed) about building.

And will I live according to the title of my
autobiography and make progress in the Lord?

Lord, I know I must do more
(as a brother tells me),
let me waste nothing you give me -

I know all is a gift from you.

August 31 (Dt.4:1-2,6-8; Ps.15:2-5; Jas.1:17-18,21-22,27;
Mk.7:1-8,14-15,21-23)

Following the perfect law of God, a law He writes upon
our hearts - living as He commands, in His love...
this is the way to heaven.

Make the heart good...

Lord, accept my work of this day;
accept the prayer I pray.

Let me live in you.

September 1 (Gn.2:4-9,15; Ps.127:1-2; Mt.6:31-34)

Labor Day readings.

We are God's creatures; it is His hand which sustains us,
and so should we seek His rule over our lives.

(It is wonderful when God acts in our days.)

And on this Labor Day, I finally begin to use new
four-track machine. In a practice recording of my
Songs for Children of Light, I find a music that is new
and natural. (I am reminded of my desire to make it so.)
I see that it does not fit ordinary patterns, and should
not be forced to do so.

But will I follow through and produce something real?
Is this work set out for me?

Lord, in you I take refuge;
be the source of my labor.

Strengthen me in doing your will.

September 2

(1Thes.5:1-6,9-11; Ps.27:1,4,13-14;
Lk.4:31-37)

Be ready for His coming, waiting in light, listening to the lamp of His teaching... and He will lead you, and you will come closer to His presence, you will know more and more each day - for His wisdom will illumine all things.

That which was once dark and murky and doubtful grows in light as we pray, as we continue in His grace, as in Him we are upbuilt. And so we become ready. (But all demons must be cast out, and our hearts made pure.)

Today's Irony - thief stole five computers from school lab... discovered today.

O Lord, may nothing of this world break in upon me;
may it but be your power which possesses me.

September 3 (Col.1:1-8; Ps.52:10-11; Lk.4:38-44)

The Word goes forth; the Spirit gradually bears fruit
and moves to the end of the world...

We must grow in its light every day.

Lord, may all fever leave me,
and may all those I know who are sick
be healed
that they might stand and serve you.

May your laborers, the angels,
water the flower that is our lives.

(When it dies, may we be with you...)

September 4 (Col.1:9-14; Ps.98:2-6; Lk.5:1-11)

"They brought their boats to land, left everything,
and became His followers."

Now would they grow in spiritual insight.
Now would they learn to rejoice, even in fateful days.
Now would they know the salvation Jesus brings -
and soon they would bring it to others.

How do we grasp the greatness of the miracle of Jesus?
How great is our God!

Gather me into the barque of Peter, O Lord,
that all might be fed on your flesh.

Teach me your ways.

September 5 (Col.1:15-20; Ps.100:1-5; Lk.5:33-39)

We learn today of the death of Mother Teresa from our Indian priest immediately following our First Friday Holy Hour. (He had seen her only a few months before.)

There is joy that the new wine of her spirit will be poured into heavenly wineskins, and yet we here remaining fast and mourn the loss of this saint.

May others come in Jesus' name
and perform works as she.

God, bless and bring her soul
directly into your arms.

September 6 (Gal.4:4-7; Ps.54:3-4,6,8; Lk.1:26-38)

The same Spirit which overshadowed Mary, overshadows us,
and calls us to be born of our Mother, calls us to be
sons of the Most High.

On this First Saturday we honor our Mother,
and I make a Confession.

There is so much yet which needs to be rooted out of me,
so much confusion and vanity and fear, so much lack of
following and serving the Lord - but I do believe it can
be uprooted.

I do believe Mary found assurance and lost fear because
of the word spoken to her about Elizabeth - that it was
confirmation of her devout prayer. I pray the Lord
grant me a word of truth to clear the path before me.
(And I pray the Mother watches over.)

O Lord, though blind I be,
I believe you can redeem me.
O Lord, let me see,
and let me walk with thee.

September 7

(Is.35:4-7; Ps.146:5-10; Jas.2:1-5;
Mk.7:31-37)

My faith in the Lord's power is rewarded today,
as He opens my ears to hear.

Found myself in some turmoil last night. Subject to temptations and unable to sleep, I paced the floor and offered my prayer to the Lord and to the Blessed Mother.

Though my prayers were not terribly strong and clear, I did fall asleep... When I woke this morning, there was a joy in my heart; and as I read my Office of Readings, the words and their message filled my soul.

Some times are times of mourning and of seeking, when we are not sure the Lord is listening, when we cannot feel His presence. But He is there and He hears us, and will answer our plea.

O Lord, help me to live your Word indeed.
You have given us a body and life;
let our lives conform to your will.
(How else shall we find love?)

Indeed, let us be more like Mother Teresa.

September 8 (Rm.8:28-30; Ps.13:6,Is.61:10; Mt.1:18-23)

God is with us. Really. In flesh and blood.
Born of a woman. In the line of man.

Through Mary, Jesus takes a human body,
becomes flesh and blood for all to see.

Mary continues to come closer to me.
And as we celebrate her birth today,
I finish reading a book on Medjugorje.
(I wonder at this miracle,
and long to know more.)

The Mother cries for us to return to her Son.
(I pray I shall.)

Convert my heart, dear God.
May I be born of Mary;
may Jesus be born of me.

(May the reality of your presence -
and of Mary, and the angels, and the saints -
sink in to me.)

September 9 (Col.2:6-15; Ps.145:1-2,8-11; Lk.6:12-19)

We must strip off the carnal body completely
and live in the flesh that is Christ.

When in our glorified form we enter the gates of heaven,
then no disease will touch our souls.
The flesh of Christ is now in heaven,
and with Him we may enter there.

Drove infirm friend to see his doctors in New York today...
(I learned and lived patience rather well myself,
waiting three times in the car.)

Power comes "out from" Jesus to cure all. I have always
believed this and relied on His hand. May He cure me
thoroughly of all my carnal ailments, that I may triumph
in Him.

Lord, body and soul we shall be in heaven;
make us temples of the Holy Ghost.
Call us into your presence.

September 10 (Col.3:1-11; Ps.145:2-3,9-13; Lk.6:20-26)

Paul says, "You have died!"

And as I struggle to die to this world and my own sinful flesh - a sister in the Lord does die today. (She who had suffered from the HIV virus.)

I was at the cemetery about the time she died. I had gone there despite the ominous darkness and threatening rain, to water the plants and pray. (The skies were dark all day.)

I pray that she who had suffered so in the trials of this life but who had clearly turned away from her sinful past, might now be blessed in the Lord's arms - that as she strived to make Jesus everything in this life, so shall it be now.

Jesus, take all our lives.
You who are life, be life to us all.
Go before us and prepare the way
through the suffering and death of this life
to your eternal kingdom.

September 11 (Col.3:12-17; Ps.150:1-6; Lk.6:27-38)

Does not Jesus show us what love is?
(And who could want more.)

Yes, Jesus tells those with open ears. He tells us the truth, that loving our enemies is true love, transcendent love - it absolutely rises above all that is not of love, wherein even persecution brings blessing, setting us free from the things of the world and bringing us to the peace of heaven... but he also shows it, doesn't He: Look upon the cross.

This morning the crucifix over my bed does strike me, and leaves me in wonder at His love. And how can I be really angry at my supervisor, who removes expectation of my next teaching assignment (postponing it rather indefinitely). All is in *His* hands.

What joy it would be to truly reflect His call to forgive, to love. What joy to live as St. Paul outlines. (Then would we be happy, trusting in Him.)

Do you see, brothers and sisters, what love is?
(Look upon Jesus.)

Help us to lay down our lives, O Lord.

September 12

(1Tm.1:1-2,12-14; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-8,11;
Lk.6:39-42)

Once the plank was removed from Paul's eye, then he could see. (And many specks in others' did he remove.)

O Lord, may I be taught so.

(Shall I return to teaching at a Catholic school?)

September 13 (1Tm.1:15-17; Ps.113:1-7; Lk.6:43-49)

When the torrents rush upon me, how unable I am to stand;
how sinful and weak is this man.

I call upon the Lord to enter deeply into my being,
to become my foundation. I open myself to submission
to His will and presence. I feel His sword pierce
my mind, cut my soul - and I sense Him enter ...
but yet how sinful I am.

The Lord is sent to save sinners, and when we acknowledge,
when we see our sinfulness - then He enters in. And so,
may this mighty sinner be set right with God.

Glory to you, O God.
May your light fill my life
and remain with me.

September 14

(Nm.21:4-9; Ps.78:1-2,34-38; Phil.2:6-11;
Jn.3:13-17)

In the cross we do not die but find eternal life.
Looking upon the Blessed One, we discover our redemption.

And at the wake of my friend today, I mourn, and I find
joy. The cross she suffered I know has brought her to
heaven.

And a special gift I receive: I find out from her sister
and mother that before she died, she received Jesus' body
and blood in the Eucharist. This was my greatest prayer
for her, and remarkably it was answered. (And I cry.)

Blessed are they who mourn, blessed are they who know the
cross; for they shall be comforted, for they shall find
life. And so do I find the Lord's peace.

O Lord, bless all those who suffer,
 bless all those who die for you -
for you go before us on that road,
and you lead us home.

September 15 (Heb.5:7-9; Ps.31:2-6,15-17,20; Jn.19:25-27)

Our Lady of Sorrows.

So appropriate for today, as this morning funeral services take place for my friend, and her mother mourns.

(This, too, I remember - that her eyes reminded me of the Blessed Mother's.)

May we take Mary into our care, that she might care for us. May we comfort one another until we reach the glory of heaven.

Jesus, be our refuge.

September 16 (1Tm.3:1-13; Ps.101:1-3,5-6; Lk.7:11-17)

Found myself recognizing the floundering nature of all parts of my life (before the saints this morning) and praying to be raised from the death of this confusion. Coming upon especially the first reading, I found a measure of direction in a confirmation to seek deaconhood and, dare I say, to marry one good woman.

But yet I require further light.

May I come before you in faith in prayer, O Lord,
expecting and accepting your response.
Please help me to walk in integrity of heart.
(And bless my widowed friend,
who tomorrow commemorates the death of her husband.)

September 17 (1Tm.3:14-16; Ps.111:1-6; Lk.7:31-35)

We must accept the wisdom of God in order to understand its truth - then we will know the mighty works of the Lord.

And today I seek the wisdom of the Lord and to accept His will for my life: I offer my fast to find direction, particularly re marriage and the diaconate. (And Friday I will continue re my art and teaching.)

The hardest thing is to simply accept God's will, without doubt and without question. We always want to change Jesus to suit our own ideas; we are so unable to surrender completely to God - we are afraid... we want our way. But as members of the Church, we are required to conduct ourselves as His children.

His wisdom is beyond our human comprehension;
it is far above our ways.

O Lord, thank you for your guidance of our lives;
forgive our stubbornness
and come unto us
as you see fit.

September 18 (1Tm.4:12-16; Ps.111:2,7-10; Lk.7:36-50)

Wonderful understanding this morning at Mass that we are all sinners - this is what unites us in a sense. All are under the merciful hand of God.

We must persevere in love, persevere in holiness, to find God's glory, always remembering and confessing our sins...

And I continue to seek wisdom in the Lord today, as I am blessed with an extra day of fasting on bread and water. Wide awake am I and finding the Lord's voice - but yet incomplete in thought. I pray tomorrow's fast day will further clarify my path.

Give me faith, Lord,
and give me love;
lead me forth in your way to salvation.

(And Blessed Mother, pray for me.)

September 19

(1Tm.6:2-12; Ps.49:6-10,17-20; Lk.8:1-3)

The Lord provides; be not anxious for the things of this world. It is not money we need.

A woman in the neighborhood wins over a million dollars in the lottery - "You may win the lottery, but the Spirit is nothing you can buy." (May she be a wise steward.) And a rich man gives a billion dollars to the U.N. - but what will it be used for?

Give all you have to *Christ*.

Assist Him in bringing forth the word of truth.

Lord Jesus, you are all and everything,
and all are made one in you.

Help us to love one another with true compassion
and not from selfish motives.

(Fast not quite complete -
it may be time to take the training wheels off.)

September 20

(1Tm.6:13-16; Ps.100:2-5; Lk.8:4-15)

May the word of God grow in you, brothers and sisters.
May it become a beautiful tree and bear full fruit.
May you know the greatness of the Lord
and bow before His holy throne...

Discussion with friend today as he poses the typical
questions of limited human minds - Why is there
suffering? Why am I in one position and someone else
in another? What can I really do?

All these questions become moot when you know He
"who dwells in inapproachable light, whom no human
being has ever seen or can see." He rules - we listen.
But not as slaves are we, but free men doing His will
(and so knowing freedom.) And His love encompasses us.

Lord, do let your Word come to light
in all of our lives.
May we bear fruit as your children.

September 21

(Ws.2:12,17-20; Ps.54:3-6,8; Jas.3:16-4:3;
Mk.9:30-37)

He will suffer and die for the children.
He will bear the taunts of the wicked
to save the innocent from death.
All strife is removed by His sacrifice.

Priest answers question re suffering beautifully this morning in his homily. As a friend who very recently lost her father sits in church with her bereaved mother (I'd hugged them both for the first time since, just before Mass), the priest speaks his words of comfort and peace and the new life which arises only after the seed falls to the ground.

The Lord stands ready with consolation for those who take refuge in His wounds.

Hold me in your arms, Lord.
(And teach me to hold others.)

September 22 (Ez.1:1-6; Ps.126:1-6; Lk.8:16-18)

We are the light of the world,
as the Israelites were the light to the nations...
we must shine as such.

All nations shall come and bow down before Him who made
heaven and earth and all that is in them. All shall be
given over to the ruler of nations, Jesus our King.

In reading at Mass today I find the words expressive
of a need for renewal of parish community; I find
an exhortation to live as one, sharing our faith.
And with all in our lives we must do the same.

O Lord, remove all lingering sin;
let my light not be hidden.
Let us rebuild your church on earth
in accord with the heavenly Jerusalem.

September 23

(Ez.6:7-8,12,14-20; Ps.122:1-5; Lk.8:19-21)

I hear the word of God calling for daily Holy Hour(s) in church. I will ask the pastor as soon as I can.

I also hear the teenager who helps cleaning the grounds of the church ask me when I will play music in church again. (He was about the only person around when I was playing *Songs* in church this summer.) I am surprised by his appreciation. He tells me he is telling the truth, so I must consider playing again - perhaps one evening a week.

I also hear the Lord's chastisement re this temple that is my body and my life. Though it may be sad, alone it seems I must go...

O Lord, renew my life
and the life of the Church.
Keep us from the chastisement to come.
Build us solidly in you.

September 24 (Ez.9:5-9; Tb.13:1-4,6; Lk.9:1-6)

O that Jesus might heal me of my diseases!
O that He might send me forth in His name!
O that He might restore me to His grace!

I wake earlier and spend more time in prayer,
then find myself stronger at church...
But laziness sets in by the end of the day,
and I am ripe to be led astray.

The struggle seems against insurmountable odds at times,
though I know Christ is all-powerful
and with Him all may be done.

Let me turn back to you, dear Lord,
and so find my way.
Indeed, may I find your grace.

September 25

(Hg.1:1-8; Ps.149:1-6,9; Lk.9:7-9)

Who is this man?

He is the kingdom of heaven come to earth;

He is the temple rebuilt.

Through the fog I see a dim light
shining.

Where it leads me, I know not

but that it leads me to Him.

Have I come full circle these seven years?

Is the octave to be complete?

Seven years ago I began teaching to support myself apart from my parents. I moved in with a woman on welfare and her two children. Today I complete teaching a GED course for women on welfare. (I had tutored said woman for GED during above year.) Immediately upon the end of our small party, I discover the above woman in the office of my supervisor, seeking assistance. And during our conversation I find out there may be no further money for this program...

The hand of the Lord is ironic.

(Let His will be done.)

Lord, lead me forth.

May I join in the building of your kingdom on earth.

(Let me remember who you are.)

- Confession redeems and exhilarates me,
and I find encouragement for *Children of Light*.

September 26 (Hg.1:15-2:9; Ps.43:1-4; Lk.9:18-22)

Oh the trials that lead to the finding of the new temple -
if we but knew what it takes for peace!

End of times prophecies seem to abound - chastisements
are predicted and many believe. It may be so. But I
do know we are not to fear, not to be anxious, for we
know with the greatest certainty that the kingdom is
being built, that above all, heaven awaits... and then
all trial shall cease.

Come, Lord Jesus, be with us.
(Even today you are with me, and I love you.)

September 27 (Zec.2:5-9,14-15; Jer.31:10-13; Lk.9:43-45)

There is a purity upon me now
that I pray in faith will last.
It is as living in Jerusalem,
in the holy day -
there eternity awaits.

Surround me, Lord.
Protect me with your Spirit.
Though it be suffering that takes us there,
let your glory shine all the same.

(He shall return.)

September 28

(Nm.11:25-29; Ps.19:8,10,12-14; Jas.5:1-6;
Mk.9:38-43,45,47-48)

Today's gospel is witness that one need not be Catholic to serve God, nor to enter heaven. ("Would that all were prophets...") And a theme of unity runs through our service to nursing home residents, who tell us of the other churches who serve them (and in those I meet there from other denominations). It also returns in our prayer meeting this night.

(Also, Jesus' strong words later in gospel confirm yesterday's move toward purity. Walking blindly into a moving car and hurting my arm reminded me of Jesus' warnings that appear today. At Holy Hour a man tells people to go and pray at altar rail for healing of any problem - I think of finding absolute purity. And while bowling, my friend promises to buy me Sharks' hat (see last Christmas) if I make triangle split - which I do.)

Lord, make us one,
and let us all serve you, the only Son.

September 29 (Dn.7:9-10,13-14; Ps.138:1-5; Jn.1:47-51)

All the pieces of my day fit together perfectly,
as the angels watch over...

We must be without guile, like Nathanael,
and like Daniel,
to see the angels of heaven
ascending and descending upon Jesus.

Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, watch over us.
All the host of heaven, guide our days.
Lord, may we serve you and be fruitful.

(Notes: Coincidental relationships of people from
different places; little work from students
gives me time to read and write; no line at
the supermarket; filling in open space in
schedule, in place at right time; computer
solitaire is completed, finished (1st time);
schedule works out perfectly for next *Songs*
series in church...

And early this morning I move to assist
a struggling woman.)

September 30

(2Tm.3:14-17; Ps.87:1-7,Zec.8:23; Lk.9:51-56)

New priest is set against idea for daily Holy Hours;
and he has spent money remaining from sizeable
donation to soup kitchen. But I am not angry.
(I do not call down fire from heaven.)
Perhaps for the first time I am not even worried.
I do see that the Lord chastises those whom He loves.
If we dwell in Holy Zion, if we dwell in the Lord,
nothing can harm us. All is in His hands.

I find Paul's letter to Timothy appropriate,
for I take this as training in holiness.

And I spend much time on this feast of St. Jerome
proofreading past three months' entries of this work.

Wisdom, be with us.
Lord Jesus, remain.
May we know your Word.

October 1 (Is.66:10-14; Ps.137:1-6; Mt.18:1-4)

Jerusalem is our joy!
The Lord is our happiness!
We serve Him in all things,
standing as a child before Him.

I do find a joy this day, thinking about St. Theresa and her way of love. And throughout the day I seek to honor the Lord.

In honor of St. Theresa, I do little tasks of cleaning and such - and at Mass this morning during homily I sense a spirit of holiness anointing all things, a sense of the simplicity of God's presence.

And at my sister's grave, upon a plant I've tended to and struggled with all summer, I find the first flower of the year... it was broken off (very recently) by mowers, so I take it home and put it in water.

(Though we be but bones, we shall live to God.)

Lord, let your light and joy infuse my days.
May the simpleness of your presence never leave us.
Make all things holy.

(Humble me as a child. Take all arrogance from me.)

October 2

(Ex.23:20-23; Ps.91:1-6,10-11; Mt.18:1-5,10)

I did have a dream wherein I was most loving and welcoming to the children - keeping them first - but it didn't seem I was much with the guardian angels today. (Though on our way with brothers and sisters to parish renewal meeting in Newark, I believe they did protect us.)

I suppose we don't really know how they watch over us; I wish, however, I was more with them.

I thank you, Lord, for my dream of love -
 may it stay with me.
And thank you for sparing my life
 by your guardian angels.

October 3 (Bar.1:15-22; Ps.79:1-5,8-9; Lk.10:13-16)

I fear for my own life and for the lives of those in the Church, for we hear the word of God, but do we act upon it? I am "flushed with shame" for our sins.

May the Lord indeed "deliver us and pardon our sins."
May He take the stupor from upon us and renew us.
May we walk in His ways.

Let me not blush, Lord;
let me not sin.
Quench the fire which besets us.

October 4 (Bar.4:5-12,27-29; Ps.69:33-37; Lk.10:17-24)

Where there is life there is hope. I see this. As long as we are in this world, we may find God - for God is indeed with everyone who walks the face of the earth or they would not be walking the face of the earth.

Jesus condemns no one here. In the end He will judge, but here He only extends mercy and gives us the opportunity to turn from our sins and seek God "ten times the more."

Here we have the power of Christ. We have been privileged to see Him and know Him and partake in His power. Nothing of this world holds power over Him - not sin, not death, not the devil. Here and now we must seize the power and turn to Him in strength.

Lord, empower your children to tread on serpents.
Let us find redemption in thee.

(It is somewhat ironic that on this the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, we hear that Italy is rocked a second time in as many weeks by an earthquake and the church bearing his name is further damaged. I think it is a sign of the Church's need to be rebuilt again in our time - to save it from disaster.)

October 5 (Gn.2:18-24; Ps.128:1-6; Hb.2:9-11; Mk.10:2-16)

I spend the day alone. It is not good, really. Even in what I call my monastic years I lived with my parents and could sit with them when I needed. But now I am alone.

Later in the afternoon I prayed the rosary and did some reading, and this evening we had our prayer meeting - which brought comfort and companionship - but yet...

Ahhh me!

Be with me, Lord,
 who are like me.
Let me be thy brother,
 and one with thy brothers and sisters.

(Marriage continues a faint notion.)

October 6 (Jon.1:1-2:1,11; Jon.2:2-5,7-8; Lk.10:25-37)

The word of the Lord comes not to fictional characters. Jesus would not compare Himself to an imaginary prophet - the mouth of the Lord would not utter such foolishness. For He is real; He is incarnate - or can you not believe this either?

Conversation today with priest about the sad state of catechesis. I begin to wonder how many Church men and women even believe.

Jesus is Lord. Do not seek to justify yourself.

(Begin setting up special parish commemoration of Mary and pro-life month today - to involve Hispanic and Anglo communities... we are all neighbors.)

Jesus, save us from our prideful ignorance.
Heal our lack of faith.
Let us serve you according to our call, in strength.

October 7 (Jon.3:1-10; Ps.130:1-4,7-8; Lk.10:38-42)

And so, of course it is on this feast day of Our Lady of the Rosary that I receive in the mail the rosary I had been waiting a few weeks for. (Lourdes rosary.) And as I had promised, I say all fifteen decades of the rosary this evening, sitting with Mary.

Indeed this prayer does take patience. (I have rarely said more than a mystery a day - though this had become my habit.) But it is certainly the "better part" and provides one with great riches and peace.

And so sin and anxiety are dispelled.

Give me the patience and peace to pray before you, O Lord.

Dearest Mary, watch over and bless our prayer.

(Discussion re psychology and *soul* today -
is it not best expressed in prayer?)

October 8 (Jon.4:1-11; Ps.86:3-6,9-10,15; Lk.11:1-4)

Astounding, the Son of God teaching us to pray -
listen to His words; listen to what He is telling us.

And the Blessed Mother at Medjugorje continually
requests us to pray. Tonight we hear Wayne Weible
speak at a nearby church about the mission of Medjugorje.
(Beautiful call, really.)

This afternoon spoke at length with a student about
the state of especially American society and also the
world because of the removal of God from people's lives.
But as the Blessed Mother says and Mr. Weible encourages,
we can stop wars by prayer... even as the destruction
of Ninevah was avoided by prayer and fasting, so could
be the ruin of our society.

May thy kingdom come, O Lord.
Wash us clean of our sinful ways.

October 9

(Mal.3:13-20; Ps.1:1-4,6,40:5; Lk.11:5-13)

The wicked will be as stubble,
burned to the ground,
on the day of the Lord.

Justice will come, and have its effect on all evildoers.

And I cry for those dispossessed from their jobs,
and for he who is so fraught with greed;
And I cry for the evil of our generation,
the blindness wrought by the devil upon us,
so that we cannot call evil "evil" nor good "good",
but so confuse the two
to justify even the killing of life in the womb.

At the factory, on the TV, in the Church,
I see the wickedness have its day upon the stage -

But I pray, I do pray.
In tears I pray for peace.
Racked with anguish I call for love and truth
and beauty to return.
I seek the world of God, as it should be.
(He does hear our prayers.)

Lord, save us.
May your justice reign on Earth,
and your joy reign in our hearts
and on the streets of the city.

October 10

(Jl.1:13-15,2:1-2; Ps.9:2-3,6,8-9,16;
Lk.11:15-26)

Woe unto him who does not believe!
What hope has he?

The end of times is upon us and the judgment
of the Lord impends like darkness and gloom
even upon His Church on earth.

Why do we not believe? Why do I lack faith?
Will not the Lord dispel the darkness?
Will He not bind Satan
and cast him from me,
from the world,
and from the Church?

I would that He would come in and dispel his hold upon
me. And I fast and pray the rosary this day for the
Pope, and for the Church he guides. May there be
obedience to the Spirit and His Word.

Cast Satan from me, Lord;
please let me believe.
And take the illusion he has cast upon the Church,
upon the world,
and let us see the light of your holy day.

October 11 (Jl.4:12-21; Ps.97:1-2,5-6,11-12; Lk.11:27-28)

Who has heard the word of God and kept it better than Mary?
Who is more blessed?
Whose "yes" is the decision that has brought salvation?
And so we all may live, and keep His word.

Priest devotes this Saturday Mass to Mary;
we put together plans to honor her in parish commemoration;
and I receive a medal blessed by Mary on table of room
in Medjugorje in which seers have visions daily.

(And I am deciding whether or not to visit there next
month.)

Bless us, O Lord, as you have blessed our Mother
with the grace to do your will.

October 12

(Ws.7:7-11; Ps.90:12-17; Heb.4:12-13;
Mk.10:17-30)

Is not wisdom more valuable than all these things?
Is not the kingdom of God greater than anything of this
world?

This is what we must know.

This is what we must realize -

the gifts God gives us far exceed all we have;
trusting in Him and in His providence and love
is all we need do.

Praise the Lord and the joy only He brings!

Take all I have, Lord -
let me come to you.

(I believe I shall go to Medjugorje.)

October 13 (Rom.1:1-7; Ps.98:1-4; Lk.11:29-32)

The only sign for unbelievers is that which will condemn them to death.

Christ, the greatest sign, has come.
He who was prophesied, who was given as a promise
by God the Father, dwells among us.
Nothing more could we ask.

Put your hands into His side, and into the nail marks
in His hands. Sinners have repented; it is time for
you to wake from sleep.

Paul knows of whom he speaks. He knows of the peace He
gives. These are not mere words - they are a blessing.
Accept the blessing of Christ.

(And this morning I smell roses in the air -
but there are none there.)

O Lord, extinguish my unbelief.
Cast it into the sea.
May I stand fast with thee
(and with thy fair mother - your gift to me.)

October 14 (Rom.1:16-25; Ps.19:2-5; Lk.11:37-41)

The true faith and the true way is simple
and childlike trust in God, in Jesus.

Sitting behind our altar servers this morning;
listening to and watching our humble priest;
praying with my simple brothers and sisters -
I remember why I returned here,
and I see how I forget the simple humility
needed for the kingdom of God.
As I attend Mass, I try to drink in this spirit.

Being rather well-educated, working in colleges as
a teacher and tutor, keeping so often separate from
others, I can easily lose the childlike simplicity
which was the source of my conversion.

And with the eyes of an artist, a purer child,
I try to see the world today as all a work of art -
and I play *The Innocent Heart* tonight in church.

Jesus, come back to me;
may I remain with you in simple faith.

October 15

(Rom.2:1-11; Ps.62:2-3,6-7,9,13; Lk.11:42-46)

God gives us time to repent.

The Lord chastises us that we might repent.

We should thank Him for His mercy and do what is needed to save our souls from condemnation.

So many have the wrong impression of Jesus as lenient, of the God of the Old Testament as punishing and the God of the New as forgiving. Jesus *is* forgiving, and thank God for Him - but in the end He shall judge, and that judgment will be eternal: there will be no escape from His condemnation. And even as He walked the earth He said to tear out your eye if it offends you, and that he who even looks at a woman lustfully has committed adultery...

I talk to my father tonight (on his birthday) about the need for discipline, especially of children, in this country. And I take Jesus' chastisement of the Pharisees to heart. I must know that any of the things I do - Mass, fasting, service, etc. - mean nothing if I do not love. I shall be judged by my love, and I'm afraid I fall far short. But love, especially of women, does come to me today - and I thank the Lord for the compassionate understanding, and love, He grants me.

Lord, help me to realize all else is as nothing;
teach me to love.

(Thank you for your chastisements.)

October 16 (Rom.3:21-29; Ps.130:1-7; Lk.11:47-54)

The Lord hears all who call upon Him,
and saves them because of their faith.
We must all fall to our knees
and recognize our sin
before He who made us.

None of us is free of sin
(most of all, not myself).
All of us are responsible for the shedding of innocent
blood.
Jesus knows this. Jesus sees this.
And He begs us to turn our eyes inward
to see the corruption within,
repent,
and seek forgiveness.

He longs to forgive those who would come to Him;
He cries for our repentance.
(Turn to Him, though it hurts - do not become angry with
truth.)

Jesus, I am sorry.
Help me, please!
I stand broken before you...
please heal me.

October 17 (Phil.3:17-4:1; Ps.32:1-2,5,11; Jn.12:24-26)

(I confess my guilt to the Lord, and He forgives...)

It is not this body. It is not this body which will enter heaven. It is the glorified body, one with Christ.

We need not fear, even death.

We can be courageous as St. Ignatius -
we can find that trust, if we know Christ.

And we can produce fruit, I know.

I finally receive application to Permanent Diaconate in the mail today. If I am to serve, let it be...

Lord, do take my life.

October 18 (2Tm.4:9-17; Ps.145:10-13,17-18; Lk.10:1-19)

St. Luke the evangelist.

We are all sent out.
May it be so that we do the Lord's will,
and fulfill the Lord's call,
bringing forth the word of truth.

His word goes out to the ends of the earth,
and though we be but as specs of dust,
He is with those who serve Him.

Take this writing, Lord,
and all my life.
May your Church be one in Christ the Son.

(We all share in the works of each other,
for we are all brothers of God.)

October 19

(Is.53:10-11; Ps.33:4-5,18-20,22; Hb.4:14-16;
Mk.10:35-45)

Jesus is the strong one -

He bears the weight of the sins of all humanity.
(Mine alone are too much for me.)

The call to serve,
the call to mission...

May the darkness which surrounds us
be broken up by the light of Christ,
that we might hear His voice
and see our way.

Lord, wash us clean in your bath -
may we be worthy to drink of your cup
(and strong enough to accept it).

October 20

(Rom.4:20-25; Lk.1:68-75; Lk.12:13-21)

(In U.S.A., St. Paul of the Cross feast day -
our patron saint.)

If we believe, we will live for Him.
If we fool ourselves, we shall not know His blessings.

If we continue as we are, making pretense of belief,
yet failing to know His presence -
where can this lead?

Faith in Christ is a deep-set stone, a profound rock
on which to build.

Jesus is Truth, and for this Truth
many have shed blood.

Still, we walk blindly.

May I bleed for you, dear Jesus.
May my soul be set and centered on thee.
I believe.

October 21

(Rom.5:12,15,17-21; Ps.40:7-10,17; Lk.12:35-38)

The righteous man serves He who has brought salvation;
and so he shall share in that salvation.
Jesus washes all sin away,
and so it is a grace to wait on Him.

I sing selections of *Songs for Children of Light* tonight
alone in church with the angels and the saints and Jesus.
I am filled with peace, as a cloud gently gliding across
the sky... To heaven do I reach, and return again to
earth.

Lord, inspire me with your call.
May I be awake and waiting for you.

October 22

(Rom.6:12-18; Ps.124:1-8; Lk.12:39-48)

I wonder sometimes how I can consider myself under grace if I continue to sin as I do. Out of ignorance or not, I still must merit stripes. I wish to step into heaven, but how can I if plagued by sin?

I find reassurance in service and of my service for the Church - at a wake this evening a grieving father, whose son has stepped into heaven, commends me on my reading at Mass - but I know I am not whole.

I pray to the Lord, and speak to the saints quite clearly - but so often I do not hear, and am incomplete in my obedience.

Lord, if it were not for you,
 how often I would have died in my disobedience.
If you had not saved me,
 where would I be now?

Guide me to completion.
Let your will be done.

October 23

(Rom.6:19-23; Ps.1:1-4,6,40:5; Lk.12:49-53)

Jesus knows His presence and His message shall cause trouble - it will divide households - and this pains Him. The fires of purgation are not pleasant, but necessary. All darkness must be taken from our hearts, that we might be just.

In the TV show I see tonight (of Catholic priests), a woman screams out the demons from a rape she's undergone; a priest struggles to pray, but, finally, professes his faith in strength... it is not easy to move toward the light.

And at funeral for the father of a teenager I know, priest emphasizes that the deceased is home now - but he is not here for his tearful mother...

After funeral I see my sister (adopted) at school for first time in nine months - she is wearing black. But there for first time this semester I see old students and feel at home... though on phone with several friends/acquaintances I find a coldness.

We do not know how the sword of Christ shall fall.

(Also, spoke (well) with mother and childhood friend, and met two former supervisors...)

O Lord, I pray for all the souls you put in my path. I pray that by your grace we may escape your wrath. Unite us again in you.

October 24

(Rom.7:18-25; Ps.119:66,68,76-77,93-94;
Lk.12:54-59)

(Today I made a mistake I haven't made in a while - I read tomorrow's readings. Priest followed with tomorrow's gospel. I reflect upon the readings for today, nonetheless.)

Jesus frees us from the prison of sin.
Hallelujah!

In confession today I do indeed find freedom in truth,
and the strength to serve the Lord.

Tutoring today blessed with lengthy conversation with two Muslim students. Sharing of faith and understanding of creeds continued after with fellow tutors, one of whom was Protestant. The Holy Spirit was strongly upon the scene. (Even inspired tutoring - math tutor dragged out a box to explain area, etc.)

We have great strength in the Spirit if we take it upon ourselves to make peace with one another and find our oneness in God. It makes the devil flee to see his illusions of division fall away.

I saw this today. I glimpsed the oneness of all;
I recognized the barriers and their crumbling down.

Free us, O Lord, from all bondage to sin.
Give us eyes of light to see thy presence
with us even now.

(I love you, Jesus.)

October 25 (Is.9:1-6; Ps.24:1-6; Lk.1:26-38)

Two Marian Masses today: one in honor of Mary, Mother of Creation this morning (above readings); another for Mary, Mother of Our Savior, as part of bilingual vigil honoring Mary and praying for life this evening.

Mary is indeed the Mother of Jesus, our Savior, and the Mother of all of us. We honor her and pray on that which can only cause her the greatest grief.

And during Holy Hour this morning, I receive a blessed idea for a painting, one which makes me cry. Looking upon the crucifix above the Sacrament and saying the rosary, I think of how Jesus' body came through His mother alone and that children look like their parents... Why has no artist portrayed Mary with similar features to Jesus? The painting I see is of the crucified Lord with Mary standing beside, looking at viewer - with similar features as those we find in Jesus. Title: Mother and Child.

May the Mother of Christ intercede for us.
Dear Lord, your Spirit is sweet;
let us share in its light always.

October 26 (Jer.31:7-9; Ps.126:1-6; Hb.5:1-6; Mk.10:46-52)

Oh that we all might see!
That we all might walk on level paths.
On that day all will be well.
(Let us all follow Him.)

On this cold day I see the little foibles in all around
me (and myself) - the disheveled hair, the tired eyes,
the little illnesses, the stains on clothing...

Indeed we all have blindness
and must call out to the Lord.

(Oh that we might see our blindness!)

We praise you, Lord,
for you are our salvation.
You know our sins and cleanse us from them
when we come unto you -
and you lead us to your kingdom
through the cross.

October 27

(Rom.8:12-17; Ps.68:2,4,6-7,20-21; Lk.13:10-17)

If a woman in bondage so long to evil in the flesh
could be set free by the Lord -
there is hope for us all.

The struggle between the flesh and the spirit goes on...
but with Jesus on our side,
we are bound to win.

(Sent check for Medjugorje pilgrimage today.
Will this be a place of healing for me?)

O Lord, strengthen us in the fight.

October 28 (Eph.2:19-22; Ps.19:2-5; Lk.6:12-16)

(Sts. Simon and Jude.)

The message of the apostles goes out to the ends of the earth, filling the kingdom of heaven with the children of God.

Let us welcome Him. Let us enter in.
Let us live in that Word that goes forth
to the ends of the earth,
that comes forth to fill our hearts
with the light of our Lord.

From the holy center, from the still and silent point -
from the heart and soul of Jesus Christ,
from His presence on the earth,
the Word goes forth
and the Church is built
in the name of our heavenly Father.

And nothing can tear it down.

Praise you, Lord, for the gift of yourself
as well expressed
in the anointing of your apostles.

October 29

(Rom.8:26-30; Ps.13:4-6; Lk.13:22-30)

It is not our birthplace which qualifies us for heaven;
it is the location of our hearts.

Keep me close to you, O Lord;
let me hear your voice speak to my heart,
let me see your presence before me.

Gather all your children unto your kingdom -
set our hearts on your Spirit and light.

(I dine at the Lord's table every day
and yet am remiss in entering heaven...
others shall come before me.

Yet the narrow gate of the Spirit,
the Word of God, leads me forth.)

October 30

(Rom.8:31-39; Ps.109:21-22,26-27,30-31;
Lk.13:31-35)

Blessed is the Lord,
for only by His blood
are we healed,
are we forgiven -
and only if we accept Him.

I can do nothing.
Of myself, I am helpless.
There is nothing I can do to make amends for my sins -
only Jesus can do that: only Jesus has done that.

I must allow His blood to wash over me.
I must accept His forgiveness.
I must let Him gather me under His wings,
and so find refuge.

He is a shelter where no thief breaks in.
He is the conqueror of even death.
In Him there is no fear,
for none has power over Him.

If you accept Him into your heart,
you will never be separated from His love.

Lord, why do I harden my heart against you?
Why do I remain in sin
when you would be my freedom?

I am a sinner -
I must thank you for your forgiveness.

October 31 (Rom.9:1-5; Ps.147:12-15,19-20; Lk.14:1-6)

Jesus rescues me (immediately) from the pit -
but still I am so lazy,
still I am so lost...
still my eyes and ears are dull
as the Pharisees'.

So much has He given me,
and so little do I do.

May the Lord awaken me from sleep!
May He remove the veil of darkness.

Why can we not see you standing before us, Lord?
Why are our hearts not in communion with thee?
Set us on solid ground with you this day.

(O Wisdom, come to me.)

November 1

(Rv.7:2-4,9-14; Ps.24:1-6; 1Jn.3:1-3; Mt.5:1-12)

All Saints Day!

The blessings of the Lord are upon those who keep themselves pure.

Confession, Communion, Holy Hour, and rosary help in finding His blessings this morning. At soup kitchen, troubles from Satan are placed in our paths - but they are dealt with. And this evening I find the grace to record a demo of ten songs (one from each album) of *Children of Light*.

Praise you, God, in your angels and in your saints.
May we join in their number
and sing to your glory.

November 2

(Ws.3:1-9; Ps.103:8,10,13-18; Rom.6:3-9;
Jn.6:37-40)

After storming the gates of hell (with prayer) yesterday, a wonderfully cloudy All Souls Day today - though beaming sunlight did shine through shortly before sunset. (Fresh air this morning after rain of yesterday particularly wonderful.)

O glorious death that leads to eternal life!

This I sense strongly at Mass. Paul tells us elsewhere to do all as if we are not doing it, and isn't this our lives if we are dead to sin?

I feel dead to sin, yet so alive to God. Realizing that this is not my world, that I have no real home here... I am assured of my home in heaven. And it is close to me today. (As are the souls who have gone over.)

And at prayer meeting this evening, great hope that veil of devil's illusion will fall away - and great strength in standing simply with God our Father as His human beings.

Lord, stand with us forever.
Thank you for your presence.

November 3

(Rom.11:29-36; Ps.69:14,30-31,33-34,36-37;
Lk.14:12-14)

How can receiving nothing in return for one's gifts
be a blessing?

How can disobedience be an occasion for God's grace?
The mind that lacks wisdom cannot resolve this paradox.
The mind without the Lord's light stumbles in blindness
over these contradictions.

I recall Pere Grou's mentioning that sin can bring
great blessings, but not going into detail, for it is
only a mind with wisdom which can discern such things -
and those without will inevitably misinterpret. I also
recall Paul's elsewhere saying that every high priest is
taken from among the people to intercede for the people's
sin and his own - for he, too, is one of them and can
sympathize with their sin.

Jesus is able to sympathize without knowing sin, but
in wisdom today I see how our sin can help us to be
compassionate about others and their sin and, in turn,
enable us to do away with sin.

"I am a sinner," I say - and nothing is truer,
and nothing is more redeeming.

How inscrutable are your ways, O Lord -
how far above our own.
Grant us a sense of your wisdom,
that we might grow in grace
according to your will.

November 4 (Rom.12:5-16; Ps.131:1-3; Lk.14:15-24)

In unity there is peace.
Living as one, we shall find our way to heaven.
All have their place at His table.

It is wonderful to hear of how well Lewis and Clark got along with most of the Indian tribes along their expedition. And to see also and remember the end of Apartheid in South Africa and the freeing of Nelson Mandela - the tears of joy are still the same.

If only the legs of the black man (they all dance as one) and the head of the red man, along with the back of the white man and the yellow man's hands, could cooperate, then the era of peace would be ushered in.

And nothing could facilitate such unity like the Eucharist of our Lord: at His holy banquet, in Him, we are one body.

(You and your kind are no better than any other - remember.
We need one another.)

Gather us into your kingdom, Lord.
May our lives and the gifts you give each of us
be shared in thanksgiving to you,
and not for love of gain.

(So should it be with our politicians,
who are called to serve the people.)

November 5

(Rom.13:8-10; Ps.112:1-2,4-5,9; Lk.14:25-33)

In so many ways I fail to renounce my possessions.
I do so lack of generosity. I do so lack of love.

Because I hold onto my selfishness, I cannot accept
marriage, should that be my call. Because I have
such doubts and fears, I could not give my life to
the priesthood.

So many distractions there are in life, so many things
which possess us and our attention and keep us from
accepting fully the glorious and redemptive cross Christ
would place upon our shoulders. And so we cannot turn
our backs on the world and come to Him freely in love.

I do believe my pilgrimage to Medjugorje will be
a renunciation of the world. I will go alone,
with no friend or relative. I will travel to a
place I do not know. I will open myself to His call.

I am told this is a place where Christian love is
tangible... I pray in peace I shall find my soul.
(To do this I must lose my life, I know.)

O Lord, help me to empty myself
of all that keeps me from coming to you.
Let me not be afraid.

November 6

(Rom.14:7-12; Ps.27:1,4,13-14; Lk.15:1-10)

There *is* great rejoicing in heaven for every repentant sinner. Every time we turn to God and trust in His love, the angels sing. But it seems this society is unable to believe.

I watch a controversial TV show about the Catholic Church tonight. In a wonderfully poignant scene, the priest hears the confession of his black-sheep, ex-con brother. The camera closes in on the priest who with tears in his eyes speaks for himself, his family, and for God, saying, "I love you. We love you. Whatever you've done, we still love you..."(paraphrase). (I must say, it was a beautiful integration of human and divine love and forgiveness.) But the brother is gone already. He does not wait to hear these words.

Why is this society so lacking in hope? Why are we afraid to offer hope? Why must all be dark in the end?

May the devil flee our presence.
May the power of God, in whose hands all is,
cast him out.

There is hope. There is Christ. Turn from your sin.
Be strong.

Lord, may we not be afraid to come unto thee,
and feel your healing embrace.

November 7 (Rom.15:14-21; Ps.98:1-4; Lk.16:1-8)

Paul has certainly taken initiative in doing the work of Christ. He has, in fact, initiated churches throughout the Gentile world. Would that we were so enterprising.

Well, I have been taking some initiative of late in moving to publish *Songs*. I've made a demo I'm trying to copy, and I have put together the lyrics for this sampling of songs in a short book. I'm hoping to take both to Medjugorje.

I also am given opportunity to teach a student about the love and mission of Jesus today.

Lord, let me work for you.

Dear Mother, please bless and make me fruitful.

November 8

(Rom.16:3-9,16,22-27; Ps.145:1-5,10-11;
Lk.16:9-15)

I gain an understanding of the gospel for the day,
and a saying which had given me difficulty.
I understand it as similar to the concept behind
my album *Thoroughfare* and the song "Asylum Paradox".

- We have bodies. We are here. And so we must use
these "little things" God gives; and though they must
in the end be forsaken, they will lead us to heaven.

Again, a listing of Christians who do well with what
they have in first reading... So we must all employ
our gifts.

(I know I must distribute the abortion flyers I have,
graphic though they may be, or the twisted soul
of this inhuman generation may never be healed.)

Through my whole day, let me be with thee, O Lord.
Thank you for the brothers and sisters you bring me
this day
to help accomplish your work.

(Indeed there are many at the kitchen,
all giving of their gifts -
cooking and cleaning, serving and singing,
offering prayers and offering goods,
all for your glory, O Lord.)

November 9 (1Kgs.8:22-23,27-30; Ps.46:1-3,5-6,8-9;
Eph.2:19-22; Mt.5:23-24)

As we celebrate today the founding of the first church of Christendom, I read of the damage done to the house of God named for Francis in Assisi.

As we celebrate today our unity as one Church in Christ, I read the Orthodox Patriarch's remarks of the divergent paths which seem irreconcilable, and I speak with others about two of the some 300 churches in the world of Protestantism - one "close" to us, another which calls us the whore of Babylon.

Who is reconciling with his brother?
How shall we stand?

And the devil's field day continues.
And as the grass grows,
 how many more abortions have there been?

The Lord prayed in His day that we would be one in Him.
But without Him as we are, there can be no unity.
And so there is division - between husbands and wives,
between liberals and conservatives,
between love and justice...
and none has the truth, for none has the other.

O Lord, as your Church flounders,
 as it stands mute in the face of evil,
 as it moves blindly without you -
 we are lost.

O Lord, hear our prayer of supplication:
 save your Church;
 make it one in thee.

November 10

(Ws.1:1-7; Ps.139:1-10,24; Lk.17:1-6)

Strangest experience this morning. Was to meet priest early to drive with him to his mechanic and bring him back in my car. As I approached the rectory (a few minutes early) in the near dark, there was a car double-parked and a man standing beside it. Upon my approach the man got into his car and began driving. Assuming it to be the priest (I'd never seen his car before), I followed him - "Who else could it be?"

The man drove in the same direction as we were to go, but continued past a turn. I beeped, drove up next to his car, and saw that it wasn't the priest.

How easy it is to follow the wrong shepherd.

Then this afternoon debated with a fellow tutor the wisdom of placing rather graphic abortion material on table with other information at the college. He thought it unwise, but upon seeing an article encouraging abortion as an option to pregnancy, and realizing how entrenched this mindset is in this society - I thought the actual facts must have a place.

So many are so easily led astray.
(What horrors must be stored up for those who lead our children to such straits.)

Forgive, yes, we forgive, Lord -
if they but would ask.

O Lord, by your Wisdom
lead us from the billows and the waves
which rack our bones, our souls.

(Notes: I returned (late) to accompany priest,
and I placed a few brochures on table.)

November 11 (Ws.2:23-3:9; Ps.34:2-3,16-19; Lk.17:7-10)

What wisdom there is in such humility;
for those who humble themselves now,
those who seem dead to this world,
shall be greatly exalted in eternal life
with Christ.

We shall dart about as flames of fire then,
ruling, and moving where we will,
for we will have understood and lived
the Word Jesus comes to give -
we will have laid down our lives in the world.

Hallelujah!

I am your useless servant, Lord.
(Fill me with your wisdom.)

November 12 (Ws.6:1-11; Ps.82:3-4,6-8; Lk.17:11-19)

We must give thanks for all the Lord does give us;
and we must employ well all His precious gifts.

I prepare for my pilgrimage to Medjugorje (in two days),
a great gift from the Lord. (The priest even announces
my imminent departure this morning at Mass.)

I know this is a great privilege, and though hesitant
at first to receive such an honor for fear I shall not
live up to its responsibility - I later rejoice in the
Lord with faith and trust in His providence... and I
look forward to praying for everyone.

Prepare my heart, O Lord, for reception of your treasures;
may my soul magnify your glory.

November 13

(Ws.7:22-8:1; Ps.119:89-91,130,135,175;
Lk.17:20-25)

Be still and wait for the Lord,
for He is here with us.
Be still and wait for the Lord.

Before Blessed Sacrament I wait,
and He is present.

At wake for a charismatic sister this night,
final song, sung in Tagalog,
resounds with love and beauty...
and brings tears.

Lord, fill us with your blessed wisdom.

November 14 (Ws.13:1-9; Ps.19:2-5; Lk.17:26-37)

Well, today I leave church and work, apartment and friends (and cat) behind and begin my pilgrimage alone. (Now in flight to Frankfurt - will spend following day there... certainly airplanes are nothing to be worshipped. Not sure if it's morning or night at this point.)

Life does go on in this day and age - I see that - with little thought, I'm afraid, for the end. I pray it shall not come suddenly upon those around me.

(It rains as it always does when I move or do major travel.)

Lord, you are everything to me.
Show me your will for my life.

(Begin to read St. Therese's *Story of a Soul*.)

November 15

(Ws.18:14-16,19:6-9; Ps.105:2-3,5,36-37,42-43;
Lk.18:1-8)

(Though due to travel the Mass I attend (in Frankfurt) late in
the afternoon is for Sunday, I shall reflect
on day's readings.)

Appropriate to hear the Lord's exhortation to prayer as
I sit here in His favored land, where the Blessed Mother
exhorts His people to pray, and where they do pray -
and find answers.

The Lord does indeed love to favor His people.
He favored us in creating us, in choosing the Israelites,
and especially by redeeming us now.

And from the "real"ness I see in clothes out on lines
to the majesty of the mountains and the beauty of the
Adriatic Sea, I realize the blessing of this area of
the world as we drive very late tonight.

And tomorrow I begin in Medjugorje.

Bless us, O Lord.
Bless all those who pray.
Make us pray-ers for you.

November 16

(Dn.12:1-3; Ps.16:5,8-11; Heb.10:11-14,18;
Mk.13:24-32)

Getting a real sense of eternity:

Jesus is always at the door, waiting.

So if in every age since His death and resurrection people have expected the end soon, there is certainly something wrong with this - because we are still here - but there is also something correct about it. In God's time, a thousand years is as a day, and so it is never long... and He is ever waiting.

Live in God's time,
and be ready.

God, our Father, take us home to you.

(First full day in Medjugorje.
Here there is more time for prayer
and more people are praying -
but the Mass is the Mass
and Christians are Christians
wherever you go.)

November 17

(1Mac.1:10-15,41-43,54-57,62-63;
Ps.119:53,61,88,134,150,155,158;
Lk.18:35-43)

We must cry out to God; how else can we lose our blindness?
How else can we escape from the nations around us?

This is a special place. I am coming to see it as a place set apart, a holy place. Walked through the fields and climbed Apparition Hill today, kneeling at the place the Blessed Mother appeared for so long. This evening really appreciated the blessing of the three hours of prayer in church. And (with group) went to visionary (Mirjana)'s house. She came to the gate and spoke to the crowd - so beautiful she is.

Tears in my eyes several times throughout the day...
and so they are beginning to see.

This is a holy place which (despite my fear of the commercialism) has been preserved from the nations - preserved from war and communism, and preserved from the weather.

Lord, protect this place,
and protect the hearts of all Christians -
that we might always see you.

November 18

(Acts 28:11-16,30-31; Ps.98:1-6; Mt.14:22-33)

(Feast day readings (above) at English Mass this morning; day readings at Croatian evening Mass. Opposite was true yesterday.)

Honestly did not know yesterday's entry would reflect today's gospel. (Actually, readings from past two days were on my mind beforehand.) Perhaps this frees me up to speak about readings of the day.

Climbed Mt. Krizevic today. Pain. Not so much physical... Ran down mountain to find elderly women I'd helped up who'd left the top early... was told they were still at top - ran back. Most gone. Sat. All gone. Alone. Tears. Crying intensely for peace.

Coming down in dark I recalled the dream of my Godparents racing down a steep mountain (on bicycle, I think), thoroughly unharmed and unworried. (And, of course, it was such a precipice that took my sister's life.)

I endure "terrible pain" "with joy in my soul."
I seek the Lord, climbing to see Him -
and I see His crucified/resurrected form
in the trees of the mountain opposite.

He comes to me, and is making His home in me.

Jesus, I give my life to you, for you.
I love you.
Hear my cry for peace among nations.

(Received news of Islamic fundamentalists murdering some seventy tourists in Egypt at morning Mass.)

November 19

(2Mac.7:1,20-31; Ps.17:1,5-6,8,15; Mt.5:1-12)

Gospel for peace,

for today we were in Mostar, land of devastation...
and we came as peacemakers.

Evening gospel is ten talents. Interesting experience:

Preparing for Confession before and during Mass (it was a long wait), I realize it is my pride keeping me from discerning and accepting my call (to ordination, marriage, production of art, etc.), as well as all other sins. As I reach confessional, priest (who is popular confessor) must leave to serve Communion.

I come home here and confess, in tears, to our own humble priest. Extraordinary Confession - assured of discernment.

Holy Hour this night led by first priest - he ever on his knees, me in front row. With head down I see flash of light above. Look around...? Jesus. Remainder of hour I look at Him.

Priest does Benediction prayer - points Sacrament at me... I look, he prays - I am blinded, I cannot look. Do not see Him again.

Jesus will humble you, be assured.

(Priest kindly asks me afterwards if I'd an opportunity to confess. Also, a young woman/sister was both at confessional and playing guitar at Hour.)

My talent shall be fruitful in humility.

Thank you, Jesus.

November 20

(1Mac.2:15-29; Ps.50:1-2,5-6,14-15,23;
Lk.19:41-44)

The Lord visits this place in such a special way -
I pray we all see and appreciate His presence.

May Medjugorje always be consecrated to God.

With a cross on a far mountain,
I pray no more overturning of stones -
no more torture...

Lord, overcome darkness with light;
only you can transform the greatest evils
into good.

(No more weeping, please.)

November 21 (1Mac.4:36-37,52-59; 1Chr.29:10-13;
Lk.19:45-48)

(Presentation readings this morning only -
may refer to these as well.)

And so the temple is purified; and so we celebrate.

It is indeed the 25th of the month that marks the
anniversary of messages here. This place, too, is
a place for cleansing the Church. May it be a model
of what the Church should be. May no thieves enter in.

Tomorrow, early, we leave. It has been a blessed week.
It seems every moment here is in the Spirit's hands,
is watched over by the Blessed Mother.

This week we have presented ourselves before God.
I pray our lives bear fruit.

I have found a principal theme of the week (for myself)
to be blindness. Got a blindfold on plane here (to sleep),
used it every night - heater very bright. Blind people
walking up and down mountains with guides - tried it
today with friend... works. Other incidents.
Must trust the Holy Spirit for direction.

Dear Mother, bless all your children.
Thank you for being with us.

(Yes, I, too, find purity,
as in the final Mass
I stand next to a young woman Religious -
and am her brother.)

November 22 (1Mac.6:1-13; Ps.9:2-4,6,16,19; Lk.20:27-40)

There is a resurrection;
there is God.
I have been to the mountain, and I see.

On plane I would preach to the people;
and on a plane I receive a message:
"Do not be anxious. Keep working (and praying),
and I will move in your life."

St. Cecelia's day, and so I think of music.
Lectored in Germany again (beginning and end of trip),
and so I think of deacon...
though I do still think of Medjugorje.

The world is not long for the devil -
soon it shall rise from the ashes.

Praise you, God!
Your life is all we need.

November 23

(Dn.7:13-14; Ps.93:1-2,5; Rv.1:5-8;
Jn.18:33-37)

Christ is King of eternal ages;
His is not this world.

O that everlasting reign!
into which I pray to come.

Back in the 'real' world,
I must admit to a lack of comfort -
I feel myself invisible and a stranger.

But there is refuge and purpose in service -
of Eucharist in Home, prayer meeting...

O Lord, let me worship you alone;
let all my heart and life be set on you...
and that shall lead me
to where you are.

November 24 (Dn.1:1-6,8-20; Dn.3:52-56; Lk.21:1-4)

O that I might have wisdom (and holiness)
such as Daniel and his brothers!
O that I might be so generous as the widow.

The Lord's peace is upon me...
and I am putting myself in His
and the Blessed Mother's
hands.

In this my exile, make me fruitful, O Lord.

(And St. Therese (of Lisieux) does inspire me
to give myself so -
to give my soul.

And I wait, yes, I wait
for Him to lead.)

November 25

(Dn.2:31-45; Ps.3:57-61; Lk.21:5-11)

Do not fear.

The kingdoms of this world will pass away;
they shall not last.

What you see is only transitory.

So set not your heart on the things of this place;
neither be taken by its allures.

The kings of this world grow weaker;
the reign of Christ comes closer.
As time passes, truth only remains.

To St. Therese death is joyous,
but love is greater.

The Blessed Mother herself, though speaking of chastisements,
tells us not to fear - but pray for peace.

When the kingdom comes,
we must be ready.

(I do feel myself preparing as never before.)

Lord, continue your work in me.

May your blessed peace remain in me,
and may the Mother's milk continue to nourish me.

November 26

(Dn.5:1-6,13-14,16-17,23-28; Dn.3:59,62-67;
Lk.21:12-19)

At the end of the liturgical year, we hail the end of earthly powers, and the coming of the glorious kingship of Christ. And though it comes with suffering, it matters not to the true heart; we have nothing to fear of temporal powers if the eternal Lord is with us.

Mary in her monthly message encourages us to take up our cross, to accept our vocation with joy, to reach out to those who need the Lord.

I pray the Word of the Lord take root in my heart and bear fruit in my life, despite any persecutions.

The blood of your cross pour over me, Lord.
Let me speak and live your truth.

November 27

(Is.63:7-9; Ps.67:1-3,5,7-8; Col.3:12-17;
Lk.17:11-19)

Thank you, Lord, for your healing graces.

Thank you, Lord, for your peace.

Thank you for brothers and sisters, friends and family,
and the bounty of your goodness.

Thank you for the joy of serving you and loving you.

(I would throw myself at the feet of the Lord today,
and there find perfect joy.

As we come to the end of this liturgical year,
a year our Pope has dedicated to Jesus,
we should find ourselves becoming as His body.

We are one in church today (Spanish and English),
and with friends and family.)

November 28 (Dn.7:2-14; Dn.3:59,75-81; Lk.21:29-33)

The reign of God is near, even at the door.
Jesus is our everlasting king.
(Tell no one.)

Glory to the One whose reign is everlasting,
 who lives in our hearts this day
 and comes with His mercy!
He is preparing a place for us in heaven.

In Confession, I feel His Spirit absolving me of my sins.
At cemetery, there is a cleansing rain.
In a chapel, the incense of prayer rises to His throne.
In sleep, I rest in His holy hands.

Tear down the reign of unholy kings, O Lord.
Tear down the reign of sin.
Build up the kingdom of your Chosen One.
Build up your presence in our souls.

November 29 (Dn.7:15-27; Dn.3:82-87; Lk.21:34-36)

Last day of the liturgical year,
and so the last page of this year of *Days*.
The year of Jesus goes by
and we must ask ourselves of the progress
in finding Him in our lives.

To His mother and to His saints I have drawn closer,
and so to Him as well.
I become fuller, finding my place in His kingdom.

But the road we are on
must continue to be trodden.
We must pray constantly (I am learning
to pray all mysteries of rosary in a day),
and be ready for the end.

Praise Him who is above all that is!
Jesus is Lord.

O Lord, prepare our hearts for your coming.
Holy Spirit, come.