

DAYS 1999

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November 29 (1998)

(Is.2:1-5; Ps.122:1-9; Rm.13:11-14;
Mt.24:37-44)

Why do we make "provision for the desires of the flesh"
when Jerusalem awaits us?
How can it be that we go on so blindly
when we know the Son of Man is coming?

We must wake now, and we must have hope,
remaining strong in Him who saves us.

In this Year of the Father, I pray I will
indeed draw closer to Him I too often ignore,
and that He will steady my course.

Advent begins, and I do pray for the Father, who sees and
knows all I am and do, to illumine my path. And I do sense
His light; but the darkness still breaks in...

Give me time, Lord, and grant me light.
Father in heaven, may I come to know you
and be founded in you this blessed year.

November 30

(Rm.10:9-18; Ps.19:2-5; Mt.4:18-22)

"Immediately they abandoned boat and father to follow Him."
May we all be so ready upon hearing Truth speak.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
May our mouths be so ready to praise Him.

How shall we effect what the Lord has in store for our lives?
How shall all His will be fulfilled? How shall His word
indeed go out and fill the ends of the earth, that all might
know of His presence? How shall heaven come to earth?

When all have completed their work in the body of Christ,
when all can say with Christ, "It is finished", when
nothing else is lacking in the sacrifice of Christ -
in that day all are home with Him, then shall the eyes
of the Lord be known everywhere, and their light illumine
all things.

O Lord, may we play our part in the advance
of your kingdom.
May the Father's will be done in our lives.

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

"Blessed are the eyes that see what you see."
And this morning I intone the Alleluia verse -
"He will enlighten the eyes of His servants."

After Confession following Mass, I go to the back of the chapel to turn off a shrine light for the priest. Before leaving I genuflect, cross myself, and look at the Tabernacle. My eyes shine.

O Lord, that your gift of sight would remain with me,
that I might not be blinded to your kingdom
present in our midst.

May I be always blessed.

(And also at Mass this morning I realize what a privilege it is to attend Mass every day, and what a responsibility. We must always pray for others who cannot be there. I pray I shall live up to the responsibility of being a servant of the Lord, that I might not lose the privilege He gives me... and again I seek to say the rosary (three mysteries) each day - another privilege.)

December 2

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

The priest asks this morning if we see the Lord's Supper as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. Indeed the readings are all on food and being fed by God.

I try to share historical accounts of the early Church's belief in the Eucharist as Jesus' body and blood with my friend; perhaps I am getting closer to communicating with her, but I still fall far short in my presentation.

Someday truth will simply be with us; God will feed us with His own hand and there will be no further disturbance - "He will destroy the veil that veils all people."

Bless your Church, O Lord, with Truth.
On this mountain make your home.

December 3

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

The Lord's is the house and the rock upon which it is set;
all else will be ground into dust.

Lord, make this day ever new in your Name.
Be in our heart's core.

(Let us put into practice His words, brothers and sisters.)

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

I ask the Lord for chastisement this day,
and He answers my prayers.

The first reading states: "Those who err in spirit
will acquire understanding." The Lord seems to
show me my blindness and reveals to me arrogance.
(With a word how easily we condemn.)

Lord, have I erred (sinfully and foolishly) all this time?
Is there another who will keep her safe,
who holds the key to her heart?
Or am I led into this maze
for no fruitful reason?

(Give me time, O Lord. Give me patience.)

December 5

(Is.30:19-21,23-26; Ps.147:1-6,Is.30:18;

Mt.9:35-10:1,6-8)

Jesus gives the disciples authority; they stand in His place and act for Him. (The old question, "Who died and left you boss?" can be well-answered by the apostles - *Jesus.*)

Also, the moon seems a theme for the day: full moon, lunette (that which holds the host in the monstrance), a moon in a picture my friend put together, and one shining like the sun in Scripture.

Finally, had a vision in my mind while in prayer at Holy Hour of Christ on the cross. It hit me clearly that *God has died for us.* What more do we need? (How overwhelming this is.)

Jesus, bring us into your promised kingdom.
Please be with me to guide me there.

December 6

(Is.11:1-10; Ps.72:1-2,7-8,12-13,17; Rm.15:4-9;
Mt.3:1-12)

Second week.

We wait for the day when "the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord," when the beatific vision shall be fulfilled.

It is frightening to think upon the realization of God's kingdom come. As we draw closer to it, we see how unworthy we are to enter, and fear of the Lord comes upon us. He is so good. He is so pure. His kingdom is so of peace, and we have war still in our members.

We must be cleansed, brothers and sisters.
We must come into His presence
in the readiness He prepares.

(There is talk of teaching and the Church and the catechism and what is true and what is not - O that the earth would but be filled with the truth of His word... I do believe I sense its coming in prayer this evening.)

Come, Lord Jesus, and make us new;
bring us into the presence of the Father,
to that peace which passes our understanding
and our ability to accomplish -
but not our acceptance.

Come.

December 7 (Is.35:1-10; Ps.85:9-14,Is.35:4; Lk.5:17-26)

Jesus is the "holy way."

And He heals us as He forgives our sins
(they being one and the same).
And "along the way of His steps"
all paralysis flees our bones
and we walk with Him
home.

Make straight our crooked paths, O Lord;
set us in strength upon the right road.
With you let us be always.

December 8

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

Who is as blessed as she?
Who serves Him more completely?

And who is as united to His suffering?
("A sword shall pierce your heart, too.")
And who is as prophesied?
("A virgin shall conceive...")
And who intercedes as she does?
("They have no wine.")

Whose place can compare with hers?
Who is as close to the Lord as His Mother?

The Father has set her aside to be holy.
The Spirit has conceived in her womb.
The Son has been born of her.

Who can say as much?
Here is she who is immaculately conceived.

Dear Mother, pray for us.
Intercede for us with the Trinity
 you know so intimately,
 that we might be humble as you.

December 9

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

The Lord takes my tired soul (and body) this day and strengthens me for the performance of all my tasks.

Sometimes it seems as though it will not be so, that I will not find or cannot find the strength of the Lord - it seems the elements and my physical limitations are against me and I shall not be able to maintain action. But prayer in the Lord is always answered, and when I trust in Him, I do not find anything burdensome. All doubt of my stamina is forgotten.

Trust in Him. It works.

Thank you, Lord, for sustaining me
despite my limitations.
You set the limitations,
and you free us from them.

December 10 (Is.41:13-20; Ps.145:1,8-13; Mt.11:11-15)

How beautiful these readings of Advent from Isaiah are. With what wonder do they speak of the providence of God and His love for man and creation. Heaven is where God is, and we shall come there by His power and by our acceptance of His grace.

O Lord, cry out the way in our hearts,
that we might walk into your kingdom
compassionately as Thou,
and in strength.

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

Follow the Lord as He leads,
not as you would lead Him.

Into your hands I commend my spirit.
Each day I place in your hands.

Father, your light shines upon and reveals
my inmost being;
from its rays nothing is concealed.
Let me simply give myself to your ways
without complaint
or straying.

December 12

(Rv.11:19,12:1-6,10; Jdt.13:18-20; Lk.1:39-47)

Reading of John's vision of Mary and the Church (and Jesus)
I realize how God is eternal, not subject to space and time.
For here is a man standing in his present time, having
a vision of the future, and that vision is of something
which has (at least to some extent) already transpired.

And on this the memorial commemorating Juan Diego's vision
of Mary at Guadalupe, I begin to see more clearly, especially
in the gospel, how she is "the highest honor of our race."
Aside from things I've mentioned recently, thinking of her
cousin Elizabeth's words: "Who am I that the mother of my
Lord should come to me?" And what is the significance of
the fact that it is Mary's voice which makes John the Baptist
leap? Her being "proclaims the greatness of the Lord."
She is the vessel of honor.

Blessed are you, Mother of all Christians.
Blessed is the race that lives in His eternity,
praising His Name.

December 13

(Is.35:1-6,10; Ps.146:6-10,Is.35:4; Jas.5:7-10;

Mt.11:2-11)

What do you think, that John is "a reed swaying in the wind?" As he sits in prison, from which he shall find no earthly escape, as his death becomes imminent, does he waver in faith? I do not think so. I believe even as he asks the question, he finds the answer, and is not surprised when his servant returns with word from the Lord. But perhaps he is in need of reassurance, being a man this side of heaven.

The Lord brings reconciliation this day with people from my friend's church, with whom I'd had discussion about their views of Catholicism, and I - this is a blessing. And sometimes I do know light in my eyes, and I can see.

Patience shall bring us to heaven and the blessings of God.

Jesus, you know our weaknesses this side of heaven;
with John even, you had compassion.
Strengthen our resolve to come unto you with open eyes
and open hearts.

Let us walk with you.

December 14

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

The chief priests and elders had no vision;
they could not see who was before them.
While Balaam, who is not of the house of Israel,
sees His coming so many centuries before.

We must have vision;
our eyes must be alight
with the Lord's flame,
and we shall see.

Help me to remain in your presence, Lord,
my tents in a row.
Thank you for hearing my prayer for love.

December 15

(Zep.3:1-2,9-13; Ps.34:2-3,6-7,17-19,23;

Mt.21:28-32)

The Lord comes, forgives the sins of the people,
and leads them unto heaven.

Sinners like us are entering heaven even now.
Shouldn't we join them?

Sometimes I think and ask myself if I would be ready to go with the Lord should He stand before me at that moment. Do I desire heaven above all things? I am happy that generally, perhaps with a bit of repentance, I find myself more ready. Though certainly the temptations of this world are still with me and their glamour seems more appealing than the kingdom, it seems to take less thought and prayer to realize their illusion and the true beauty and love of heaven - so much a greater gift than anything of this world.

Lord, may I do your will
and so know the presence of heaven.

December 16

(Is.45:6-8,18,21-25; Ps.85:9-14,Is.45:8;
Lk.7:18-23)

The justice and love of God rain down upon the earth;
Jesus comes from heaven and walks among us, healing
our ills, bringing heaven to earth.

The Word of God is with us.
Now is the time appointed,
and He is the One.

How shall it come to pass
that we shall find ourselves in the kingdom of God?
Jesus brings us there.
(Follow Him.)

Jesus, you are here with us -
bring us where you are with the Father.

December 17

(Gn.49:2,8-10; Ps.72:3-4,7-8,17; Mt.1:1-17)

(Now in the Octave before Christmas.)

There is such order in God's universe
and in the generation of man.
All is in His hands,
and His hands are pure,
His hands are holy -
and that which they form
shall not die.

In Jesus the covenant with man is fulfilled
and made eternal.

May I be born of your line, dear Lord.
May I have life according to the Word.

December 18

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

There is a land to which we have been banished -
and there is a land to which we shall return.
In this world we are as exiles -
to heaven the Lord calls us, our home.

And oh to have a dream as Joseph had,
that his wife would be the instrument
of the fulfillment of Scripture.
That which he had read about,
that which he had waited for,
was now becoming present
in his own family.

Oh that we all could so fulfill our call from the Lord.

O Lord, send your angels;
may your messengers bring guidance
and inspire our faith
and our living in your truth.

(My friend's sister and brother-in-law
move into a new, comfortable and warm apartment.)

December 19

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

Help us to trust your words, O Lord,
for all is possible in your hands -
from our mother's womb you bless and guide us,
if we would but seek your glory.

The Lord's hand is in all things;
we should not be anxious, but trust.

The Lord blesses the soup kitchen today
despite my lack of preparation -
He sends others to do His work.

And a man witnesses this evening of the blessing his child's
birth was, having overcome by God's grace and their own faith
the obstacles to that end. At the end he holds his child up
before us - and the blessing of God's life I see.

Let us praise you always, Lord,
for your presence in our lives.

December 20

(Is.7:10-14; Ps.24:1-7,10; Rm.1:1-7;
Mt.1:18-24)

Here is the fulfillment of the Word of God,
here in the birth of Jesus Christ.

May we all fulfill what the Lord has written for us as have
the Virgin Mother and her husband Joseph, that Christ might
be born into the midst of all of us and His presence awaken
our tired hearts.

Come, Lord Jesus, let your word be fulfilled
in all your Church -
leave us not alone in this world.

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

The Lord loves us so
and seeks us out where we rest,
to raise us to His side.

May we all trust that the Lord's words
will be fulfilled in our own lives
as they were in Mary's -
may we be at His side with her.

Do you see, my brothers and sisters, what it is causes John
to stir in Elizabeth's womb? It is the voice of Mary which
brings the good news of Christ's presence to the prophet
who will cry out the way.

Who are we that the Mother of our Lord should come
to any of us, indeed?

Prepare our hearts, the hearts of all your children,
to hear you call so sweetly
unto our souls.

December 22

(1Sm.1:24-28; 1Sm.2:1,4-8; Lk.1:46-56)

We must give ourselves entirely to the Lord -
 what joy that would be,
 for all our being to proclaim His Name.

Been having a sensation of peace and light upon me several times recently - today during homily, other day during preaching and giving communion at nursing home (when it seemed I couldn't move for several minutes). It is nothing to do with me, I know, but they do seem blessings from the Lord...

Suddenly we shall be left speechless at the wonders
 the Lord performs.
(The only words will be those of the Spirit.)

Lord, let my soul proclaim your glory -
 may I know the blessing of serving you.

(P.S. Told on phone by pastor - I am in Florida, having come for visit yesterday - that soup kitchen has been shut down... possibly for security reasons after break-ins at school and church recently.

What does it mean?)

December 23

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

This is he who is to come before the Lord in the spirit
of Elijah to prepare the way.

Let us be refined and purified, O Lord.
Make us whole
and ready for your coming.

(Confession today and an hour and a half in prayer before
the exposed Sacrament. I seek preparation for the Lord's
coming, and He approaches...)

December 24

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

Lk.1:67-79)

The Lord is the builder of the house,
the maker and fulfiller of the covenant;
it is His hand which is at work
in all that is holy.

Has He not built the Church as sustainer of our souls here
on earth? Does He not fulfill His promise to David in this
blessed House? Does not the Spirit build this House?

Another book that would tear down what is seen as the "human"
constructs of the Catholic Church. David had no right to
take it upon himself to build God a church; does anyone
have the right to tear down what God has made?

It is hard, Lord.

Give me hope this Christmas Eve -

"guide our feet into the way of peace."

December 25

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

Praise God, that His light has come into the world!

Yes, the light shines in the darkness, the darkness of this world. Even today there is sadness upon me, and tears. But the Lord comes, He comes to dispel all fears. (He will come.)

Look. Upon the mountains you will see His feet racing to meet you, greeting you with a joy that cannot be overcome.

(It's A Wonderful Life, again tonight.)

Here is the fullness of God.

Dear Jesus, come into all our lives.

December 26

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

(Did not attend Mass for the day today; had to go to vigil Mass for tomorrow's Holy Family Sunday. See below.)

Today I make confession. It has seemed wise to me not to speak directly of the sin which has plagued me for some time - but today I shall name it (despite its shame): masturbation. For many ways have I sought to conquer it; perhaps in this light it shall flee. Now perhaps, by God's grace, my resolve will be complete.

Indeed, during the night I did commit this sin. This morning in prayer I beg the Lord's chastisement, and a severe one He brings me: there is no noon Mass here in Sarasota on Saturday, and so for the first time in over four years, I miss daily Mass. Before the vigil Mass I go to Confession, and the priest incites me to action. I lose my place during Act of Contrition. The priest asks, "Do you firmly resolve...?" and I continue.

How I need to firmly resolve!

As I proceed to Communion, the children's choir begins "Silent Night." Their voices are clear as they sing for me. And after Mass I see the families, parents and children, wholesome as they are, and myself, though forgiven - coming from my place beneath stained glass window of Mary Magdalene - on the edges.

I wish to be part of this wholesome society; I must conquer this sin. Before the Lord and His saints, upon all that is sacred, I shall commit this sin no more.

Let it be so, dear Lord.

(Blessed St. Stephen, pray I shall have the strength.)
Into your hands, Lord, may I be commended.

December 27

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

Mt.2:13-15,19-23)

The Holy Family.

(Would that we were all so humble and obedient,
so loving and kind... so one.)

Priest mentions in homily and I see it, sadly, for myself,
how separate we are and how dangerous this is. All in our
own worlds, thinking only of ourselves - perhaps this is
the central sin of twentieth-century man.

And, of course, the Church is a family much in need of unity
as well...

It is wonderful to sense it at Mass this morning,
but sad to see it not stay.

(And I myself am not as obedient as Joseph
to the promptings of the Spirit.)

Let us walk with you, dear Lord,
as your humble family.

In all things be present to us.

December 28

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

Holy Innocents.

Almost my soul was overcome by a suffering too great.
(Perhaps now I will have greater compassion for those
who are driven into depression, unable to cope with the
trials of life.) But through the course of this dark day
I find a release. In the rosary - the first mystery of
which I say with my mother, the second alone, the third
silently while reclining beside my father - I seek and
touch a peace.

My heart is weak, Lord,
and certainly I am a sinner.
Protect and guide me in this life.

December 29

(1Jn.2:3-11; Ps.96:1-3,5-6; Lk.2:22-35)

How important it is to walk in His way,
to keep His commandments.

As I try to do that now, I realize how important it is.
Sometimes we don't realize when we lose the light.

And in walking in His way certainly we shall suffer with Him,
sharing in the sword that pierced the Blessed Mother's heart.

Keep me in the right path, O Lord.
It is liberating to walk in your narrow way.

(Home again; alone again -

had begun to get comfortable at parent's house.

Note: Father slept well, straight through, last night...
said it was like a miracle.

In the end the Lord blesses what was a troubled trip.)

December 30

(1Jn.2:12-17; Ps.96:7-10; Lk.2:36-40)

"The world with its seductions is passing away..."

Though in dreams temptations come, I see the emptiness
of carnal allurements - the body itself is a hollow form.
Keep soul and body one in the temple of the Holy Spirit,
that you might be prepared to be presented to God.

The Lord strengthens me in purity,
and so I grow, the grace of God upon me.
May we all conquer the evil one,
that the Father's love may find a place in us.

Jesus, I love you.
Mary, Mother of my Lord, continue to reveal unto me
the peace of Christ.

December 31

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

Who is this love which has come into the world,
and why would any turn from Him?

The Lord Jesus has been made incarnate in our presence -
He has come into our world and is in our world, which is
His world. The Pope stresses the Incarnation above all
things and I understand why. If we recognize God present
in our world, that will change entirely our way of being.
The light will then come into our lives.

Jesus is with us, brothers and sisters,
and His Spirit guides us and His Church.
You are not alone.

Dear Jesus, come into my life
to complete what Thou hast begun.
Word of God, be with us.

January 1, 1999

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

As long as the Lord blesses us so shall we praise His name.
Let us all glorify God, who shines His light upon us.

Let us all ponder the blessing of Christ's coming
into our midst.

Today there is a spirit of joy upon me: the great blessings
of Confession and Communion and prayer in His Name...
and an honesty and forthrightness with my friend
and her mother which is refreshing to my soul.

Mary, Mother of God, pray the joy and peace
of the child Jesus
be with us always.

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

Jesus is the Christ.

(This is all we need to know.)

Lord Jesus Christ, may we all point to you
with all our lives.
Your anointing remain with us.

(First day without soup kitchen - less of a day...)

January 3

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

The world bows before the humble child Jesus; drawn by the true light which shines forth from His presence, they wish to share in His blessed humility.

Jesus shines forth a star in our own lives to lead us unto Him - we must follow that light where it leads, and we shall enter His house and find "the child with Mary His mother."

Dark dreams are upon myself and my friend this dark day,
but there is a true light in the presence of Christ
(which I bring to nursing home) which dispels their illusion.

Dear Lord, may we all bow before
the light of your truth.

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

All who are of God come to Him.

Please, Lord, let me seek you always.

January 5

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

God loves us, and His Son brings peace
and feeds us
here where we walk
upon the earth.

Food shopping today with friend and her mother -
the Lord provides for our needs. A man/worker comes
up to the lunch truck as I wait for my order and says,
"I'm hungry and you gotta feed me." Let us all be so
hungry for the word of God and seek it so confidently.
He will provide this need as well.

Today I love my friend and read psalms (Liturgy of the Hours)
to her as she undergoes MRI.

Lord, you provide for all our needs,
especially with your teaching
and the Eucharist.
May all find your provisions.

January 6

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

With complete trust in Him and so unity with Him who is love, we can but be filled with that love and so have no room for fear in our lives.

I see how little I trust and love God, in my relationship with my friend, in consideration of what is to be done with soup kitchen, in all decisions regarding the future (and the present), as well as my fate after death...

I need but to trust in Him and love Him and neighbor, and all will indeed be cared for - confidence is a free gift He gives us if we trust in Him and love.

Lord, let me not be terrified
by the winds of this world.
May I find my anchor in you
and in your love.

January 7

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

What love falls from His lips -
true love for mankind.
Here is God.

And He shall set us free;
and we shall conquer the world in Him.

Redeem us poor sinners, Lord,
in the power of your love,
of your Word.

(The Father's love is with us;
let us live in that love.)

January 8 (1Jn.5:5-13; Ps.147:12-15,19-20; Lk.5:12-16)

Do I not believe "that Jesus is the Son of God"?
Then why am I anxious, and why do I sin?
I do not often retire "to deserted places" to pray.

Today my hours are not properly controlled and directed;
continually anxious about the time, I never resolve to
do in time what should be done, and so I lose my soul...

Heal me, Lord, and let me grow;
please let me progress in your name.
Let my faith in you not be only on the lips,
but in my very blood and bone.

January 9

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

If we are in Him, He will hear us
and keep us from sin.

If we are in Him, we will do His will
and rejoice at His prosperity.

The Lord blesses and keeps all who serve Him,
for He serves all;
and in order to be with Him,
we must serve.

The Lord will bless and keep me, I know.
Despite my weakness, He will keep me from
that which is deadly.
Pray for me, brothers.

O Lord, may we all remain in you
and give our lives for you
and those you love.

January 10

(Is.4:1-4,6-7; Ps.29:1-4,9-11; Acts 10:34-38;
Mt.3:13-17)

The Baptism of the Lord, and a blessed day.

Had asked for a blessing from the Lord yesterday,
and as I lay down to sleep last night,
I realized I hadn't received it. Today I did.

In fact, last night I had a wonderful dream, from which I
woke in peace. I dreamt I was flying, soaring over a body
of water. My brother was flying, too. (My childhood friend
was trying, and my sister was present as well - gave him a
watch, or rather several watches...) I've dreamt of flying -
or at least gliding - before, but never in such a full manner
as this, and not with others.

When I woke this morning, I indeed felt blessed. It felt as
if the Lord had taken all temporal punishment for sin - which
I was feeling acutely yesterday - from me. I felt (and feel)
renewed... as if by Baptism. And joy is with me, too.

I suppose the blessing cannot stay with me so wonderfully,
but I pray that it shall remain.
(Even my flesh seems newborn...)

O Lord, this blessing (undeserved) you give to me this day,
make complete in heaven.
Thank you for washing the world clean by your Baptism.

(And at Mass with Secular Franciscans this afternoon,
as my soup kitchen partner professes -
"Prayer of St. Francis" at this and Mass this morning.)

And I read of the mystic Marinus today.)

January 11 (Heb.1:1-6; Ps.97:1-2,6-7,9; Mk.1:14-20)

Ordinary Time begins with the calling of the apostles and with the recognition of the greatness of Jesus. Now come from His baptism, He begins His own ministry, and all shall know He is the Son of God. (And so we, too, are called to worship the Lord and to do His will in this world.)

For what it is worth, I accomplish my work for the day.

O Lord, the world is in your hands,
not anyone of the world
and its destruction.

Let us finish our work here
and join you in paradise.

January 12

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

Through Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God, man has power over all creation, for He is all in all, and all authority under heaven is His. If we join ourselves to Him, we too shall teach well and cast out evil spirits.

I would I were more of the Lord in lengthy conversation with friend and her mother re Catholic and Reformed Churches (prompted by proposal of idea of marriage between her and me.) In the Lord's hands alone can I place such difficulties. (May He act.)

And this morning I did so want to embrace Jesus on the cross... I see how humble I am and how wonderful He is, and how gracious to make of me His brother. And looking at priest's face (yesterday) and lector's face (today) I see the soul of man and its glory reflected in this humble skin.

Make us whole, Lord.

Take mankind from the precipice of self-rule,
from the brink of destruction upon which he gazes -
may it not be that we have bitten too far into the apple.

But make us one with you.

January 13

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

May the Incarnate Lord, who knows the troubles of my soul,
save me from the pain and sadness and sin of this dark,
dark day.

I am alone now, and weak.
The Lord touches my hand a little,
but I am little able to stand.
It is not so much dying I am afraid of as it is living,
and so I sleep...

(My friend shouts on the phone that she will never marry
a Catholic man.)

There must be hope, dear Lord;
bring me light, I pray.

January 14

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

Jesus continues to heal,
and His hand turns toward me.

I have rarely been as dark as yesterday,
and hope never to grow as "hardened by the deceit of sin."

It is another dark and icy day, on which all schools
(including the university) are closed. But it does
not seem as bad to me. Though I remain in the desert,
there are calls to refresh my soul.

Lord, you provide all we need;
help us to trust in you for all things.
In your hands let us be.

January 15

(Heb.4:1-5,11; Ps.78:3-4,6-8; Mk.2:1-12)

The Lord heals: the Lord forgives.

(Yes, His forgiveness brings such wonderful healing.)

And into His rest we enter
if we remain faithful,
seeking Him at every turn.

I know the Lord's healing of my relationship with my friend;
today I take up my mat and walk.

O Lord, help us to find absolute rest
in you.

(As my friend's mother rubs my back,
I pray the Lord's forgiveness.)

January 16

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

First, I must say that today's reading sets the tone for me for this the year of the Father: "All lies bare and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must render an account." It is my prayer to place myself in the all-seeing light of the Lord.

Second, I had a singular experience this night in explaining Christ dying for our sins to a young boy who had recently misbehaved. Applied Jesus' forgiving and substituting Himself for our sins to his "sin". In the process I stated that it is hard in this world to always do right and that I too do bad things at times... but Jesus is there to forgive and love. I realized that, although we have our places in this world - as with adult/father to child - we are all children to God, and in heaven all the same, really.

Let us praise God who heals even as He wounds.
Let us thank Him for exposing our sin,
that we may be cured of our disease.

Dear Lord, thank you for your love.

January 17

(Is.49:3,5-6; Ps.40:2,4,7-10; 1Cor.1:1-3;
Jn.1:29-34)

I seek to be the Lord's servant this day,
to share in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

Upon receiving Communion this morning, I am moved to desire to bleed with Christ, to die with Him - to know such complete blessing. I receive that which I ask for.

Arriving before my friend and her mother (and the children in their care), I am seated alone, near the front of the church. I find myself in some trepidation, feeling naked. As the pastor again implicates the Catholic Church throughout his preaching, I suffer deeply, looking out upon the cemetery outside the doors. I pray intently for the souls in the church, and indeed for the tragically missing unity of God's children. Here I die, and throughout the day I cry as I carry the weight of Christ's sadness.

There is a lie upon this earth
which must be banished
by the Spirit of Truth.

O Lord, take away our sins,
and let your light "reach to the ends of the earth."

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

Here is the Priest in the line of Melchizadek,
Jesus the Lord,
whose origin no man knows,
and whose limit no man can delineate.
(For He sits in highest heaven.)

No priest at Mass time this morning;
he must be called.
How necessary is this office.

Into your skin let us grow, Lord,
each with a particular place
in the Body of Christ.

January 19

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

I grow lazy, I'm afraid,
 leaving so much unfinished -
 and so hope in the covenant tends to wane.
(We must live each day fruitfully as the Body of Christ.)

"The Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath," and even
of the Scriptures. Scripture is the inspired word of God
and a firm guide, but the Word of God, Jesus Christ, far
transcends it. What is derogatorily termed "tradition"
by those outside the Church is nothing more than the
living Body of Christ. Scripture was made for man,
not man for Scripture.

Your Word is sure, O Lord;
 help us in our weakness
 to live its demands.

January 20

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

No one knows from whence Melchizedek, "priest of the Most High God," came or to where he goes - and so is it with the Son of God, for His priesthood is in eternity with the Father. And so He really cannot be made subject to the laws that are earthly, though He humbles Himself to walk in their realm. He transcends these laws because He is the maker of these laws - *they* have their origin in *Him*.

Lord, whenever you would heal me,
no question would I raise.

January 21

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

He is the mediator of the New Covenant, the minister who offers Himself to all. Yes, He is the Son of God, and each day we partake of His presence among us.

To your table lead me, Lord,
that I may eat with you and of you.
(And let me not come irreverently.)

(Thinking today that were it not that He loves us, Jesus could easily condemn each one of us; for He is absolute perfection and certainly we all fall short of His status.)

January 22

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

The New Covenant and the apostles He chose to administer
that covenant in His Name...

Write your name upon our hearts, Lord,
that all may know you
and your love.

(I am sure abortion is not part of the Lord's covenant -
and neither is my own sin.)

January 23

(Heb.9:2-3,11-14; Ps.47:2-3,6-9; Mk.3:20-21)

Ya gotta eat!

And where would we be if we could not eat His body
and drink His blood.

(Oh how He provides for our needs.)

The blood of Christ in the New Covenant washes me clean
this day as I receive Him, confess my sins, and adore Him
in a Holy Hour.

How fortunate we are to be so blessed,
and how sad are those without Him.

(I do find joy today.)

Let me live according to your Covenant, O Lord;
may it be you that I seek
and so find,
for you turn no one away.

January 24

(Is.8:23-9:3; Ps.27:1,4,13-14; 1Cor.1:10-13,17;
Mt.4:12-23)

The light dawns in a land of darkness.
Jesus comes and calls His apostles.
This light shall not be dimmed,
 but illumine the ends of the earth.

And as I deliver a lengthy letter to Reformed Baptist
pastor this day, I pray the Church which has "been divided
into parts" shall be reconciled - and so shall the light
shine strongly forth.

Hallelujah, Lord!

Let it be so.

For the light you have brought to this land of darkness
 cannot die.

January 25

(Acts 9:1-22; Ps.117:1-2,Mk.16:15; Mk.16:15-18)

The Conversion of St. Paul is truly an amazing story - only God could take a man so bent on persecution of His children and turn him into an apostle for His word.

I notice two things: one is how difficult it was for Ananias to lay hands on Paul and call him "brother" (and how rare it is that we are able to keep to Christ's word and do this today); and how Jesus aligns Himself directly with the suffering Church on earth ("Why do you persecute me?"), as indeed He gives Himself and all His power to His children - as He does to Paul- if they should take it.

O Lord, that my call (and its accomplishment)
might be so clear as that of Paul.
Let your will be done in all our lives.

(Friend tells me twice that Christ's body is His people,
which is fine, except that I've already said it three
times.)

January 26

(Tit.1:1-5; Ps.96:1-3,7-8,10; Lk.10:1-9)

Send forth your laborers into the field, O Lord.
Bless your Church.

This day the Pope comes to America,
bringing the word of God.

(And this night in my graduate class I emphatically propose
the removal of God from the schools as their foundational
problem, and so gain a reputation in my small group...)

January 27

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

Jesus is Lord of Lords and King of Kings; His sacrifice is all that is needed to heal men's souls. Let us listen to His words now. Let us allow His teaching to sink in. Let us sit in prayer, still before Him, that when we rise we shall do His will and bear fruit in His name as branches of His holy vine.

His blood is poured forth for us each day. His word is proclaimed at every hour. Let us join in His sacrifice and become one with His Word.

(The Blessed Mother calls us to prayer and not more work, as nature still lies in sleep...)

O Lord, let your word sink into my very heart;
let it be written upon my soul.
Please allow me to bear fruit in this world.

(Our prayers shall water the ground whose seeds shall later sprout unto eternal life.)

January 28

(Ws.7:7-10,15-16; Ps.119:9-14; Mt.23:8-12)

I pray, and Wisdom comes -
but she does not stay
when I stray from the Lord's commands.

Special time in prayer in a chapel today, and I have a spirited conversation with a teacher who is a former Catholic (now 'nondenominational'). This prayer and sharing of the word is as bread to me.

But better could I speak and better could I act -
more in prayer I could be.

O Lord, let me and my words be ever in your hand.
Please bless with wisdom every little thing I say and do.

(And I am in a class with teachers this evening,
talking about teaching and practicing -
but I am no teacher.)

January 29

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

We "need patience to do God's will."
We must "trust in Him, and He will act."
We know not how, we see not the growth
 and are unable to put our fingers on the life
 (except to say the name of Jesus),
but yet the flower blossoms,
the earth gives its yield.

Be of good earth, my brothers and sisters;
 turn not to the corruption of this world
 which in this day closes in and surrounds us -
let your minds not be carnal.

But let your flesh take nourishment in the flesh of Christ
and spirit-filled shall you be, and your leaves shall reach
unto Heaven.

In time, my brothers, in time...

I love you, O Lord, for you are good and forgiving,
 and all our lives you hold in your hands.
May in your bosom we take our rest,
 that by your power our lives may grow.

January 30

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

Where is my faith?

In the morning I am strong in the presence of the Lord;
by the afternoon I become weak...

Up late last night with friend and her mother discussing the darkness this world is in and how we should not be afraid but pray. After Mass and Holy Hour this morning could taste oneness with friend as I taste the Eucharist in my mouth. But this afternoon I grow tired and a little anxious. I do not complete the tasks I set out for myself, but sleep instead... and I have not the energy to see my friend.

All fear and all confusion and disturbance of mind I need to be taken from me, that clearly I might stand with the Lord.

Lord, rid me of doubt and rid me of fear,
that in all things I might praise you
and be with you.

Give me confidence by your grace.

January 31

(Zep.2:3,3:12-13; Ps.146:6-10,Mt.5:3;
1Cor.1:26-31; Mt.5:1-12)

How well humility is spoken of today in all the readings. And I look before me at those in church this morning and see the humility of my people, a humble people of St. Paul of the Cross. In their dress and in their posture and in the poorness of their spirit, there is humility. This is who we are, this family.

And I must say that the walls of separation were broken down at my friend's church today - perhaps by the grace of humility I carried - and I felt at one, as fellow Christians, with them (no judgment).

And this evening at my childhood friend's house, conversation about prayer and church and God... especially with his father, who is a man of simple faith.

To the earth Jesus came, to make us as His own.

Dear Lord, I thank you for your consoling words
and your consoling life,
which allows us to endure all things with a joy.

(Persecution comes this day, too,
and a great sense of compassion at nursing home -
this compassion should be a doctor's main trait.)

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

There is hope that we all shall come into our right minds.

This morning as I walk to church the light and the objects around are clear before me. And the moon shone brightly in the middle of the night when I woke and (unable to sleep) said my Office of Readings. A dream followed wherein my friend's face became radiantly beautiful. (And today she did seem so beautiful.)

Let us tell of what the Lord has done for us.
He waits for us to this day.
Without us heaven shall not be complete.

I love you, Lord; forgive my sin
that I might look upon you always
and have your light.

February 2

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

The Lord comes, sharing in our flesh and blood, and Simeon holds Him in his arms. To us He is given - open your hearts and allow Him in.

Would that the compassion of Christ were practiced by all, particularly those who call themselves Christian.

(Tonight in class behaviorist theory of teaching is discussed - but Christ's compassion is what we need. Let me present Him to you, brothers and sisters.)

Come to us all this day, dear Lord.
In all your glory shine forth upon us.

February 3

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

All is in His hands; you must trust in Him. Whatever may come, whether rejection or trials or persecutions or chastisements of any kind, His kindness is everlasting - you must continue to seek Him.

Move on to the next town if necessary; there is much work to be done. Move with the Lord and He will bless you and keep you despite any weakness.

May we all be so blessed as to remain with the Lord wherever He travels, and may all bitter roots be exposed for what they are and their fruit rot on the vine. (Read today about a priest who infiltrates and exposes cults like the Witnesses and the Mormons; read that Jerry Falwell has said the Antichrist is probably born and probably Jewish; and am told Koran teaches that Jesus will return, have forty followers and build the kingdom from there - and heard a Protestant preacher speak about the grace of God as if he had just discovered it, as if it hadn't been preached by the Catholic Church for 2000 years... and today.)

O Lord, strengthen our steps,
and those of all who truly seek you,
along right paths in your light.

February 4

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

As we draw near Mount Zion,
healing graces pour forth.

As we approach the throne of the Holy One of Israel,
we are made whole.

And we set forth to speak His name,
His love.

Little do I know of this world, O Lord;
lead me, I pray, unto Heaven.
(Send forth your healing graces.)

February 5

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

"I will never desert you, nor will I forsake you."

As I approach my sister's grave this afternoon, after having prayed at the grave of my grandparents, there is a certain quiet come; even in the sounds there is a certain quiet... I stand there before leaving (and after praying in tears), and as I see a bird flying overhead, gliding and playing in the breeze, I hear Jesus speaking His blessed words to look upon the birds who neither toil nor spin and yet the Father feeds them - are you not worth much more than a flock of sparrows?

And He leads me through difficult times.

The Lord seems to be refining and purifying me of a certain lust these days, freeing me of the sin of which John the Baptist and St. Paul speak today.

May my head be upon my shoulders always,
unless it is given to God as John.
(Yet we know even there He watches over.)

Dear Lord, help me always to trust in you
and keep myself from sin.

(The number "68" - which is the number on the garbage barrel at my sister's plot area - recurs repeatedly (on bills, checks, etc.). It has been a long time since I visited my sister's grave.)

February 6

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

O Lord, teach me at great length;
shepherd me rightly,
that you might carry out in me
all that is pleasing to you.

(Today I buy a San Jose Sharks cap <a long and winding road - see 12/28/96>. As I walk from church - Mass, Communion, Holy Hour, Confession, Prayer - I think of doing so... and there I see a young man with a Sharks jacket on the corner. All day long the fire of the Holy Spirit strongly upon me, absolutely energizing me... It seems a conversion is upon me.)

February 7

(Is.58:7-10; Ps.112:4-9; 1Cor.2:1-5;
Mt.5:13-16)

There is a pain, brothers and sisters. There is a pain
in my heart, in my soul, in my hands and in my throat.
("Share your bread with the hungry.")

It is not the soreness I fought this morning with salt
water - it is as a sword piercing my gall.
("Shelter the oppressed and the homeless.")

It is "in weakness and fear" I come, not knowing the words.
("Clothe the naked when you see them.")

It is begun by a simple matter - my friend tells me (the
other day) she will spend four days next weekend (Valentine's
weekend) with a group of singles from her own and like
churches. This statement pierces me to the soul. To those
stronger than I in affairs of this kind, it may seem a simple
thing - but I have not felt closer to Christ on the cross.

Brothers and sisters, whatever anguish we find in this
difficult world, we must unite it to His cross and know
that He has gone before, and He is more innocent than we.

The pain serves to cleanse me of sin, and the Lord teaches me
(in a moment of quiet) - whether or not this is the end of my
romantic pursuits or if I should go on to be married - the
verse, "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust
in men" (or "princes"), that *no one* can or will love you like
the Lord.

Lord, be first and remain first
in my heart and in my life.
Let me not give your place to another.
(And, yes, let my light shine,
and help me to love others.)

February 8

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

Here is the hand of Him who existed before time,
through whom all things were made -
here is the hand which has power
to restore all to health.

This day take me, O Lord,
and make me as the newborn earth.
(Through tears let me be reborn.)

February 9

(Gn.1:20-2:4; Ps.8:2,4-9; Mk.7:1-13)

God gives man dominion over all living creatures,
then he gives up his freedom to his own devices.

Be not a slave to your own designs. (How true this rings as
I think of my graduate teacher studies.) You are more than
the sum total of your laws - all creation sits at your feet.
You have a mind and a will; subject them not to your flesh
(perhaps a shot at behaviorism).

We are human beings, made in the image of God.

Lord, let us be as your brother,
living according to the Father's Word.

(Be an image of God, not yourself.)

February 10

(Gn.2:4-9,15-17; Ps.104:1-2,27-30; Mk.7:14-23)

Lord, we are in your hands;
it is you who give us spirit and life.
Forgive us our sins against your word.
(Help me to regain my purity.)

As I consciously work on finding the innocence and purity in which we all are created, though I am not perfect in my search, the Lord does bless me - and what beauty there is in successful steps (for this *is* that for which we were created).

February 11 (Gn.2:18-25; Ps.128:1-5; Mk.7:24-30)

"Even the dogs under the table eat the family's leavings."

A consistent theme today - dogs.

I go to Confession this morning, and as I say my penance the sisters' dog attempts to enter the chapel. Everyone laughs lightly and comments on how the dog wants to go to Mass. (All this before hearing the gospel at Mass.) I take the gentle levity as forgiveness for this poor sinner, who is as a dog under the table.

Dogs continually enter into the day -
confirming perhaps how I am like one.

I must be a man, an image of God,
with dominion over the wild animals.

O Lord, give to me that which is holy;
take from me all my sin.

February 12 (Gn.3:1-8; Ps.32:1-2,5-7; Mk.7:31-37)

O Lord, let my ears be opened,
open to your call.
Forgive me my sins, Dear Jesus;
help me to discern your voice.

(Late in the afternoon I come here to the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in New York City. I am comfortable among these brothers. I am to stay two days. If I should hear His voice, let me harden not my heart.)

February 13

(Gn.3:9-24; Ps.90:1-6,12-13; Mk.8:1-10)

The Lord will feed us; yes, He will give us life
(and life eternal) - but first we must be humble before Him.

The Franciscan charism is humility, and their service is to
the poor - they feed the hungry. This morning we witness at
an abortion clinic.

And this life does seem geared to what I have been these
last several years - soup kitchen, Eucharistic adoration,
pro-life, the Hours... even music.

Yet I must be patient.

Lead me, Lord, to your life
in eternity.
The path which leads there
make known to me.

February 14

(Sir.15:15-20; Ps.119:1-2,4-5,17-18,33-34;
1Cor.2:6-10; Mt.5:17-37)

The command of the Lord is clear, and wonderful to behold - for it is the command of complete love.

Here there is no loophole through which one might slip; here there is no excuse. Here one must love even his enemy and lay down his life for his brother. True love it is which Jesus preaches (and which the priest speaks so eloquently today in Jesus' voice); and nothing short of it will enter heaven.

Wisdom leads us here, but we must choose... and be chosen.

I return home, quietly, today. There has been a message of love and bearing with those who are weaker (a message to be applied to my friend, I believe).

Today, at a particularly inspiring Mass, I am shown my own weakness, my fear and my anxiety - and my failing to turn to the Lord for His peace.

Into the Lord's hands may my spirit be commended.

Lord, let me do all for you,
then will all I do be blessed.

February 15

(Gn.4:1-15,25; Ps.50:1,8,14,16-17,20-21;
Mk.8:11-13)

Lord, take all spitefulness and selfishness
from my being,
that I might offer true sacrifice before you.
May I be my brother's keeper
and desire only the best for all.

May this honesty and goodness and love of neighbor
and yourself
be all the sign I need.

(Let us do well, brothers and sisters,
always and forever.
May the Lord never take His leave of us.)

February 16

(Gn.6:5-8,7:1-5,10; Ps.29:1-4,9-11; Mk.8:14-21)

The life is more than bread;
the light of Christ is our leaven.
And we rise...

These days are like the days of Noah, for all are losing their rule of life, all are abandoning their religion. An Islamic student and I see and speak out in agreement against the obvious lack of religion in society. The teacher was lecturing about separation of Church and State in America, and the ridiculousness of this society overwhelmed us both. We particularly focused on her comment about sex before marriage - what religion teaches acceptance of such a belief?

We have no religion but our own egoism.

Lord, help us.
Save us from the flood of licentiousness.

Thank you for blessing my life.

(Indeed I find myself close to Him and His Mother today.)

February 17

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

Ash Wednesday.

Now begins the time of repentance;
may it continue as it has
these past number of days.

Purify me, O Lord, completely.
In secret let me pray for your graces
and praise your glorious majesty,
that these words
will be someday shouted from the rooftops.

(Open my eyes, that I might see you, Lord.)

February 18

(Dt.30:15-20; Ps.1:1-4,6,Ps.39:5; Lk.9:22-25)

"The Son of Man must first endure many sufferings."

The Lord gives me a sense of this today as He answers my prayers and I again know what I once wrote:

"When the sorrow's so deep, you feel nothing but joy - the humbled are exalted."

Praying about my pain last night, this morning the Lord brings me joy, and teaches me what it is to turn the other cheek for repeated blows. When we unite our suffering with His, when we are able to praise God in all things, we know why the disciples rejoiced at the persecutions they faced.

Also spoke again today of how the line "What profit does he show who gains the whole world" and loses his soul is perfectly illustrated in the number of rich needing psychotherapy... and that no one is able to accept pain in today's society; all are seeking the easy way out and so they choose death (abortion, euthanasia, et. al.) and not life - which is hard.

Would that I could ever choose life with you, Lord,
for you are a good God
and love me even in your death.

February 19

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

Let us do the will of the Lord with all our lives;
let us fast
and so call upon His name.

Oh to give our lives completely to the Lord
and the service of our brothers -
then would we be in a cleansed state.

Come, O Lord,
and take our fast this Lenten season.
Yes, let your will be done.

February 20

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

Change my heart, O God.
Make it ever in thy image,
 that I might share my bread with the hungry
 and shelter the oppressed.

In prayer today I intercede for all I can think of...
though in reading the memoirs of a Holocaust survivor
I see how I fall short of complete love - how petty
and selfish we can be (even in our doctrinal arguments)
when such suffering goes on.

May the Lord restore the ruins of our lives
and of our lands.
May we learn to love and show mercy.

February 21

(Gn.2:7-9,3:1-7; Ps.51:3-6,12-14,17;

Rm.5:12-19; Mt.4:1-11)

Again it is remarkable how directly Jesus' temptations parallel those of Adam and Eve... He *is* the new Adam (as Mary is the new Eve), and indeed life and mercy now abound.

And it is remarkable how the passage(s) preached about at friend's Baptist church today directly parallel the readings of the Catholic Church... Here is a Lenten theme - to turn away from sin.

Dear Lord, I need your hand to guide me
through this world of sin
into your heavenly kingdom.

(My mother was eight years trying to become pregnant and 21 hours in labor with me - in this world I feel a foreigner at times...)

February 22

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

Chair of Peter.

He who sits there is the humblest servant with the most terrible responsibility. How I respect our current Pope and how he suffers and prays for his flock - and how he prays for the unity of all God's children...

We are one in him, under him, for he is the rock upon which the Church is built and maintained - for two thousand years. The Lord has willed it so, and only because of this it is so. There is no doubt corruption in this world, but that which Christ established and maintains shall remain.

(How my friend and I seek to unite the other into our respective churches today -)

Into your hands, O Lord;

into your hands may the Church be commended.
Watch over and guide it, my God.

(Note: Archbishop says Mass in our church this morning.)

February 23

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

Dreamt last night of eating juicy, nutritious vegetables...

I did not think beyond the literal level until friend's mother wished that I would accept God's word as delivered at her church. But, as far as it goes, it is so that I relate it to her because of the literal fresh produce she feeds me, but in the dream it was my godmother who was giving me the food... and yesterday was Chair of Peter and Archbishop spoke of Catholic teaching.

Word of God, be upon me;

nourish me well, that I myself might bear fruit.

Give me each day my daily bread, Lord -

let me never be separated from your teaching.

February 24

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

This morning I go to Confession (as well as Communion) and I fast during the day. In prayer throughout the day the grace of the Lord repeatedly becomes palpable; His cleansing hand I feel upon me. It is like the blessing and light of heaven.

I am most grateful that the Lord gives me a certain quietude today.

Lord, when we repent and turn to you
and accept your graces,
you are most faithful in healing us.

Thank you.

(Note: I continue amazed at how anyone with a modicum of common sense could interpret Jonah as a fictional character. Jesus says, "At the judgment, the citizens of Ninevah will rise along with the present generation, and they will condemn it. For at the preaching of Jonah they reformed, but you have a greater than Jonah here." How could anyone be so blind as to think the Lord would refer thusly to a fictional character?)

February 25

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

Mt.7:7-12)

What shall I ask?
What shall I pray?

Whatever we ask in prayer with faith the Lord will grant -
of this I am certain. But what shall I ask?

Save us, O Lord, from the day of damnation -
set us free from the chains which bind,
which possess this world,
that in the coming of your light
we may all stand with thee.

(How do I speak with my priest, O Lord?
What shall I do?
And what would you do in my relationship
with my friend?

O Lord, let all be done in your will.)

February 26

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

The Lord lays bare my guilt today, and I cry out to Him.
How often I turn from a virtuous path only to find sin.

Indeed if He should mark my sin, I would not stand.
But along the way I attempt to settle with Him,
and so I have hope that I shall find reconciliation.

O Lord, may the tears of repentance
 fall upon me
 and wash away my guilt this day.

Heal that which I have broken by sin.

February 27

(Dt.26:16-19; Ps.119:1-2,4-5,7-8; Mt.5:43-48)

The law of perfect love, love of all, must be followed. Can you begin to see the beauty of loving as Christ loves, of loving even your enemy? Do you thirst to share in that absolute love? Sometimes I see it, and it is wonderful, but often it is hidden from my limited vision.

I knock today at the locked sacristy door of another neighborhood church before Mass, looking to go to Confession, and I am surprised when a priest/friend formerly of our parish, recently returned from India and assigned again, answers. Not only do I get to go to Confession with him, but the Mass happens to be a healing Mass.

God is good and forgiving, and He gives me a measure of light again - I only wish I did not waste His grace.

May I "hearken to your voice," O Lord,
and walk your path of love,
relying on your grace.

February 28

(Gn.12:1-4; Ps.33:4-5,18-20,22; 2Tm.1:8-10;
Mt.17:1-9)

Death will come, but life will follow.

In the midst of death, Lord,
you shine the light of life, of hope.

(And so here in Lent we find the glory
of the Transfiguration.)

March 1 (Dn.9:4-10; Ps.79:8-9,11,13,103:10; Lk.6:36-38)

I beg my friend to be compassionate today: to give, to try to understand, rather than judging and condemning the Catholic Church so constantly... I thought she might have understood.

My sins are great, too, and in need of the Lord's forgiveness - promises are made to avoid the near occasion...

O Lord, forgive me
and remove the stain of sin from me.
I pray for your love alone.

March 2

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

"Do everything and observe everything they tell you."

Today's Scripture reminds me of an understanding I received on Sunday. Considering my friend's generalized condemnation of Catholics as not living Christian lives and considering that Baptisms were being held at Mass and there were a number of supposed Catholics who were lost during the liturgy - including godparents unwittingly standing during (at least) beginning of consecration - it was not difficult to imagine myself as the sole faithful Catholic in the world. My realization was this: that even if all others should turn away, I would remain, for Jesus would still be there.

The second part of the realization involved the Protestant view of church (generally). When I asked my friend yesterday what she would do if the people and the pastor of her church became lukewarm in their faith, she responded as I thought she would, as Protestants tend to - that she would find another church. My overall comprehension is that a good Catholic is in his Church for God; a Protestant's faith rests on man. (There are many other repercussions of this - regarding commitment, obedience, etc. - but this is the central theme.)

Lord, keep your blessing upon your Church;
remain with us till the end of time.

(Note in first reading that Isaiah does not promote the formation of a new Church - not even Moses would do that when prompted by God - but he does hold out the cleansing of sins for the evil man. Only God can make a Church and change His Church, and this is what He's done (i.e. Israelite to Christian/Catholic).)

March 3 (Jer.18:18-20; Ps.31:5-6,14-17; Mt.20:17-28)

Our goodness shall be repaid with evil;
such is the call to Christ.

He suffers, He dies -
the innocent for the guilty -
and so must we
to be of Him.

Here is the king who is a servant -
walk in His way and you will be exalted.

(Heaven awaits us - the third heaven I have thought of lately
- if we wait on Him.)

Lord, may we be yours.

(I am sick, tired and weak, today;
but an elderly Jewish woman fortifies me
with vitamin C, and I go on.
Let us drink of His cup.)

March 4 (Jer.17:5-10; Ps.1:1-4,6,40:5; Lk.16:19-31)

Two paths which lead to two places -
from which there is no return.

Do we walk with the Lord and bear fruit in His name, bearing
the suffering of this life? Or do we feast sumptuously while
here while giving no fruit to others?

A woman, an older woman and a fellow tutor, says today she
is ready (for heaven). And I believe her; her suffering
has prepared her and now is but a time of waiting for her.
I have not reached such a level.

Lord, find me not wanting;
let your waters cleanse me now.

March 5

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

Joseph they stopped short of killing,
but the Son of Man is not spared.

But the Lord brought great blessing from Joseph's captivity,
and the greatest blessing from the crucifixion of Christ.

Oh how the Lord would gather us unto Himself,
if only we would come.
Why do we fight against His graces?

Take the hardness of our hearts from us, Lord;
let us obey your prophets
and your Son.

March 6

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

How can I express the palpable forgiveness the Lord provides me by the sacrament of Confession? How can I tell you of the grace I receive, how when I close my eyes I see and feel it burning away the darkness, cleansing my vision? How can I impart to you the marvelous way which it enlivens my soul and heals me of all illness? It is something altogether real. And it is something not in my control. This is truly the grace of God.

"Kind and merciful" God,
 who "removes guilt and pardons sin" -
 when I confess my sin against you,
 how quick you are to throw your arms around me.

Thank you for your grace
 and the sacrament most faithful.

March 7

(Ex.17:3-7; Ps.95:1-2,6-9; Rm.5:1-2,5-8; Jn.4:5-42)

On this day on which water is so much a part of the readings, before I head out to the prayer meeting this evening I find a lack of water in my pipes. At meeting all say they had no water. As we pray I must admit to thinking about my need for water to shower and clean my house, etc. and actually praying for its return. It is back on by the end of our meeting. (Also spoke on phone to my father about the house my brother is considering buying, which has a septic tank instead of sewerage system.)

Thank you, Lord, for providing for our needs,
both physical and spiritual.
All comes from you and returns to you -
let us drink of the waters of eternal life.

March 8 (2Kgs.5:1-15; Ps.42:2-3,43:3-4; Lk.4:24-30)

Let us never be offended by the chastising words of the
Son of God. It is a blessing when a good man corrects us,
and there is none better than Jesus.

Oh that I could be made clean
as was Naaman...

Walk through the midst of me, dear Lord,
even when I'm angry.
Come to my rescue,
here in a corner of the world.

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

If we humble ourselves before the Lord,
He will forgive us our sins,
but we too must forgive our "fellow servants"
from the heart.

We are all sinners before the Lord,
judge not nor hold none to account.

There is joy and sorrow in my heart today. My friend visits our parish chapel for Mass this evening. This does make me happy. But I know it is difficult for her to see my devotion to my church - she so would like me to be Reformed Baptist, and her church is not as kind to my religion as mine to hers.

Lord, I humble myself before you;
all my life I offer upon your altar.
Hear and answer my prayer:
bless this situation.

March 10

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

The command of the Lord is beautiful
and is present only for our benefit -
we should recognize the blessing of His guidance.

But so many would go their own way, they become deaf to Jesus' words - "Whoever breaks the least significant of these commands and teaches others to do so shall be called least in the kingdom of God." Not a letter shall pass away, and yet schismatic priests and others with their own bent would condone that which has been expressly forbidden - and so many blindly follow, unable to discern because of ignorance of the Word.

O Lord, that knowledge of you would fill the earth;
that your light would break forth like the dawn
and the Holy Spirit would make all things new.

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

Let us be with the Lord and His goodness.
Let us listen to His voice.
Let us pay heed to the corrections of the prophets.

I wish I could turn my face to the Lord and proclaim
His goodness to me, the Father's light upon me...

The Lord has come; His presence is evident.
Let us turn to Him.

Praise you, Lord, and your good works;
may all men open their hearts to you.

March 12

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

Jesus gives a direct answer to the scribe's question -
He tells all clearly that life is to love God and neighbor.
And there is no mistaking that He speaks the truth.

And in the first reading the Lord God is quite clear
in calling us back to Him and granting us forgiveness
and blessing. This is quite obviously His desire,
that we blossom in His presence.

Let us heed these words without confusion.

I love you, Lord,
and I thank you for your graces,
for answering my prayer
and providing me with the bread which sustains me:
your word and your flesh.

March 13

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

"As certain as the dawn is His coming."

And this morning I find a sense of confidence as I walk to Mass, a sense of faith in the Lord that He will draw me closer to Himself, that I will grow in His presence. I find fear of falling fleeing from me and trust in the solid foundation of Christ filling me. Taking refuge in Him, we can have confidence, for it is His will to bless us and bring us to heaven.

And I realize in prayer this day that when we pray for our enemies it is not really that unusual, because the seemingly out of place blessings we wish upon them must certainly come with chastisements and the turning away from their sins. I realize this by thinking of my own desire for blessings and how I must turn from sin and suffer the Lord's chastisements myself in order to find them. (The Lord chastises those whom He loves.) And I think prayer for others, say abortionists, is made more effective by seeing our own sins and repenting of them.

Lord, may I always be conscious of
and repentant of
my sins,
that I might always draw closer to you
and bear fruit in your light.

(At my sister's grave, I seem ready for an angel to come
and take me away...)

March 14

(Sm.16:1b,6-7,10-13a; Ps.23:1-6; Eph.5:8-14;
Jn.9:1-41)

We must be blind as regards sin,
yet with eyes wide open to the kingdom of God.

Very beautiful readings today, very poignant, particularly the first and the gospel. The Lord teaches us what true sight is. God looks upon the heart and it is this which must be open to see. The eyes of the head are certainly a blessing - Jesus does cause the man to actually see - but they are not of primary importance and must not detract from our spiritual vision.

(Pastor at friend's church spoke very well of how we must teach our children to keep their hearts (on Christ), not simply get them to behave properly.)

Let us live as children of light,
children of the vision of Christ.

O Lord, that I might see as you see -
O that I might see you.

(I begin to think that the next three years will be crucial in my life.)

March 15

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

What a joyful picture the first reading presents,
and how joyful the official must have been
to have his son back
and know that it was Jesus who healed him,
and so have such faith in the Lord...

Indeed I found myself contemplating and praying for the
reality of the kingdom today. And the Lord continues to
bring me from temptation and sin to healing and joy in His
presence.

Dear Lord, do draw me closer to you
and draw closer to me.
Be here with me;
let me put no walls up before you.

Take forever the sound of weeping away.

(Last night at prayer meeting we prayed over a brother
who today confessed his troubles had gone away.)

March 16

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

Jesus is the living water which courses to the ends of the earth, flooding all with His love. His arms spread out upon the cross would embrace all nations, all peoples, for all are God's children. The water and blood which flow from His pierced side is for the cleansing of our sins - it is He who is healing for all of us. It is the Lord's will that all turn from their sins and find life.

Come, brothers and sisters, unto He who is life.
Come to He who loves you, loves you enough to die for you.
Come to the Son of God.

(Can you see this?)

O Lord, forgive me my sins
and to them let me not return again,
but in your waters let me rest
and find nourishment for my soul.

(A generous spirit I pray for today.)

March 17

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

The Lord is faithful to all His own;
may we all be with Him in the Son.

Kind and merciful indeed is the Lord
and He does not forget us.
Jesus is with us.

Thank you, Lord, for your grace and mercy;
forgive me my sins of this day
and bring me to glory with you.

(May we all become worthy to be His own.)

March 18

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

The Israelites in the desert became impatient;
they could not wait for Moses to return
with word from God,
so they took matters into their own hands.

The Jews to whom Jesus speaks do not have faith;
they are unable to trust in the words Christ says
because their hearts have been hardened.

I know I, too, am anxious, and it, too, is a great source
for sin. I find it hard to trust in God.

But today I do sense what trust in God is; *all* things
we must put into His hands, as difficult as they may seem.
Ultimately, we must place our dying in His hands, too.
He does provide. If the Father can give us His Son,
He can give us all things (through Him).

Lord, there is love in my heart today
and trust in you.

Forgive me my sins against you,
and let me be as your son.

March 19

(2Sm7:4-5,12-14,16; Ps.89:2-5,27,29,37;
Rm.4:13,16-18,22; Mt.1:16,18-21,24)

All the Lord's promises are fulfilled in Christ;
it is His coming into the world
which makes it complete.

Here is the King of all ages.
Here is the cause for faith.
Here is He who "will save His people from their sins."

Believe in Him.

(Has the Lord made any promise to me regarding my friend?
Her eyes have long been beautiful to me - shining with
light and looking somehow as my own - but today is the
first time they looked like Christ's.)

Lord, I am not the man Joseph was,
but I pray thou shalt bless my house.

March 20

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

The persecutions Jesus and those who follow Him must face - yet their trust is in God.

Trust in God is a repeated theme this day in priests' preaching. And the forgiveness of God is present.

This has been a rather blessed day, wherein I have witnessed the Lord at work in my life, in these hours.

Through all things He leads us.

(How at home I was this morning at Holy Hour. I came into chapel late and not in the holiest state, but immediately upon kneeling in the pew I was in place in the presence of God. I was surrounded by His people - a priest either side, a nun before... and could not have been more at peace.)

Lord, let your peace be with us
and your forgiveness,
as we move through the obstacles of life,
as we break through the walls.

March 21

(Ez.37:12-14; Ps.130:1-8; Rm.8:8-11; Jn.11:1-45)

The Spirit of Christ that is in us never dies -
He raises us up from the death of sin,
and so we shall live again.

To live forever, that there is no end to life...
how well do we grasp this?
How well do we believe?

Thinking of the heavenly kingdom today, dreaming of it -
and reading of an undertaker/poet's view of death
and that the corpse is as a seed unto eternal life...

I sleep most of the day, but rise this evening.
(I don't think we can even imagine the glory of God,
brothers and sisters, but look for it we must.)

Lord, let us rise with you;
let us live with you.
Take us from this darkness to your light.

(I realize today a thing I've noticed since childhood -
I will be forty years old in the year 2000. Forty years
the Israelites spent in the wilderness before entering
the promised land. I have hope and prayer for 2000.)

March 22

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

Once the Lord spared innocent blood;
now He also spares the blood of the guilty.

I would the blood of the guilty be spared,
simply that they would turn from their sins -
for this *is* the will of the Lord.

Today I approach our administrator with hope that He might
cease shortening the gospel reading at Mass - another priest
had told me this is forbidden - but my pleas do not find
a place to rest.

May all be commended into the Lord's hands.

O Lord, that you have spared my blood I know;
may you be the protection of all the innocent this day.

March 23

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

Jesus is the Great I AM.
He shall be lifted up,
and we shall come to Him
who is Life.

Our sins nailed to the cross in His person,
what will be left but life.

Nothing of this world can hold us
if we put our faith in Him
and in His resurrection.

I would I could come to you, dear Lord,
and be with you forever.
May I represent you well while I am here.

March 24

(Dn.3:14-20,91-92,95; Dn.3:52-56; Jn.8:31-42)

He is One - there is but one God
and He has but one Son.
If we are faithful to God
as were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,
He will rescue us.

Our deliverance has come in Jesus Christ!
Let us be slaves to sin no longer.

I know our mettle will be proved on that Day, O Lord,
when your sacred fires refine us
into your image -
may we stand in faith on that day
with the Son beside us.

March 25

(Is.7:10-14,8:10; Ps.40:7-11; Heb.10:4-10;
Lk.1:26-38)

He who is born of the Virgin
is the sacrifice for our sins.
This perfect and pure Child
is the flesh and blood of our life.

I woke this morning naked as a new-born babe (somehow, I have no recollection, my shirt and shorts were removed during the night), and a most special sense of innocence is upon me at Mass. "God in the first place," the Blessed Mother states in her monthly message, and this is my thought this morning.

May the Lord bless our lives
and our sacrifices.
(We are one in Him.)

I love you, Lord, and the childlike wonder you bring.
Keep me as a babe before you;
let my faith be so sure.

(Twice today in academic pursuits the term "self-actualization" arises. A fellow student comes from a conference on Judeo-Christian studies, but, unusually, I find myself oriented more to my studies in ESL. On this day of the Annunciation, I pray we all fulfill our call and are willing as the Mother to serve the Lord.)

March 26

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

Persecution I do sense this morning,
fighting off illness and tiredness
and the temptations of the devil...

But I cannot say that I stand fast throughout the day.

The Lord does hear my prayers when I call upon Him;
He is faithful to His words
and all His works are true -
He can be counted on to save.

Awaken me, Lord, in your light
after the night has passed.
Let the night come, purge me of my sin,
and pass forever.

(And what of the persecutions suffered by those in Kosova
and so many other places throughout the world.
How can we complain of *our* burdens?)

March 27

(Ez.37:21-28; Jer.31:10-13; Jn.11:45-57)

They will apprehend Him,
but He will come to the feast anyway.
They will do what they think they must
to save their skins -
but it is only He who saves.

Not until they put their faith in Him
will they be gathered into His sanctuary.

Palm Sunday is upon us;
Holy Week is about to begin.
Through all things He will guide us
and bring us into the Promised Land.

I am not a native of this place, O Lord;
gather me into the New Jerusalem.
(Lord, is not the Church your presence on earth -
should you not bless it with Truth
and gather your children by it?)

(I marvel today at words - this gift of God we carry -
and how far we have come to find such perfect,
holy discipline and action in Holy Mass.)

March 28

(Is.50:4-7; Ps.22:2,8-9,17-20,23-24; Phil.2:6-11;
Mt.26:14-27:66)

The Drama unfolds, the Passion of the Lord -
Holy Week is here.

Man is inclined to drama, to action, to conflict...
the Lord would sooner have foregone such,
but our appetite must be satiated.

And so His face, though abused by buffets and spitting,
is set like flint
as He walks the road to ignominious death.

"Truly, this was the Son of God!" says the centurion -
but only after darkness, earthquake,
and the dead coming from their tombs.

Lord, why can't we simply believe in you
and live as one with you?

March 29

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

How I wonder at this scene from the gospel today - how like a last supper, a final celebration, it is, with Jesus and His company sharing the fruits of the earth and Mary applying the costly perfume which filled the house... and with the risen Lazarus at table. It seems to presage the heavenly banquet.

And light comes to my part of the earth today
as it is as the first day of spring.

We shall make it through the days ahead
and come unto Christ's glory.

Come, Lord Jesus, and lead us to the kingdom.

March 30

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

Jesus knows. He knows Judas will betray Him.
He knows Peter will disown Him.
He knows that He will soon die.

He knows these things because He is the Son of God.
He and the Father are one. And so of all that is
in the will of the Father He is aware.

The knowledge that He has does not bring Him joy;
this knowledge weighs down upon Him.

(It is my sister's birthday and I eat my lunch
in a park by water in the wind with my friend.)

What shall come tomorrow I do not know,
but I pray it will bring me closer to Jesus.

My Lord, why is it we betray you?
Why is it there must be death?
I do not know, but I trust in you.

March 31

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

The time is nigh - I can feel it in my soul.
The time of suffering and death, and of glory and new life.

It is set in motion. The path is spread out before Him.
And now the readiness is all.

Each of us will know a time like this, brothers and sisters.
I pray we shall be ready.

O Lord, you chastise us and we suffer -
 you refine and purify our hearts
 and prepare them thus for your glory.
Let us bear with you the darkness of this world,
 that we might know the light of the next.

April 1

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

May the Lord's blood be sprinkled upon me.
May I drink deeply the cup of salvation,
the precious sign He has left us,
that when He comes to destroy the gods of this world,
I shall remain in His protection.

Especially in this Year of the Father,
the intensity of these days is upon me -

Wash my feet, dear Lord, that I might be humbled.
Feed me with your Body and Blood,
and help me to serve my brothers.

(Jesus wills to die this day -
the first of three He will spend in the belly of the earth -
and it is by this same will He is present in the Eucharist.)

April 2

(Is.52:13-53:12; Ps.31:2,6,12-13,15-17,25,Lk.23:46;
Heb.4:14-16,5:7-9; Jn.18:1-19:42)

On my way to the church for the Stations of the Cross, a man and a woman carrying bags stop to rest. The woman places hers down; the man, just as weary, stands and holds his... And returning from church there is a man and a woman in the back seat of a police car.

The Lord provides a very special blessing for this day, one I had not planned: I fast from a few hours before last night's Mass of the Lord's Supper until after this evening's Passion celebration. I was quite hungry even after Mass last night - a woman gave me a sip of water as we began our three-hour pilgrimage to churches, and I had but a couple of more sips of water the next afternoon... After receiving today, a smile - also unexpected - came to me as I realized the special blessing the Lord had given me. (It had been a good fast in Jesus' hands.)

And late tonight I stop in a nearby Polish church for an hour during their all-night vigil with the veiled Blessed Sacrament. (This after a vegetarian meal prepared by my friend's mother.)

Lord, I do not deserve your blessings,
but I pray you unite me with your cross.

April 3

A day of prayer and rest, and a final Confession of Lent.
(Fasted until evening.)

(Gn.1:1-2:2; Ps.16:1,5,8-9; Gn.22:1-2,9-13,15-18; Ex.15:1-6;
Ex.14:15-15:1(-); Ps.30:2,4-6; Is.54:5-14(-); Ez.36:24-28;
Rm.6:3-11; Mt.28:1-10)

Well, the Easter Vigil Mass will probably not make tomorrow's Mass seem as anti-climactic as it usually does, but, even so, yes - the Lord is risen! Distractions make it difficult to focus on Mass. (Edited readings (-) one reason.) But during the Consecration and in Communion I am awakened to the Lord's presence.

The trials of this world help to pave the road to the next.

Dear Lord, forgive my pride and exclusionary judgment;
bring your children, all your children,
into your fold.

(I must never think myself more worthy than another.)

April 4

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

Jesus is risen from the dead!
The disciple saw and believed;
 understanding came to him.
We, too, know of the Lord's glory.

He is not here in the tomb;
 He is in heaven.
Let us look for Him there.

Oh, that we could be witnesses,
 that we could proceed to speak as Peter,
 that our mute tongues might be loosed...

May the Church resurrect in love, indeed.

Lord, may your Easter glory grow in me now.
As I have trod the path to your death through Lent,
 may I now begin the journey to life this Easter Season.

<Interesting Note: My telephone, dead since Thursday,
 was repaired and back on today.>

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

Jesus is eternal.
He is with us always. He is risen.
He abides forever and no human calculations
can distract this truth.

Looking at a book proving the verity of the Bible,
the resurrection, etc. Here we see the proof in
today's reading, if we have a heart for truth,
if we have a heart for Christ.

(The Holy Spirit reveals profound truth in the words
He inspires in Peter to the Jews.)

He is risen. I pray this Easter Season His resurrection
may indeed grow in my heart, despite my terrible weakness.

O Lord, you are real, I know,
and truly risen.
Help me draw closer to you.

April 6 (Acts 2:36-41; Ps.33:4-5,18-20,22; Jn.20:11-18)

Well, I suppose if there is such hope for Mary Magdalene and the Jews who crucified Christ, there must be hope for me as well... I must wait on His kindness and mercy.

We must seek the risen Lord, brothers and sisters.

Become so real to me, dear Lord,
 you who have conquered sin and death.
May I meet with you someday
 in all readiness.

April 7 (Acts 3:1-10; Ps.105:1-4,6-9,33:5; Lk.24:13-35)

The Lord had to suffer and die,
or none would have known Him as the Messiah.

Each day we hear the Word of God
and then the Bread is broken -
each day He is with us.

Why am I so far from you who would be so close to me, Lord?

Oh may I take up my cross in your name;
may I die to myself,
that I might live with thee.

(Today I am despondent. I turn to the Blessed Mother,
first among women (even as Jesus is first among men),
for consolation.

Blessed are you among women, dear Mother,
hold me in your arms...
you who are mother to the apostles.)

April 8

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

How strongly, firmly Peter preaches "penance for the remission of sins." How well he knows that in ignorance the people crucified the Christ. How he has changed from the coward who denied Jesus three times. How even he has changed from the frightened apostle first seeing the risen Christ. How he speaks now in the Spirit.

O Lord, let your Holy Spirit be upon the whole church.
Let us stand up and speak the truth in love to all.
May your voice resound through Peter and your Church;
 may all proclaim your glory.

(My brother, whom I called on this his birthday, jokes with me after asking about my relationship with my friend and what will give - we have fallen on difficult days lately - that maybe we should make up our own religion. The humor, the laughter, is a relief... Only the Spirit of Truth can help us.)

April 9 (Acts 4:1-12; Ps.118:1-2,4,22-27; Jn.21:1-14)

Peter leads and others follow; this is eminently clear throughout Scripture. It is He who is given the respect of the first of the apostles.

But be not afraid to call upon Him and upon all the apostles, disciples, and martyrs for the Lord; for being Christ-like as they are, though first, they are meant to serve all others.

O Lord, may we join with your angels and saints;
let our prayers rise up to you
as a holy sacrifice.

(Today, though it is dark and rainy, I am not afraid.)

April 10

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

The Holy Spirit is so necessary to complete the Trinity and to make us whole in the Lord. Before Pentecost the apostles were rather weak and disbelieving. The Holy Spirit filled them with power and they spoke with such boldness that no room was left for doubt or question.

And so we strive toward Pentecost.

(Another book questioning if not condemning Catholic doctrine, this one looking at the Church Fathers and denying their support. It also appears suspect, but may provide means for Spirit of Truth to work in defense with friend...)

Make us strong, Lord, as we give ourselves to you.

(Note: Knocking down a brick wall at friend's apartment in order to make space for a door.)

April 11

(Acts 2:42-47; Ps.118:1-4,13-15,22-24; 1Pt.1:3-9;

Jn.20:19-31)

Before waking this morning, I found myself preoccupied with an experience of last night: I arrived home rather late, and as I came out of my car, a man addressed me from across the street. He said his car had run out of gas, and needed money... I gave him money though I was very suspicious of him. This morning I considered the possibility that he might have stabbed me and I might have died, and imagined this happening. I found myself afraid of death, lacking faith in the Lord - doubting that all I believe might be naught. Remarkably, I find the gospel of "doubting Thomas" today; and the priest speaks about how our faith sometimes goes behind a cloud...

I pray I may endure all trials and that anything preventing my coming to Christ will be taken from my path.

O Lord, to have the faith of the apostles -
your mercy be upon all mankind;
thy will be done.

(Jesus Christ is risen today.)

April 12

(Acts 4:23-31; Ps.2:1-9,12; Jn.3:1-8)

By the power of the Holy Spirit our houses are shaken and we are made new, we are born again. Oh to be born of the Spirit and have such faith and such joy in the Lord as the apostles.

At Mass this morning I almost sense the signs and wonders of Christ in me, potentially working through me. But where does such faith find a place? And how can it be in man who is so sinful?

It occurs to me that there is Jesus, and then there is every other man (as, in a sense, there is Mary, and then all other women). "I am not Jesus," I think, and there is freedom in this thought. And there is the knowledge also that we all are Jesus.

(Today the daughter of my friend's sister is born.)

Lord, I love you.

Bless and protect all your children.

April 13

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

An earthly thing we have difficulty understanding in this modern day and age is how the apostles and the "community of believers" were able to share everything in common, that no one should be needy and no one should be greedy... This is an ideal which seems far beyond our reach today.

Yet this is but an earthly thing, and when the Spirit comes down upon us, such things come to mean little, following on the wings of worship and love of God.

We must put God first and all things else will follow.

Oh Lord, that I might come to know things of heaven,
where you dwell.

April 14 (Acts 5:17-26; Ps.34:2-9; Jn.3:16-21)

The Sadducees, those who do not believe in the resurrection from the dead, cast the apostles into prison - a symbol for death - but the Lord amazes them by setting the apostles free by His own power - a kind of resurrection.

And what do the apostles do - they go right out and preach the resurrection. They are not afraid to do the will of God, to come into the light bearing the truth.

There is a lesson in this: that the Lord guards and protects those whom He loves, those who believe in Him - those who do His will. If we believe in the Lord and set our hearts on doing His will, He cannot help but bless us and resurrect us from all death.

(Today I say to my friend that we should make time to practice music - will the Lord bless this way?)

O Lord, those who take refuge in you
are blessed by you
and shall know no death.

April 15

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

"The One whom God has sent
speaks the words of God;
he does not ration his gift of the Spirit."

And so the apostles cannot help but speak the truth,
even at the risk of their lives.

And what of us? Do we do the same?
I fear not.

I must move, I believe...
A terrible situation with friend today shows me
my hope is in vain - and only prayer saves me.

O Lord, thy will be done!
Please let your word be fulfilled in me.

April 16

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

Where do we find Bread each day for all His people to eat?
Jesus. Jesus Himself is the Bread which is spread abroad
for all to eat and be satisfied. (Why should this amaze
you so, brother?)

Into the Lord's hands I commend my troubled life.
(There is comfort and forgiveness in Confession.)
What is of God I trust shall rise to the top;
what is not, it cannot but fall.

May the Lord's house be my own;
and may He nourish me well.

All come unto thee, dear Lord, in truth and light.

April 17 (Acts 6:1-7; Ps.33:1-2,4-5,18-19,22; Jn.6:16-21)

I am frightened. I am aware of my guilt from past sin and so afraid of what I might do in the future. (May it not increase.) And so I spend the day crying, sleeping, and praying...

I pray that what St. Paul has said might be true of myself - that I shall live no more for myself, but that it might be Christ who lives in me.

O Lord, let your hands be imposed upon me,
that I might be assured of doing your will.
(Heal me, dear Jesus. And heal her, too.)

April 18

(Acts 2:14,22-33; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-11; 1Pt.1:17-21;
Lk.24:13-35)

The Lord reveals Himself,
and so "our faith and our hope are in God."

Look for Him, my brother;
He will show Himself to you.

He travels with us in our doubt, looking for us upon that
road. He chastises us in His kindness, knowing the pain
it brings us will transform our souls. How hard it is
to turn away from sin, but it will profit us.

Lord, as you bring my sins to my eyes,
may they be purged in your light.

(In praying over another at prayer meeting tonight,
something like arrows from the Spirit pierce my eyes.)

April 19

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

(Actually, the Mass this morning was for religious vocations, with appropriate readings, but I will focus on the daily readings.)

"Have faith in the One whom He sent."
We must do this, and not be anxious.

Let the Lord's will be done.
If to the altar as a brother or deacon or priest
or if to the altar as husband - let it be.

Let me but die to the world
and welcome the Lord.

Feed me, Lord, as a baby at his mother's breast.
Give me the milk of your comfort and peace.

April 20

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

In this week in which we pray for vocations in my parish and in the diocese, it is curious to find Stephen so much a part of the readings. It reminds me of my applying to the diaconate. Still it would be somewhat ideal to marry and be ordained - thus knowing all the Lord's sacraments.

But tears and confusion remain in my relationship with my friend, and so how this could be is beyond my understanding...

Lord, I come to you and you feed me -
why does it seem I yet thirst
for you?

Why do I not stand fast in your presence?

(In class this evening I am mute as there is continued presentation and discussion and destruction of basic Judeo-Christian beliefs... Forgive them, Lord.)

April 21

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

Read a rather stirring article about Kosova and the NATO strikes against Milosevic and his Serbian regime, and - though I am never really able to give approval to war of any kind - reflecting on the author's statement that it is difficult to rouse Americans from their avoidance of what is uncomfortable (in this case to support NATO's intervention), I find myself waking from slumber and a sense of willingness to die for a great cause growing in me.

As the number of martyrs increases in the early Church, so the Word spreads. We must be so willing and *believing* today. Such vision is sorely lacking.

Fear not; but believe.

(Eternal life is far beyond the measures of this world.)

Awaken us, O Lord;

 end the sleep we have fallen into.

Let faith grow unto thee.

April 22

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

The Ethiopian eunuch was seeking God; he was on pilgrimage to find truth. He was drawn unto God, who provided for his enlightenment.

All the earth will come unto God, for all the earth is made in His image and, so, seeks Him from whom they come.

A strong sense, a strong remembrance this morning that all are one in Christ; His arms are open to all. We are all brothers and sisters; we are all one in Him; we are all one person. (I have not always been as aware as I was and should be, as I look into the faces of those whom I judge as different, as separate.)

Give us, O Lord, the vision that sees
the unity in all.
Give us your love and wisdom;
may our arms be so open.

April 23

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

Christ and His Church are one.
To persecute us is to persecute Jesus.
He is our life.

And He is real
and really present,
in His Church, in His people,
in His priests and His sacraments...

After some prayerful tears,
friend writes a beautiful prayer
for truth,
and I transcribe it.
We agree to say it every day.

Lord, may I continue to eat your flesh
and drink your blood,
and remain in prayer with you
and your Church.

April 24 (Acts 9:31-42; Ps.116:12-17; Jn.6:60-69)

"You are God's holy one."

I believe in you, Lord.
And I believe your light shall come
and renew the face of the earth.

(At Holy Hour (for priests) I find such hope.
Praying for priests is as to pray for the Church...
and I sense prayers being answered -
the Church shall be at peace again in Christ.)

April 25

(Acts 2:14a,36-41; Ps.23:1-6; 1Pt.2:20b-25;

Jn.10:1-10)

His voice brings comfort;
His voice brings healing;
by His voice we are led from our straying
into His heaven.

I offer a word at friend's son's communion party, prayers
in guiding meeting tonight, and readings to my friend late
on phone - and there is comfort, and there is peace.

This is all in Jesus.
(And I think again, seriously and with a call,
to be a deacon.)

Tonight may we sleep in peace with thee,
and wake in the morning to your voice.

(Jesus is Lord!)

April 26

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

Indeed, all long for the Lord,
and He gives a home
to all who come to Him.
He sends His Holy Spirit
upon those who believe,
upon those who are His.

We must enter by the sheep gate;
we must come unto heaven
by the Lord.

There is no avoidance of His voice
and His command
which will save us.
All must be done in His name.

Fulfill in me your call, O Lord.
Let me enter the Father's presence by thee.

(All are one in Jesus.)

April 27

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

Lord, let no one snatch me out of your hand.

Let me remain with you forever.

They will know we are Christians, brothers and sisters,
if we follow the Lord.

- Exhorting my friend to know her own self and body more to be able to say where ailments come from. People run too quickly to doctors and depend too heavily upon them rather than God and understanding of themselves. Has Christ not said, "Your faith has made you whole" and to ask what we will in His name and He will give it? We must place all in His hands.
(Oh we of little faith!)

April 28

(Acts 12:24-13:5; Ps.67:2-6,8; Jn.12:44-50)

Jesus speaks the Word of Truth,
and that word spreads
to the ends of the earth.

A good fifteen years ago, the Lord gave me a certain word. At the time I had come from listening to an acquaintance speak a little about the origins of certain languages. I am reminded of this tonight as my linguistics professor lectures in detail on the same subject (particularly since I had already been considering the quote).

Part of the exhortation is a call to "Turn not away from my light. Forsake not my words" - not to seek wisdom in the world but in God - and so I consider what His call might be for me...

Let me not forget you, Lord,
and the power of your Word,
the power of your Light.

April 29

(1Jn.1:5-2:2; Ps.89:2-3,21-22,25,27; Jn.13:16-20)

(Catherine of Siena.)

O to be sent forth and proclaim the word in the one voice
that reaches to the end of the world!

I am called a philosopher today,
and so would I be, in Jesus.
The state of Catholic colleges I read about...

But I jog in shadow on my way to church this morning to
minimize any sweating, and affection for my friend must
be hidden. Into the light I would come with all my life.

Yet there is a sense of peaceful innocence upon me,
and a light in my eyes. I pray the Lord let it stay.

Into your light let us come, O Lord;
take all darkness from our midst.

April 30

(Acts 13:26-33; Ps.2:6-11; Jn.14:1-6)

Only Son of the Father,
Messiah awaited by all generations...
it is He -
Jesus is here, Jesus is real.

He is your King, Jerusalem;
follow Him.

Any doubt we have sort of fades away
as we realize Jesus is the One.

May we all find a place in His house.

Only through you, Lord,
shall we find ourselves in heaven.
Only by you will we find the source of our lives
and live in harmony with Him.

Bless us so.

May 1 (Gn.1:26-2:3; Ps.90:2-4,12-14,16-17; Mt.13:54-58)

St. Joseph the Worker,
and such is the theme for the day.

I remark to my friend how my hands and feet hurt after continuing (still) to knock down a brick wall (for a door) in her apartment. (Jesus the carpenter's son may have known the wounds in His hands long before His crucifixion.)

I see the fruits of my labor as tulips planted last year at my sister's grave now show themselves in full bloom. (Funny how I saw only four after several times looking, though I noticed five buds last time I was there, and though there were actually five... also, a child had made a distinct impression upon me, saying "the flowers" to her mother as I walked home from church.)

I practice my presentation of a learning model I'd developed for my partners on a project - heart, mind, soul, and body applied to learning process.

And another interesting note - my friend and I each bought golden statuettes (as for trophies) from a boy, separately. I gave her my male 'champion' and she me her female with angel's wings.

This day was rich, though this morning it seemed lacking hope - Confession again the key to finding the Lord's grace and blessing.
(Perhaps my prayer to St. Joseph was thus answered.)

O Lord, thank you for this day and your blessings.

(And after working, I eat and then relax,
playing Parcheesi with friend and her mother and father.)

May 2 (Acts 6:1-7; Ps.33:1-2,4-5,18-19,22; 1Pt.2:4-9; Jn.14:1-12)

Unity. Jesus and the Father are one.

Unity. We are built into one house with Christ.

One with Him, we are one with each other and one with the Father. Wherever we are, at whatever time, we are one.

We are one Church.

O that we would *be* one Church.

(United with Jesus and united with the Father
in the Holy Spirit.)

O Lord, the unity we so lack
bring to us.

May 3 (1Cor.15:1-8; Ps.19:2-5; Jn.14:6-14)

Sts. Philip and James, apostles.

Ask in His name. Join in His Word.
Let the voice of the Lord be heard.

Let all the world come to the Father through Jesus
through His holy apostles. Let us all radiate His light.

(Would it were so.)

Lord, build us into your house,
which shall stand forever.

May 4 (Acts 14:19-28; Ps.145:10-13,21; Jn.14:27-31)

Through all our trials the peace of the Lord
is always with us.

Paul is stoned, yet he rises to preach...
Jesus is leaving, but it is to the Father He goes,
and He will return.

There is a certain joy with me today as I present my
learning model to my class as part of a group project.
All goes rather well, and I am able to quote from
the Bible re the soul of man.
(The school year is approaching its end.)

It would be a miracle to be able to tap into the soul
of even the special education student and see him learn
with interest.

Lord, thank you for your forgiveness
which brings strength.
Into your hands I commend my spirit.

(It is very dark out today and raining,
yet I am most aware of God's presence
and His light above and beyond the clouds.)

May 5 (Acts 15:1-6; Ps.122:1-5; Jn.15:1-8)

The vine is whole, the branches grow
as long as they remain in the Lord.

The apostles at Jerusalem are the first
offspring of that vine,
and so Paul comes to such root,
to such source,
to be sure his branch grows well,
grows firmly
in the Lord.

All teaching must be apostolic,
must pass through these sources
to have true growth.

And so we have the Church.
And the Church yesterday and the Church today
is the same, and grows
because the roots have never been severed.

Let us always look to authority given by Christ.

Dear Lord Jesus, help us to remain in you.
What must be pruned, let it be.

May 6 (Acts 15:7-21; Ps.96:1-3,10; Jn.15:9-11)

Simply, love.

Jesus, be with us.

May 7 (Acts 15:22-31; Ps.57:8-12; Jn.15:12-17)

Love one another. Lay down your lives for one another.
Bear fruit in His name.

The message is clear and it is simple:
follow Jesus -
and following Jesus means to love.

Friends let us be of the Lord.

Let us die for you, O Lord.

May 8 (Acts 16:1-10; Ps.100:1-3,5; Jn.15:18-21)

Sent. Jesus is sent. The apostles are sent.
Indeed all are sent forth in Christ.

Priest speaks of all being proclaimers of the Good News by our lives, and after Confession of my failure to live up to that ideal, he asks me to stay in church awhile for my penance. As I pray, speaking to the Lord of my confusion regarding my relationship with my friend, standing before the Blessed Sacrament, my legs feel as if they are planted in the earth - very strong and solid. And I remember my friend's exhortations for me to have my feet on the ground. Perhaps she is to serve as a rooting to the earth.

(Have also read of how the divine radiates in the ordinary circumstances of life - in Jesus' life, and in all our lives. He is God and man.)

The first step to heaven is to give our wills to Him.
We will to be free by giving our wills freely.

O Lord, let your will be done.
Let not that which comes from me be.

May 9

(Acts 8:5-8,14-17; Ps.66:1-7,16,20; 1Pt.3:15-18;
Jn.14:15-21)

The Advocate, the Spirit, that gives life...
Him we need.

Spoke today with a member of the waning of our charismatic
prayer group... What has become of our spirit?

But a vision is given me today. Thinking of the Pope's
calling for a new evangelization and Christian unity for the
Jubilee, I put two and two together and realize they are one.
If Christian unity were to come, those Protestants (as in my
friend's church) who would receive the sacraments and come
into full communion would serve to set the Church on fire.
The power of such unity, and the utter absence of disunity,
could not help but bring a new evangelization of the Word
and usher in a Christian era whose force would be
overwhelming and whose truth would be undeniable.

There is hope for such blessing.

Come, Lord Jesus.
Come, Holy Spirit.
Into the Father's presence bring us.

May 10 (Acts 16:11-15; Ps.149:1-6,9; Jn.15:26-16:4)

As Ascension nears and Pentecost is on the horizon,
we begin to hear of the Holy Spirit.

I realize frequent neglect of the Holy Spirit in my life
these days. I pray in the Spirit this morning, calling
on His name, and know that it has been some time.

Would that He would return and strengthen me
who am so weak.

(I am terribly tired and need a place to rest my head.)

Holy Spirit, set my life on fire.

(Forgetfulness re this being Easter Season
is upon me, too.)

May 11 (Acts 16:22-34; Ps.138:1-3,7-8; Jn.16:5-11)

O what power is in the Holy Spirit -
and if we pray and sing to Him,
calling upon His name...
what is there that cannot be done?
What of the earth will remain unshaken?

The unshakable rock of faith can move all things
(even men's hearts).

Upright I am for a time today,
and in this comes the Lord's blessings.
(It is a blessing in itself.)

Now, to remain standing...

With a sober mind and a spiritual heart
we shall find our calling,
our place in the Spirit.

Move the ground beneath my feet, O Lord,
but keep me ever standing.

(Children (and friend) pull my hands
and help me to stand as I pretend unsteadiness
and fall back down to sitting, like the tin man.)

May 12

(Acts 17:15,22-18:1; Ps.148:1-2,11-14,Is.6:3;

Jn.16:12-15)

The Word must be proclaimed to all -
the word of spirit and of truth.
Be they intellectuals or peasants,
it does not matter;
the Spirit speaks to all.

And in the heart the Spirit will convict all
who listen for the truth,
who seek He who makes us human.

The Word of God will go forth to all His creatures,
and then we must decide.

Reading today of a girl who, when a gun was put to her head
(at a recent school massacre), declared her faith in God
and was killed.

When the saints march into heaven, they will be defined by
their faith in God and their obedience to His voice.

Walk with us, Lord, in these days,
that we might walk with you into heaven.

(Dreamt last night that I had lost my assistantship because
of the practicing of my faith. Also read today of a black
man imprisoned unjustly for the killing of a policeman,
and a bishop in Guatemala killed after releasing a report
on the terror practiced there. May God help us.

Today is the feast of the early martyrs Nereus and Achilleus
and the priest wears red.)

May 13 (Acts 1:1-11; Ps.47:2-3,6-9; Eph.1:17-23; Mt.28:16-20)

He has gone, yet He is with us.
He is above, yet He is below.
We are seated with Him in heaven,
and He walks with us here on earth.

Let us glory in the life the Head gives to the Body.

Augustine speaks eloquently in the Office of Readings of our oneness with Christ and His oneness with us. He suffers still with us here ("When you did it to the least of these..."), and we are exalted with Him at the right hand of God.

May our souls ascend, O Lord, to where you are.
Let us not confine our vision to this earth
(as so many supposed scientists and sinners do).
Yet let us do something beautiful for you.

May 14 (Acts 1:15-17;20-26; Ps.113:1-8; Jn.15:9-17)

St. Matthias.

Let the place of Judas be taken,

that the twelve seats may be filled
and the wholeness of God's reign be complete.

It is the Lord who sends any of us out -
He chooses us;
therefore, we should have faith that His work
will be done.

Today I accomplish many tasks,
and it is my trust in the Lord which sees me through
all insecurity...

(And the number "3" repeats itself throughout the day.)

Lord, I only wish I could be your friend.

May 15 (Acts 18:23-28; Ps.47:2-3,8-10; Jn.16:23-28)

Priest made the point this morning that when we pray, Christ is with us - we pray with Christ. And our prayers are important; they are effectual and we need more for the new evangelization upon us.

For the new evangelization we could also use more men like Apollos, and for this I pray.

Parents arrived tonight for a nine or ten day stay. I'm praying it will be a time of strengthening in conviction of the Spirit, a time of grace.

When we are one with Jesus and the Father,
all is well.

Lord, be with us.

May 16

(Acts 1:12-14; Ps.27:1,4,7-8,13; 1Pt.4:13-16;

Jn.17:1-11a)

The glory of God is near to me today;
I begin to understand the Spirit's blessing
upon those who believe.

Why such faith in God's glory becomes real, I do not know.
There are readings in the Office, fasting before Mass,
a full church with my mother, an incisive and terribly
beautiful sermon on the truth of abortion and the beauty
of life, an article on Joan of Arc and a transcendent
rosary... But a greater chastity may be the key.

People joke that my mother is here to "keep me in line",
but there is truth in this, too.

The glory of God is real
and for all who will suffer with Him.

Glory of God, be upon me.

(Let us be one with the saints in heaven.)

May 17 (Acts 19:1-8; Ps.68:2-7,33; Jn.16:29-33)

How indeed by Jesus and the Holy Spirit
we overcome the world.

Paul continues his journeying;
he brings baptism and the Holy Spirit
to the disciples.

There must be a readiness to suffer
and a courage to do.

Speak to us clearly in the power of the Spirit,
that we might proclaim your greatness
in that same Spirit.

Dear Lord, hear us.

(A ride down to the shore with parents and friend -
a full day.)

May 18

(Acts 20:17-27; Ps.68:10-11,20-21,33; Jn.17:1-11)

There is another world, and living there with Jesus,
we need have no fear in this world.

Paul faces impending persecution; Jesus prepares to go to the Father - and tonight I watch a TV movie about Joan of Arc, who herself faces death bravely and with faith. In addition, there are news stories about Medjugorje - due likely to coverage of the war in Kosova.

God's hand is upon all things - this we must believe. Also, I see the importance of suffering, and that it is this which will bring us to heaven. ("Martyrs never die," my father says, perhaps not aware of its entire truth.) And, perhaps because of my pride or my lack of courage, I think of my own call and how I may be less than fulfilling it.

Grant me, Lord, the grace of courage and conviction,
to be with you until the end.
(And burn away all my pride.)

(Are we willing to die for what we believe,
brothers and sisters;
are we truly Christian?)

And I get a new message machine today...
- Paul receives the message of what impends
- the visionaries in Medjugorje, Joan,
and Jesus...)

May 19

(Acts 20:28-38; Ps.68:29-30,33-36; Jn.17:11-19)

Goodbyes and blessings of protection
from Jesus and Paul...

What is this name by which Jesus protects us and by which the leaders of the Church are to guard the flock? Is this name the silent Word I have found, the tetragrammaton (YHWH)? Is it this perfect spirit which protects us? Is it not this which keeps us from the distractions of this world?

Indeed, we are living in an age of distractions, the distractions made by man's own hands - an age in which technology tends to rob us of this silence, this reflection, this purity of soul wherein we find the peace of God. Now we have the noise our idols make. Let us not give ourselves to this but remember God and be consecrated in the word of truth.

I renew my membership in the Sacred Heart Auto League, hoping I might offer up the distraction driving can certainly be. We shall find our way if we keep our hearts on Him who has shed His blood for us.

May your peace be with us, dear Jesus,
and remain with us until the end of the age.

(Let us pray.)

May 20 (Acts 22:30,23:6-11; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-11; Jn.17:20-26)

The name of the Lord continues to be revealed;
as Paul once made it known
(even by controversy),
so it is today...

This oneness, how shall we find it,
except by the Spirit?

(And I continue to wonder how I shall participate
in His word.)

Live in us, O Lord.

(Note: a word in the night:

God makes mistakes, yes
(He made us, didn't He?).
Yet it is not natural to continue to mistake
(as we do).)

May 21 (Acts 25:13-21; Ps.103:1-2,11-12,19-20; Jn.21:15-19)

O Lord, how shall we follow you;
how shall we know the way?

(Do I not love the Lord?
Would I appear before kings on His behalf?

How shall His will be done in my life?)

May 22

(Acts 28:16-20,30-31; Ps.11:4-5,7; Jn.21:20-25)

I should like to record a thought I had in prayer during Holy Hour this morning, a kind of continuation of the word I'd gotten in the night a couple of days ago - specifically, addressing the question of why there is sin (or suffering, since one proceeds from the other) in the world.

The idea is really nothing new, but I seemed to have a deeper understanding of what God wants from us - what He gives us and what He hopes from and for us.

Sin exists, what do we *do* about it?
Do we seek to conquer it and so employ the Godly nature within each of us?

Sin exists, but the power to overcome it also exists, to a greater extent, in fact. (Where sin exists, grace abounds.)

This power within ourselves we must employ.
We must overcome sin and find glory.
We must become God-like, as we are.

(It should be noted that, paradoxically, the power to overcome sin comes from surrendering to God and specifically to the blood of Christ - which is the means of expiation.)

Lord God, may I have the power and conviction
to overcome my sin;
may I seek your grace and glory.

May 23

(Acts 2:1-11; Ps.104:1,24,29-31,34; 1Cor.12:3b-7,12-13;
Jn.20:19-23)

Pentecost, and the Jews of the Dispersion
are brought together as one
in the one language of the Spirit -
and how we need such unity in the Church today.

It is a dark and rainy day, but for the water (a symbol of life and unity, as I've been reading) an entirely uninspiring feast. Mass was quite undramatic - no altar servers, a music director without a microphone, a lector with a cracking voice, a priest with a dull homily... the service too at my friend's church I found uninspired. How dull we have grown. How we need to come alive. The day seemed an indictment on the state of the Church and the definite need for new evangelization, and for unity.

I must have hope the Spirit will come and all will be new in the coming year. (By the power of the Spirit the earth and the Church can be renewed.)

Come, Holy Spirit.
We hope in you.

(It is not by us the change will come.)

May 24 (Sir.17:19-27; Ps.32:1-2,5-7,11; Mk.10:17-27)

Tomorrow morning my parents leave for Florida.
I have attempted to search my soul, find a measure of purity,
and seek the Lord's will.

"Happy is he whose fault is taken away."
"Return to the Lord and give up sin."
There is hope. There is a way.
Can I pass through the needle's eye?

Life is complex and it is difficult to know clearly
the Lord's will and way. But there must be a willingness
to follow.

(Tomorrow comes another message from Medjugorje.)

Lord, lead me and I will follow.

May 25 (Sir.35:1-12; Ps.50:5-8,14,23; Mk.10:28-31)

How appropriate life in the Lord can be...

Even as I drove back from the airport (early this morning), alone through these city streets on which I grew up and in which the whole of my family once lived, I thought of today's gospel and wondered if this leaving of my parents to return to Florida, if this living alone, is effectual in the Lord or if it is just vain. (I would not want this loneliness to be wasted.)

And walking through the park after Mass I come across several patrons of our former soup kitchen; I speak with one at length and try to offer help. And there is a message to clean out our closet at the church and a brief conversation with the last hope for a new place... And tonight the homeless are on TV.

Where do you come from? Where do you go?

O Lord, let us find our home in you.

May 26

(Sir.36:1,5-6,10-17; Ps.79:8-9,11,13,Sir.36:16;
Mk.10:32-45)

Jesus died that all may live;
we must lay down our lives, too,
and He will answer our prayers,
and we shall live.

The time is coming.

Chastise me always, Lord,
but let me never despair of your love.

May 27 (Sir.42:15-25, Ps.33:2-9; Mk.10:46-52)

God is not blind; He sees all.
And so He is able to and would grant vision
to all who seek it from the heart.

All-seeing God, All-knowing Lord,
who are most compassionate and forgiving,
who desire the best for us all -
you know my sin and the blindness of my soul...
heal me.

May 28 (Sir.44:1,9-13; Ps.149:1-6,9; Mk.11:11-26)

Godliness, known or unknown, cannot be blotted out;
it endures.
For this we praise the Lord.

And we are expected to endure;
we must bear fruit in season and out of season,
always ready should the Lord come.
The time may not always be with us,
but we must endure.

As the twentieth century comes to a close,
we remember this
and pray for a time which may be more favorable
for the bearing of fruit.

(Yet Godliness can never be blotted out...)

O Lord, I do forgive any whom I may have a grievance against,
and pray for their presence in your kingdom.
Forgive me, please, and accept my presence.

May 29 (Sir.51:12-20; Ps.19:8-11; Mk.11:27-33)

We must seek truth to be convicted of the Lord;
if we hide ourselves from Him,
He cannot find us.

Oh how the first reading reminds me of my autobiography,
wherein I wrote of Wisdom's coming to me even in the womb -
and how I wish it were so that she would truly be with me.
It was my prayer some time ago to be, as it were,
a millionaire in wisdom...
How I still search for her guidance.

I see in prayer my lack of humility and how this is an
important first step to God. Yes, the saints are saints
because they are humble. They are humble because they
fear God and know they are nothing in His sight. They
become something because God is merciful and looks upon
their humility and blesses them.

Let me follow your word and your law, Lord.

May 30 (Ex.34:4b-6,8-9; Dn.3:52-56; 2Cor.13:11-13; Jn.3:16-18)

Trinity Sunday.

God be with you - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(How great is our God!)

Dear Lord, may all Christians be one in you.
(This is the prayer of your Church.)

May 31 (Zep.3:14-18; Is.12:2-6; Lk.1:39-56)

The Visitation -

I had set a fleece before the Lord regarding my relationship with my friend and asked for the Blessed Mother's intercession. Nothing dramatic seems to have happened, though strictly speaking answer was here. She did not go away and we did spend the day in the park with her family, but nothing exceptional occurred to assure me there is rightness in it. (Perhaps the mundane is the answer.)

I love the line from today's first reading:

"You have no further misfortune to bear."

How wonderful. And now that the Lord is born, that He has come through the Blessed Virgin, all need for fear does flee, and rejoicing enters in.

Let it be so with us, Lord.

June 1 (Tb.2:9-14; Ps.112:1-2,7-9; Mk.12:13-17)

Tobit becomes angry;
I myself am prone to such behavior.
Jesus uses wisdom to respond to a trap;
I could use a gift such as this.

The end of the world is upon us;
it is a time which calls for patience
and understanding -
and the era of peace shall be ours.

Do not fear, my brothers;
there is one who sees all.

Make us ready, O Lord,
to convert to thy way.

June 2 (Tb.3:1-11,16-17; Ps.25:1-9; Mk.12:18-27)

The first reading is an object lesson in prayer: the two, Tobit and Sarah, pour out their hearts in tears, and the Lord hears them both. In one sense, the passage may be used to show how God answers prayer in ways we do not expect, according to His will and not ours - both ask to die, yet both are given new life. Taken further, it is clear that God knows better what we seek and sees what we seek better - really what they are praying for *is* new life.

Let us set our hearts on heaven, brothers and sisters,
where we shall be as angels,
and the Lord will care for us here.

O Lord, hear my prayer,
and answer me according to your understanding
and your will.

June 3 (Tb.6:11,7:1,9-14,8:4-7; Ps.128:1-5; Mk.12:28-34)

Perhaps my favorite marriage passage, where Tobiah and his wife rise from bed to pray for the Lord's blessings... The psalm, too, speaks of the blessings of marriage.

All marriage is accomplished in God; He is the source of all love. And ultimately we shall all be wed to Him whose love we dimly mirror.

(Today my friend is wed in a sense to this country, as she becomes a citizen. I myself might have difficulty with the oath, unless I come first as a citizen of heaven.)

Yes, may we love you entirely, Lord
(as even the Mother compels us),
and reflect that love with one another.

(I do so consider how to give myself
entirely to the Lord.)

June 4 (Tb.11:5-15; Ps.146:2,7-10; Mk.12:35-37)

Jumping off from Tobiah using fish gall to heal Tobit's eyes, the priest (from a neighboring church) proclaimed at length of how God works through creation and how the Church is sign and sacrament of God's presence in the world.

And as I drive to the cemetery after Mass, an abiding sense of peace fills me as I begin to see God in all things. Earlier I had been praying that the Lord make me ready for His kingdom if I should die today, and then that even if I should not, to let me be in His kingdom. And so, present was His kingdom, and seated with Him in heavenly places I found myself, gazing upon a very special blessing - thirty-three roses at my sister's grave (and another seventeen buds). Wonderful it is to contemplate the Lord.

Then while later playing "Too Good For This World" (my sister's song), my foot slipped suddenly from its place on the step of the highchair as I sat - even as I sang "They died in love" - much as my sister fell suddenly... And I was pleasantly shocked. (So may death come.)

In this world, Lord,
 help us to shine your light.
Yes, let your light be with us now
 and forever.

June 5 (Tb.12:1,5-15,20; Tb.13:1-2,6; Mk.12:38-44)

As I sit in the second pew in chapel during Mass, I notice that the five people I can see (including myself and the priest) all were regular contributors to the soup kitchen...

Because of the Holy Hour, Saturday is always a great day for prayer - today is no exception. I come up with a prayer: May God's wisdom shine upon the earth like the light of the sun; may His love cover the earth like the waters of the sea; may His peace blow upon the earth like the four winds of the sky; and may His people stand as strong as the earth itself, unshaken. (A prayer also for Christ to come into every home.)

I also begin to realize that it is really up to us, the lay people, to be the instrument of the new evangelization. We must take responsibility, and not hide our faith.

Lord, help us to be generous
and give of ourselves for you.

(Note: I have begun again to practice playing
Songs for Children of Light.

June 6

(Dt.8:2-3,14b-16a; Ps.147:12-15,19-20; 1Cor.10:16-17;
Jn.6:51-58)

Body and Blood of Christ.

I hadn't realized Buddhism is essentially an "a"-theistic religion (in a sense, not a religion at all) with no belief in a Creator, only in cause and effect circumstances... this from the Dalai Lama's mouth.

How different we are, believing not only in God, in the transcendence of heaven, but also that He is really, very really, with us.

(Interesting that in the absence of an official God, the Dalai Lama comes to be revered as a god himself.)

God is, and He is here.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of yourself;
may all come to know your presence
and your divinity.

June 7 (2Cor.1:1-7; Ps.34:2-9; Mt.5:1-12)

I am sorrowing, but I cannot say I share in the sufferings of Christ. And so, will there be consolations for me?

The Lord answers my prayers faithfully whenever I call upon Him, but today I am too often mute, and so, how can He help?

And so I suffer, but not for righteousness' sake - and so the kingdom is not mine.

Lord, take not your Holy Spirit from me;
Jesus, please let me be with you,
and let me share in your sufferings somehow.

Take not this sweetness from me.
(I would be so blessed.)

June 8 (2Cor.1:18-22; Ps.119:129-133,135; Mt.5:13-16)

To shine my light...

Songs for Children of Light still seems such a blessing.

Is there a bushel basket upon me which needs to be removed?

I do vacillate; this I know.

May I follow the straight path
and trust in God.

Patience shall bring me there,
if only I could learn it.

(To do student teaching in the spring or in the fall
(or not at all)? The line at the supermarket is held
up at length by three straight customers in front of me.
I continue to play songs.)

Lord, you are too merciful,
and I am too blind (and proud).

June 9 (2Cor.3:4-11; Ps.99:5-9; Mt.5:17-19)

It is written in stone; the Law cannot be broken.
The Spirit is true, it is so,
and He writes His Law upon our hearts -
and there is no conflict between the two.

There is but one Law, as there is but one Word,
as there is but one Christ -
and we must live His way,
which is all that leads to heaven.

I would seem to bend the law
without breaking it;
the law, though malleable in the hands of Christ,
is hard and fast as stone.

Lord, into your hands I commend my spirit.
May you who are just be merciful.

June 10 (2Cor.3:15-4:1,3-6; Ps.85:9-14; Mt.5:20-26)

Serve the Lord.
How can I serve Jesus?
How would He have me do so?

His Name must be proclaimed.
That I might be clear in how to proclaim it...

First we must be settled,
first we must be at peace.

And before heading to my house this evening I think about a fellow Christian on the block with whom I have had no friendly contact of late, and whose parking habits had rather upset me. I desire to see him and share the kindness of the Lord with him, and so I pray. He is on the corner as I arrive on my block; I pass him and he doesn't notice me, but I am forced to circle the block and park across from him (due to lack of parking) - and I find opportunity for interchange with him.

Sometimes God is so real, so present to hear our prayers.

Lord, let us be at peace with all others,
and let us find our way in serving you.
Bring to fulfillment your light in each of us.

June 11 (Dt.7:6-11; Ps.103:1-8,10,17; 1Jn.4:7-16; Mt.11:25-30)

Sacred Heart of Jesus,
and blessed do I feel.

From waking this morning to preparing now for sleep there has been a certain joy with me, and the Lord blesses my endeavors, light though they be. A restful day it has been, though busy, and in my play I am successful - from winning at Parcheesi (two games) early this afternoon to shooting my best round of golf later in the day to the Knicks winning a championship game tonight...

A Knick player speaks of the peace of the Lord being with Him throughout the game, and this quiet confidence is what I too have known. How is it we know so really the Lord is with us and will bless us? It is that He is real and loving, and if our belief in Him is strong and our prayer is clear and steady, He will be so really with us. But we must be as "merest children."

O Lord, to come to know your love more and more
is the joy of our lives.
I give you all I have and all I am
and all I do -
may I find rest in you.

June 12 (2Cor.5:14-21; Lk.1:46-55; Lk.2:41-51)

Immaculate Heart of Mary.

O to be reconciled to God, to find His love,
to be chosen as His own.

There is a place for all His saints.

(I understand that God does bless the winner of a contest
by realizing that He also blesses the loser. All is in
Him.)

Lord, may I draw closer to your Word
and the living of your will.

June 13

(Ex.19:2-6a; Ps.100:1-3,5; Rm.5:6-11; Mt.9:36-10:8)

There is but one God,
and there is but one people and one religion.

The "house of Israel" was chosen by the living God as His "special possession" and they carry His presence and His truth. Jesus stated that the kingdom would be taken from them and given to another - and this other is the Catholic Church, the new Jerusalem. And so it is the Catholic Church which has the true religion.

Others are not religions: Buddhism is a science, an intellectualization; Hinduism is a work of the imagination, a spiritualization; Islam is a trusting in works, a physicalization; and Protestantism tends toward emotionalism (witness televangelism). None are whole; though all may contain redeeming qualities, none is full. As the Jews were respected as the people of the living God in Old Testament times, now the Catholic Church are their descendents.

A common theme in friends' and my own church: we hear "the harvest is abundant but the laborers are few" and a sister speaks to us of the serious lack of vocations, even as a Pakistani man speaks of the importance of mission work (especially to the Muslims) in my friend's church. And I pray about my talents and their fruitfulness...

Lord, help us to find you
and to do your will.

June 14 (2Cor.6:1-10; Ps.98:1-4; Mt.5:38-42)

How we must give! What we must give!
All. Without question. Without fear.
Without reservation.

But I am reserved. I am afraid to go as called.
I prefer to hedge my bets,
to go with some pragmatism, some compromise.

I hope when the time comes, the Lord will still accept me.

I do desire to give all to you, O Lord.
I wish I could but find the way,
the faith, the confidence...

(Preserve me until that time,
and make me ready.)

June 15 (2Cor.8:1-9; Ps.146:2,5-9; Mt.5:43-48)

(Lord, please be with me and bless this writing
despite my sinfulness.)

To be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect,
to give generously, beyond our means -
how far this is from me.

How sinful I am: how greedy and judgmental,
how selfish and lustful, how blind and how deaf
to the Lord's words...

I can only attempt to bow down,
that the Lord might raise me up
from my pride.

O Lord, how hard it is to see you in others,
and so, how hard to love them all.
If you we have killed,
how can we refrain from hating those who kill us?
(Only somehow by your grace.)

June 16 (2Cor.9:6-11; Ps.112:1-4,9; Mt.6:1-6,16-18)

If you plant your seeds in the dark,
if your prayers and your alms are hidden,
great indeed shall be their yield.

In the darkness of the earth,
hidden from the eyes of man,
seeds sprout and grow.

In the quiet of our hearts,
in the silence of our rooms,
our prayers rise up to God.

And in forgetfulness of what we have done,
our alms provide abundantly.

Take all that I am, Lord.
Come to me in ways I cannot see.

June 17 (2Cor.11:1-11; Ps.111:1-4,7-8; Mt.6:7-15)

Who can I forgive?
Who is there that has wronged me?
Indeed, may they be forgiven.

I can hold nothing against anyone,
for there is much in me which needs repentance.

I can say there is no one who has sinned against me.

Lord, may all be forgiven and come to you,
and may I join them there.

June 18 (2Cor.11:18,21-30; Ps.34:2-7,18; Mt.6:19-23)

O let there be no darkness in these eyes!
(Here is the place for light.)

Who of us can boast as Paul, and so why should
I be disappointed at the little I do for the Lord
and in His name?

Speaking last night with a former cook of the soup kitchen
and today with my former partner about how we miss the
service we were able to give, what a blessing it was -
and how we must find something else... I know I must
pray that the Lord will bring another ministry to me and I
will embrace it in all faith and charity, and with all hope.

How shall I serve you with my life, Lord,
even as I move along in years?

June 19 (2Cor.12:1-10; Ps.34:8-13; Mt.6:24-34)

Wonderful sense after Holy Hour this morning, a sense of openness and willingness to honestly and gratefully accept anything the Lord would call me to do with my life - having no preference, nor any fear or timidity.

Openness before God and knowing "His kingship over you" is indeed wonderful to behold; I pray it shall become rooted in me.

I shall not worry, Lord,
I shall not fear.
If you are with me,
I will go where you call
and accept what you give.

June 20

(Jer.20:10-13; Ps.69:8-10,14,17,33-35; Rm.5:12-15;
Mt.10:26-33)

This is the day the sparrow fell -
but the soul is not destroyed.

The Lord Jesus is our salvation;
let us proclaim it from the rooftops:
O the wonderful grace of the LORD!

(I continue to think about what the Lord might have for
me to do, I continue to pray... and to practice *Songs*.
I must maintain openness.)

Lord, grant me the faith to know of your care
and your providence
in all things.

June 21 (Gn.12:1-9; Ps.33:12-13,18-20,22; Mt.7:1-5)

Spoke with a former Jehovah's Witness this evening (an acquaintance I'm tutoring). He was open to my words about my Catholic faith; I wish only the speck in my eye were further removed so I could be less hesitant to proclaim what I know.

Abram's feet walk through the land; all this shall be his and more, for he is a spiritual father of all saved wherever and whoever they may be. May all his children have such faith as he.

Lord, come and claim that which is yours,
for you alone are of perfect vision.

June 22 (Gn.13:2,5-18; Ps.15:1-5; Mt.7:6,12-14)

The road today is rough, very rough -

I pray it will lead to the wide expanse of heaven.

I attempt to do justice today, and call upon the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit to cast out Satan and all evil from this place and my relationship with my friend. It is a very draining effort.

In Confession I recognize my lack of wisdom and strength, and through the day I seem to find them present in me and in my actions...

May our pearls not be cast before swine, Lord,
and may your Bread of Life not be wasted on me.

(I thank you for your chastisements, Lord.)

June 23 (Gn.15:1-12,17-18; Ps.105:1-4,6-9; Mt.7:15-20)

Abraham is the most fruitful of men;
all children of the promise are his descendents.

That I too would be his descendent
and bear fruit in the name
of the fulfillment of the covenant,
the Lord Jesus.

"Instruct me, O Lord, in the way of your statutes."
For I do yet lack wisdom and grace.

(How shall I know that you will bless me?)

June 24

(Is.49:1-6; Ps.139:1-3,13-15; Acts 13:22-26;
Lk.1:57-66,80)

On this special day, the Birth of John the Baptist and the 18th anniversary of the Blessed Mother's first appearance at Medjugorje, I would say, "I praise you for I am wonderfully made," but yet do I struggle with the weaknesses and confusion of a less than perfect, sinful life. The Jesus John hailed is very present before me in the Sacrament, and blessings seem to come, but in the midst of all is my sin.

A former neighbor who still lives on the block on which I grew up (I am living a couple of blocks away), after I show kindness for his troubled state of loneliness - his wife died several months ago - offers me to live on a floor in his house which has been unoccupied for some time, rent-free. It seems such a blessing, but I am such a sinner, and I don't know what to say.

Lord, purge me, that I might see clearly.
Again, let thy will be done.

June 25 (Gn.17:1,9-10,15-22; Ps.128:1-5; Mt.8:1-4)

Abraham feared the Lord, humbling himself before Him,
and so he was blessed.
The leper feared the Lord, humbling himself before Him,
and so he was healed.

I come before the Lord, finding holy fear
and humbling myself to His will,
and He forgives my sin.

Lengthy discussion with friend and mother about the apostolic powers, particularly forgiveness of sins, which are passed down to this day... On this day when the sacrament of Confession is such a strong part of my life, how can I help but argue for what I perceive to be true.

O Lord, may I be reconciled to you
and to your will -
this is most necessary.

(And the blessing of the aforementioned apartment progresses.)

June 26

(Gn.18:1-15; Lk.1:46-50,53-55; Mt.8:5-17)

"The natural heirs of the kingdom will be driven out into the dark."

We in the Catholic Church are the natural heirs of the kingdom, again, the new Jerusalem. The Lord has given us all His gifts and graces, in the hierarchy, in the sacraments, in the teaching... therefore, this warning is for us.

A conversation with the son of a pastor tonight, and the lack of teaching and conviction Catholics generally exhibit is agreed upon. It is also agreed upon that Christ's blood is what is necessary... They who have only what is necessary - faith - wherever they may be, will enter before we who are surrounded by His graces, but are not faithful.

"He expelled the spirits by a simple command";
and so by few words
the priest forgives sin and consecrates the Eucharist.

Lord, "I am not worthy to have you under my roof,"
and yet you grace me each day with your presence -
open my eyes to see you,
and let this gift not be wasted.

June 27

(2Kgs.4:8-11,14-16a; Ps.89:2-3,16-19; Rm.6:3-4,8-11;

Mt.10:37-42)

Today I come into full acceptance of the great blessing the Lord has put into my path of an apartment without pay. (For it is today I learn of the new owner's intention of raising my rent \$125.) And I can't help but think of Elisha; and I can't help but remember that "whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because the little one is a disciple - amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward." And so I believe my benefactor, whose <98- year-old> mother I give Communion to today during our monthly visit to the local nursing home, and into whose apartment I shall be moving, I believe he shall know his reward.

It is not easy to accept the Lord's blessings; it is not easy to trust in His miracles. But how shall we believe the greatest blessing of eternal life in heaven - how shall we bear it, if we cannot trust in His blessings here?

Yes, to God be all glory, and praise, and thanks.

Jesus, I pray you continue to reveal yourself to me
and bless all my life in your will.

June 28

(Gn.18:16-33; Ps.103:1-4,8-11; Mt.8:18-22)

The justice of the Lord is evident in His kindness,
but those deserving of death shall not escape it.

Though a few shall be spared of the hellish city,
and the Lord might spare them all,
they shall set their hearts against Him,
and know the wrath of the Lord.

At moments during this day I have sensed the Lord's will
reaching a fulfillment, a realization, in my life, that
my many prayers shall be answered - and upon reaching
the heavenly kingdom, there will be no turning back again.

Lord, into your hands I strive to place all my life,
reserving nothing for myself.
When the time comes, may I indeed be ready.

(My friend goes away for a few days to a religious
conference.)

June 29

(Acts 12:1-11; Ps.34:2-9; 2Tm.4:6-8,17-18; Mt.16:13-19)

"The Lord will continue to rescue me from all attempts to do me harm and will bring me safe to His heavenly kingdom."

And so the angel of the Lord rescues Peter from his chains... and so the office of Peter rescues us from the snares of this world and makes us strong... and so the priest, who has the power to bind and unbind, sets me free from my sins today.

How we shall be set free, as if in a dream,
and how we shall come unto heaven!

Stay close to the rock which is given for our protection.
(Clearly the apostles are the foundation stones of the kingdom - as it says in Revelations - and clearly Peter is the first of these.)

Today the apostles Peter and Paul become more real to me.

Dear Lord, bring me unto the place they are with you.

June 30 (Gn.21:5,8-20; Ps.34:7-8,10-13; Mt.8:28-34)

Ishmael, too, is watched over by God,
and he is made a great nation,
though it is Isaac's descendents
who bear Abraham's name.

And it is curious to note that upon meeting Jesus, the people of the Gadarene neighborhood begged Him to leave them. Isn't this essentially all of us, who are so afraid of the wonders of the Lord that we would sooner be left alone? His arms are open eternally, but who would be gathered under these protective wings?

Lord, help us to accept and live gladly with
your miraculous presence.

July 1 (Gn.22:1-19; Ps.115:1-6,8-9; Mt.9:1-8)

Such authority is given to men -
to forgive men's sins and to heal.
The Lord loves us so that He blesses us abundantly
and gives us a share in His kingdom.

How can you come so close to men, dear Lord,
as to bless us with your grace in this land?
Help us to be faithful to you in all we do
and to know that you provide the sacrifice.

July 2 (Gn.23:1-4,19,24:1-8,62-67; Ps.106:1-5; Mt.9:9-13)

Sarah dies, and Isaac takes solace with Rebekah.
Jesus calls Matthew to apostleship,
again choosing an unlikely man.

We cannot know the mind of God,
except that He is merciful.

Yes, let us thank Him for what He has done for us.

(A little difficulty between my friend and her mother -
but the Lord shall comfort them.)

Dear Lord, your will and your ways
are not determinable by us.
Help us to turn to you and trust in you,
knowing all is well in your hands.

July 3

(Eph.2:19-22; Ps.117:1-2,Mk.16:15; Jn.20:24-29)

On this the feast of (doubting) Thomas the apostle, perhaps because of my own disbelief and anxiety, my once rent-free apartment has become a low-rent apartment. (Somehow I think my own anxiety rubbed off on him <the elderly man> and he has become more cautious.) I fear I have not been able to fully accept and trust in the gift Christ would have given me.

Also, as a somewhat odd aside, my friend goes into a monologue about not listening to people (e.g. myself) say that you "can't" do something. (We were working on her new room at the time.) I make it a running joke, saying that I believe in her and wouldn't say she "can't", even as her work shows doubtful judgment.

Lord, please let me place this and all gifts
into your hands
and trust that your will shall be done.

Forgive me my weakness.

(And yet, today, too, as I worship the Lord in silence during Holy Hour, His presence becomes most real and awesome to me. It is as if the light of judgment day shines upon me.
"My Lord and my God!"

July 4 (Zec.9:9-10; Ps.145:1-2,8-11,13-14; Rm.8:9,11-13;
Mt.11:25-30)

Something related in putting "to death the deeds of the body"
and banishing "the warrior's bow."

Jesus brings a true and lasting peace.

Lord, make me as a child
to see what you would show me -
to see the Father.

(A hot day(s) and the body becomes quite burdensome.
May the Lord bring us relief.)

July 5 (Gn.28:10-22; Ps.91:1-4,14-15; Mt.9:18-26)

Well, today's first reading carries the name of my friend (both names). And is it not remarkably appropriate that she should assist me this day, in fact, doing most of the work in painting especially my <to be> bedroom - including standing on a ladder and painting the ceiling blue (like the sky, her own idea) and promising to add stars and a moon...

Perhaps she shall indeed be somehow the resurrection of my sister, to which the gospel points.

O Lord, if indeed you would bless me as Jacob
(my own namesake)
and prosper me so...

Heaven awaits, I know.
Let me wait on you.

July 6 (Gn.32:23-33; Ps.17:1-3,6-8,15; Mt.9:32-38)

The Lord tests me these days as I am "lying prostrate from exhaustion" because of the terrible heat we've been experiencing and the work I've had to do... Indeed I am short of breath, little able to pray or to think on the Lord. Usually I am not greatly affected by the heat and humidity, but now I suffer as much as anyone else. May the Lord send relief, for I can struggle little more.

Lord, look with pity on us -
take this affliction from your people.

July 7 (Gn.41:55-57,42:5-7,17-24; Ps.33:2-3,10-11,18-19,22;
Mt.10:1-7)

There is some relief from the severity of the weather
today...

Oh that the Twelve would be sent forth to the very ends
of the earth!

O Lord, in this land we live as if in famine,
for never do we fully know you
and always do we find ourselves in sin.

May our prayers rise up to you
that we may be saved.

July 8 (Gn.44:18-21,23-29,45:1-5; Ps.105:5,16-21; Mt.10:7-15)

It is wonderful that Joseph comes to realize that his suffering was for good, that he accepts willingly the sacrifice he has had to endure - and that he gives freely what he has been given.

I need so to give freely of what the Lord has given me, to share with others my blessings and my pain - such openness would be truly redemptive. (An absolute compassion and love is what Jesus teaches.)

And we must trust that if we do His will,
He will provide.

Jesus, teach me to love you
and to love others.

July 9 (Gn.46:1-7,28-30; Ps.37:3-4,18-19,27-28,39-40;
Mt.10:16-23)

You may have to suffer in this world, but fear not,
the Lord will be with you, and should you remain faithful,
you will come into His glory.

I must indeed undergo a kind of suffering today, a physical
suffering, as I prepare my apartment for moving into - it
is a work of which I am not used to, and my body aches after
a long day. But I pray the apartment shall be a blessing
and lead to greater blessings.

Lord, bless the place into which I move,
and bless those who are a blessing to me.

(A Franciscan friend spends the whole day working with me,
and my (girl) friend paints her stars on my bedroom ceiling.)

July 10

(Gn.49:29-33,50:15-24; Ps.105:1-4,6-7,68:33;
Mt.10:24-33)

"There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow..."

The time comes for both Jacob and then Joseph to breathe their last and be drawn to their kindred - this time shall come for us all. But we need not fear; we need but to acknowledge the work of God in all our lives for good and He will be ever with us.

Today, though very tired and worn, I return, alone, to painting. At first it seems I will not be able to go on, but I am strengthened, and though tired now, I am not so weary - perhaps I am building strength and resistance. (In this way I should grow spiritually with my Lord.)

Teach me, Lord, and strengthen me.
Let your word be proclaimed through me.

July 11 (Is.55:10-11; Ps.65:10-14,Lk.8:8; Rm.8:18-23;
Mt.13:1-23)

The redemption of our bodies will be the flowering
of this seed, sown and nourished by the Word of God.

The Lord's voice speaks. It tells of the way and the truth
and the life; it offers forth the wisdom necessary to come
to the Father's presence. Listen to Jesus.

Lord, I have not seen you
and I believe -
help my unbelief.

July 12 (Ex.1:8-14,22; Ps.124:1-8; Mt.10:34-11:1)

Do I find my friend wrestling with the Catholic faith within herself? (She has had to read some history of the Church in two of her classes.) To do so would certainly cause division in her family...

And now Pharaoh and the Egyptians begin to harden their hearts against the Israelites - but it shall lead to their freedom.

Word of God, speak to me
and be with me,
giving light to all my days.

(His voice and so His person is becoming very real to me.)

July 13

(Ex.2:1-15; Ps.69:3,14,30-31,33-34; Mt.11:20-24)

Drawn from the water, the Lord having rescued us,
we must now live according to His blessings.

I fear today that I do not witness to Christ well enough
with my life as I look around myself at school, amongst
the dissolution of some of the students - do they know of
the love of Jesus? Sometimes indeed the waters overwhelm
me and there seems little opportunity for escape. I can
only hope and pray for the salvation of those lost in this
world of sin.

And oh that I would better live my Christian calling!

Lord, draw me from any darkness
and let me be faithful to you.
(Save those in need of your assistance.)

July 14 (Ex.3:1-6,9-12; Ps.103:1-4,6-8; Mt.11:25-27)

How like a child I am after Confession and during Mass
this morning! How wonderful it is to be so!
How close we are then to God.

We must come as children to God, humble and awestruck
as Moses.

Reading today from *Faith and Reason*, John Paul II's
encyclical - how brilliant he is! He speaks of philosophy's
being able to fulfill its purpose only by faith in the cross,
faith in Christ, otherwise their vision and their reason will
ever be stunted and perverted by the limitations and
distractions of this world.

We cannot by our own minds attain to ultimate truth.
Only through Christ and the "folly" of the cross can
reason find genuine and even absolute enlightenment.

Lord, let me ever be as a child before you,
a child of light.

(And this is my last night in my current apartment.)

July 15

(Ex.3:11-20; Ps.105:1,5,8-9,24-27; Mt.11:28-30)

Into my new home I come today -
I pray it shall flow with milk and honey,
fruitful gifts unto the Lord.

I labor again today, moving furniture,
but the Lord gives strength
and the Lord gives rest.

(Even as today I learn of the jeopardy one of my tutees
is in because of his illegal status in the U.S. -
why do we so readily bar the doors?)

Lord, my only home is with you I know;
be here with me even now.

July 16

(Ex.11:10-12:14; Ps.116:12-13,15-18; Lk.2:15-19)

Here is the Child who will set God's people free. He who lies here is the sacrifice offered for the sins of many.

On this the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel I ask the Blessed Mother's protection upon me and my new place.

(I would I were not so anxious about all that needs to be done here.)

Lord, settle me into your arms,
and may I always be prepared
for leaving.

July 17 (Ex.12:37-42; Ps.136:1,10-15,23-24; Mt.12:14-21)

In the night and as one the Israelites left Egypt.

In the silence of our hearts Jesus comes
and makes us one with Him,
as we leave our sins behind
and find healing.

And as I continue my move,
I wonder at hundreds of thousands of people
all moving at once together...

(Though they may not have remained united, here is the sign
for how we Christians ought to be and will be on that Day.)

Jesus comes in quiet,
but on that Day the trumpets will blare.

Kind Jesus, forget me not;
guide us as we leave this world,
and come to you.

July 18

(Ws.12:13,16-19; Ps.86:5-6,9-10,15-16; Rm.8:26-27;
Mt.13:24-43)

The Lord is kind and merciful.
(Remember.)

Insightful sermon by visiting priest this morning: it is not ours to judge; the Day will come when the Lord will separate us - do not about pulling weeds now.

And I listen as conversation after prayer meeting centers on those like Stalin and Hitler who were unrepentant unto death and those who, though having led dissolute lives, called on God as they lay dying.

Do not judge. The time *will* come when the Lord shall reveal all. (And at prayer (at meeting) I find an awesome realization that all will stand before Jesus on that Day - all in heaven, in hell, and on earth - *all*.)

Gather me into your kingdom on that Day, Lord;
keep my heart now from judging others.
(Help us to help others, to evangelize them.)

July 19 (Ex.14:5-18; Ex.15:1-6; Mt.12:38-42)

Now we hear the first of the Israelites' grumblings against God and their own release from slavery. I myself must admit to grumbling over the work and the problems this new apartment has thus far wrought.

Do not lose trust in God.
"You have only to keep still."

(O that I could but remain quiet and allow the Lord to act -
but I am learning patience.)

Lord, you are the greatest of all signs -
you are the Son of God.
Help us to realize your provident hand
in our lives and in this world.
(Let us move forward with you.)

July 20

(Ex.14:21-15:1; Ex.15:1,8-10,12,17; Mt.12:46-50)

O that I would be a brother to the Lord -
that I might somehow do the Father's will...

Cast our enemies into the sea, Lord,
that we might sing your praises at dawn.

(A flood of rainwater through the ceiling causes
the department in which my friend works to be closed.)

July 21 (Ex.16:1-5,9-15; Ps.78:18-19,23-28; Mt.13:1-9)

May the grain we yield be as food for all children of light.

Lord, I cannot grumble against you this day,
for though there are troubles,
it is your blessings I hold now in my heart.

(Yes, there are yet problems re the apartment -
the phone has yet to be turned on,
things have yet to be done...
but I begin to see the blessing that it is
and the order it may bring.)

July 22 (Sgs.3:1-4; Ps.63:2-6,8-9; Jn.20:1-2,11-18)

Mary Magdalene.

She found Him whom her heart loves.

She who was once so far away, now draws close and cannot
live without Him, cannot go forth from where He lay -
and she finds Him.

The first to see Jesus is she who loved much -
there is hope for us all.

If the Lord would but speak my name...

(I find a purity in forgiveness,
yet I still struggle
with how to express my love with my friend.)

Jesus, does my heart not love you?
Am I not true?

Deeply plant your word in my soul.

July 23 (Ex.20:1-17; Ps.19:8-11, Jn.6:69; Mt.13:18-23)

(Catholic/Christian) Art on the walls, art in the newspaper,
and in a book...

"You shall not bow down before them or worship them."
We do not do this. (Is this not plain?)

And I continue to fight off the setbacks and persecutions.

And I pray the word of the Lord sink deeply into me
that this ground might produce good fruit.
(And I think I hear Him speak to me.)

O Lord, help me to walk according to your Word.
May your commands be written upon my heart,
and may I love.

July 24 (Ex.24:3-8; Ps.50:1-2,5-6,14-15; Mt.13:24-30)

The blood of the old covenant was that of young bulls and was sprinkled on the altar and upon the people. The blood of the new covenant is Christ's own and as it is sprinkled upon us, and as we drink it, we are healed.

Today I pray for, among others, a man whose lifestyle is against the will of God, hoping that by harvest time he will have changed.

(And I seem to touch heaven, where are the saints and angels, during Holy Hour.)

But, Lord, take my pride from me...
(Prepare me for your coming.)

July 25

(1Kgs.3:5,7-12; Ps.119:57,72,76-77,97,127-130);
Rm.8:28-30; Mt.13:44-52)

Wisdom. The pearl of great price.
To know when to speak and when not to -
and what to say.

Oh that I had such a gift! But I find myself speaking unkindly and unwisely. Though perhaps truthful, there is something less than love and understanding in my speech (especially with the elderly).

And today there are carnivals and circuses, which can be distractions from the kingdom. Though there is room for humor, there is none for frivolity, and uncontrollable laughter cannot be "holy".

Lord, how shall I find the sense of silence I need?
I understand your words;
help me put them into practice.

July 26

(Sir.44:1,10-15; Ps.132:11,13-14,17-18; Mt.13:16-17)

Today on the feast of Sts. Joachim and Ann, we are reminded of the chosen nature of the Jews. But what we hear and see (and taste) in Jesus surpasses this blessing and fulfills it.

It is truly wonderful to know the Lord as intimately, as really, as we do. We indeed taste and see Him and have His words ringing in our ears.

May all come to know Him as He is.

I pray, Lord, that this blessing of yourself you give
will take root in my heart and grow,
purging away all darkness in your way
and in your time.

July 27

(Ex.33:7-11,34:5-9,28; Ps.103:6-13; Mt.13:36-43)

I thank the Lord that He is "kind and merciful",
for I am indeed "stiff-necked"
and would be lost were it not for His patience.

Just last night I looked at my face in the mirror,
remembering my sin and wondering how it could be
that I might enter heaven - but I do believe in
the Lord's forgiving power.

The end shall come;
let us not forget it.

O gracious God, I continue to pray,
"Let your will be done."

Though it bring suffering,
make me more acceptant of your guidance,
for all is well with you.

(Curious note: I live now on the other side of the house
and yard which was the subject of my vision with my sister,
wherein there was a flood of rain and water next door but
the water did not go through the fence into our yard...
There is still a pool next door and my sister's childhood
friend still lives there - and now he is becoming a SCUBA
instructor. (As I spoke with him this night, a friend of
his named "Marina" came by.) What this all means for the
end of the age, I'm not quite sure.)

July 28

(Ex.34:29-35; Ps.99:5-7,9; Mt.13:44-46)

The radiance of God shines like a pearl of great price;
our treasure is in heaven.

(And as the priest points out,
our great treasure is in daily Mass
and the Eucharist.)

Tonight a special on TV about the multiplicity of apparitions
and manifestations of Jesus and Mary, and an investigation
of authenticity. As I see statues and people cry and bleed,
I believe Jesus calls us all to experience the suffering
of the world as our own - as He does.

O Lord, may we indeed awaken
and strive toward your radiance
in heaven.

(No contact at all with friend today -
there is a moving apart...)

July 29

(1Jn.4:7-16; Ps.34:2-11; Jn.11:19-27)

Christ has loved us and has died for us,
and His love brings us everlasting life.

I am graced by God to speak of the Lord and especially
of the eternal life we have in Jesus. I ask a fellow
tutor of the meaning he finds in today's gospel. Jesus
must mean more than coming to life at the end of time -
He says we shall never die if we believe in Him.

I have a wonderful realization that I shall never die.
Though my body may seem to die, yet I shall live.
I know this intellectually, but it became more real -
and the conclusion is, there is nothing to fear.

What joy this fills me with. I am in good humor
and also find opportunity to speak about the
tetragrammaton and the four corners of the universe.

Though we may suffer greatly,
Jesus will always be with us.
We must believe.

Praise God for such confidence in Him and His love.

Come closer, Jesus.

July 30

(Lv.23:1,4-11,15-16,27,34-37; Ps.81:2-6,10-11;
Mt.13:54-58)

We have our feast times, too -
but this is Ordinary Time.

This day is less than ordained and blessed, I'm afraid. Very strange. From doubts plaguing me at morning Mass to my student not being at home (and no message) when I go to tutor to my friend flipping out when I refuse to tutor her after she is an hour late to a guy we were to golf with getting a call that his son needs stitches as we were about to leave to balls flying all over (and close by) as we rush to finish our round to the thunder and darkness on the last several holes... and to conversation with childhood friend about feeling of melancholy we both have experienced at twilight - I can only hope for better, clearer days. (And all this with the heat wave aside.)

Lord, every day I would offer to you.
Make every day blessed in thee.

(Oh yeah, my guitar also sounded out of tune
as I began playing *Songs* again.)

July 31 (Lv.25:1,8-17; Ps.67:2-5,7-8; Mt.14:1-12)

(It doesn't seem to end: this morning I learned that a woman I'd spoken to on the phone (a fellow Eucharistic minister who'd expressed illness) at about noon yesterday is in the hospital in a coma. She was apparently found by her son whom she'd told me was coming by about one o'clock.)

Yet the hope of the Jubilee is still with us,
that we shall be released and return to Him.

And on this day, in keeping with the gospel on Herod's fateful party, alcohol is present at the three places I visit, including a birthday party. But I manage to keep my head.

And Confession this morning does help to set me free.

Lord, maintain my stability, I pray.
I hold out hope for Jubilee.

(And the hottest and driest July in 130 years
of record-keeping is mercifully ending.)

August 1

(Is.55:1-3; Ps.145:8-9,15-18; Rm.8:35,37-39;
Mt.14:13-21)

What a great gift the Eucharist is!
When we come to Him, He feeds us,
providing the nourishment we need with His own Body.
(He can be everywhere in the Bread and Wine.)
This gift keeps us close to Him.

And in the second reading is confirmation of the entry
of a few days ago - nothing shall separate us from Him
and His love, not even death, and so we *shall* live forever.
Despite the trials that came after, this realization stands.
(And my sick fellow Eucharistic minister I'm told is doing
better...)

We bring the Lord to the nursing home today -
He is with us.

Praise you, Lord, for your presence,
for your life and your love.

Help us to love you as you have loved us.

August 2

(Nm.11:4-15; Ps.81:2,12-17; Mt.14:13-21)

(Yesterday's gospel today.)

We must be fed - we must have food.
We are human (of the earth) and we need to eat.
Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are regular events in our lives.

The Lord knows this. He knows we are human.
He knows we need to eat - He made us so.
The Lord is not ignorant of our needs;
Jesus shows this clearly in His compassion...

We must trust in Him, trust in His hand, in His providence,
and not put our stomachs before our souls,
and He who is our Creator will care for all our needs.

Lord, you feed me well,
first of all, in the Eucharist;
secondly, in the bread you provide upon my table.

(I receive Communion... I eat a melon and give bread away...
and get a free meal.)

August 3

(Nm.12:1-13; Ps.51:3-7,12-13; Mt.15:1-2,10-14)

The psalm, not directly applicable this morning,
becomes more relevant by the end of the day.
(There are chinks in my armor.)

And I would that the Lord might cleanse me
and take His scourge from me.

Let me not be blind, dear Lord,
but lead me with your light
through this world of sin.

August 4

(Nm.13:1-2,25-14:1,26-29,34-35;
Ps.106:4,6-7,13-14,21-23; Mt.9:35-10:1)

On this the feast day of St. John Vianney, patron saint of parish priests, it is a most appropriate blessing that my own parish priest should go out of his way to bless my new apartment and hear my Confession. (Vianney himself would hear Confessions 12-16 hours a day - oh how we need a return of this sacrament and its repentance.) It is as if a cleansing shower passes through my place.

And I see how it is that the disciples authority "to expel unclean spirits and to cure sickness and disease of every kind" does continue in the sacraments, especially Confession. (And the same priest says evening Mass.)

Thank you, Lord, for the blessing of priests
and the powers you give them.
May they be blessed and be with you.

(And on the phone I mistakenly, repeatedly (until corrected),
call a priest "John".)

August 5 (Nm.20:1-13; Ps.95:1-2,6-9; Mt.1:18-23)

Have no doubts. Question not the Lord and His will.
Let us not grumble against the ways of our God,
but accept where and to what He calls us.

Would that we were all more acquiescent to the Lord's
commands, that we were all closer to Him and obedient.

Lord, let your word be fulfilled in me.

(Feast of St. Mary Major Basilica.)

August 6

(Dn.7:9-10,13-14; Ps.97:1-2,5-6,9; 2Pt.1:16-19;
Mt.17:1-9)

If you were to see Him where He is, as He is,
in light and glory,
majestic over all...
how could you stand
except that He come
and touch you
and lift you up to Him?

It is too much for this mind to dwell on the majestic
presence of the Lord. How can we imagine it? It is
not possible except by faith and in His will as a child.

We must let His light grow gradually in our souls,
as Peter says, until we come to be with Him eternally.

It is time now for me to rest in Him,
to take something of a vacation.

Lord, my light, shine upon me;
let me breathe with you.

August 7

(Dt.6:4-13; Ps.18:2-4,47,51; Mt.17:14-20)

Faith is the foundation.

(And all we have is of the grace of God.)

Faith. More and more we must find it, we must
build our lives upon it. We must trust in God.

It is so sad that something so important and so natural,
as innocence, is something so far from many of us and
so difficult, it seems, to find.

And to such extent we are limited in our Christian lives.

(In song tonight I try to remember heaven and the angels
and saints (especially Mary), and I see the day and its
theme and its being in the hand of God - in a park by
a lake peace begins to be - always we must be close
to Him and His hand in our lives.)

Lord, let me love you
and know the glory of that love.
(Forgive my shortcomings.)

August 8

(1Kgs.19:9,11-13; Ps.85:8-14; Rm.9:1-5; Mt.14:22-33)

If we are able to be silent before the Lord, we will have such faith as is needed to walk on water. The storm shall not disturb us, and doubt shall be far away.

We are in the midst of a drought. The other day we had a short rain accompanied by thunder and lightning, which, though it frightened some, refreshed and reassured me. Today, there was some light rain this morning and it was dark all day, but no thunder - this quiet I found ominous and rather disturbing.

The Lord's judgment we must accept
and His presence we must know.

Lord, let me not be afraid of you;
increase my faith.

August 9

(Dt.10:12-22; Ps.147:12-15,19-20; Mt.12:22-27)

How can the Temple pay tax unto itself?

(Jesus is the Temple.)

And yet in this as in so many things

Jesus is humble and obedient.

We must be just in this world. (I read today of a pro-life lawyer speaking of the importance of abiding by the laws even as you fight against them.) And so it is most important to feed the hungry, care for the orphans and widows, "to love and serve the Lord, your God."

We must be models of righteousness in all things. So often, I think, we forget we are Christian when we are in secular places. It's as if we think we no longer have to act upright and conscious of God. Today at the golf course I am taught a lesson about Christian charity and thinking of the other person by a young man we are paired with.

Lord, I believe that someday I will control my tongue
and say only what is needed for upbuilding of others -
I believe I will learn not to be so selfish.
And this knowledge of my sin and its potential overcoming
brings me joy.

August 10

(2Cor.9:6-10; Ps.112:1-2,5-9; Jn.12:24-26)

Food and all things are in God's hands -
why is it we fret about them?

On this the feast of St. Lawrence, deacon and martyr, perhaps it is appropriate (or at least I would it were appropriate) that I both read and give Communion - both of which I have been doing with less frequency the past year or two. I would serve as a deacon, if the Lord wills...

It is the laying down of our lives that is the main theme - not thinking of ourselves, giving to others, dying either literally or as the Lord dictates. My state in life is yet uncertain, but whatever it is let it be in Jesus.

Please, Lord, accept the sacrifice of my life.
Let me continue to come closer to you.

August 11 (Phil.3:8-14; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-8,11; Mt.11:25-30)

St. Clare.

Striving toward Christ, even until we die,
joining with Him in this life of sacrifice -
 we shall find peace now
 and come to be with Him eternally.

He is our inheritance.

(I find rest today, though again it is spurred
by tiredness and weakness...)

Lord, if I could but lay my life aside,
 not think of myself,
 then would I find you and your comfort.

(This morning as I switch hands with the Cup after receiving
and preparing to serve others, a small amount of the Blood
jumps from the Cup onto the floor (a rug). I am rather
shocked. After Mass, the priest says there's nothing
to be done, but I stay and when all have left I kneel at
the spot (by the altar) then lie face down upon the carpet
in prayer.)

August 12 (Jos.3:7-11,13-17; Ps.114:1-6; Mt.18:21-19:1)

I seem to be caught in a dichotomous situation: either I sin in a lack of self-control - in lust, selfishness, greed, or laziness - or in an overly strict sense of control - in judgment, pride, anger, and violence. Avoiding the one seems to bring me to the other, and there seems no escape...

I need the Lord's mighty hand to rise above such an earthly cycle, to cross the Jordan River and enter the Promised Land, where a purer light does shine and all such sinfulness is left behind.

Write off my debts, O Lord;
there is no one who owes me anything.
Let me come to the place where your truth doth reign.

August 13

(Jos.24:1-13; Ps.136:1-3,16-18,21-22,24;
Mt.19:3-12)

(Can I accept this teaching?)

On this the day I finish reading *Faith and Reason* and I play *Listening to the Lamp*, including "Whole Philosophy" and the appropriate line from "Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder": "Imagine your senses. Now imagine new sense." - considering John Paul's exhortation to philosophy to go beyond the empirical to the metaphysical - I have a dream with the Pope.

This morning as I have trouble waking I dream of the Pope playing sports in a square then sitting to one side. I decide to try to get close to him to speak with him, so I assume to play the sports and work my way toward him. As I get there, he says to me, with some consternation, "Aren't you going to read (lector)?" for a current ceremony/Mass.

Having awoke late, I go to a later Mass at another church, and oddly enough I am asked to read. It is true I have read there once or twice - having known one of the priests - and the woman who asked is a little familiar with me, yet it was unusual and rather poetic, except for the fly which wouldn't leave me. (I did not harm him though.)

The day is also marked by a dispute with my friend regarding her judgment in adding a room to her apartment. She is now walling up the opening we spent months working on and trying another tack with, I'm afraid, little security from the owner.

Lord, your wisdom give us,
for it is upon you we rely.

(May I find my station in life.)

August 14 (Jos.24:14-29; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-8,11; Jn.15:9-17)

(The weekly gospel had the little children coming to Jesus; the gospel (of pastors) we heard has Jesus exhorting the disciples to love one another and lay down their lives.)

Upon the heels of yesterday's gospel I find it apropos to be sitting between a married woman with children and a priest (between kneelers even) during Holy Hour. I remember how I am so often in the middle, a kind of peacemaker, and as I am it is so. I am neither married nor ordained, but have sympathy and can pray for both (as I do during Holy Hour). It occurs to me I can continue as I am in the middle, or also be in the middle by marrying and becoming a deacon. But I know not if there is time for that.

I play *Bearing the Birth Pangs* tonight - I am finding greater confidence - including a song with lines from today's gospel: "love one another" and "friends".

Joshua dies today resolved to follow the Lord.
I pray I shall do as much.

Keep us from the temptations of this world, O Lord,
and committed to your command to love.

August 15

(Rv.11:19,12:1-6,10; Ps.45:10-12,16; 1Cor.15:20-27;
Lk.1:39-56)

The Assumption.

How shall all come to bless Mary and love Mary and be in right relationship with Mary? Why should the Mother of my Lord be a cause of such division? (I suppose she is no different than Jesus in this respect.)

The new Adam has His new Eve. Why should anyone doubt that He would have her whom He set aside from the beginning of time by His side now?

Perhaps it is because so few (including myself) are as pure as she and so able to fathom and perform God's will.

How shall I find such purity?

Lord, how shall I come to be with you
and your Blessed Mother
in the heavenly kingdom?

I am so weak,
but you give me hope.

August 16

(Jgs.2:11-19; Ps.106:4,34-37,39-40,43-44;
Mt.19:16-22)

To follow the Lord so closely is, I suppose, not for everyone. To be a disciple who gives up all in this life - who essentially lives the life of poverty, chastity, and obedience - is for those who can hear it and keep it.

The peoples of the world flounder so much. We are so weak. I do not know how these shall come into the kingdom...

The priest sums up this morning saying that it is not money that keeps us from the kingdom (or how could Stephen of Hungary be a saint); it is attachment - the point is to do God's will whatever our call. I continue to search and question, try and fail and try again to find the Lord's love and its fulfillment in my life.

Lord, I would not be sad if you took all my possessions,
if this were your will.
What is difficult is knowing clearly what it is you desire.
Perhaps it is my own sin and weakness -
help me to find you.

August 17 (Jgs.6:11-24; Ps.85:9,11-14; Mt.19:23-30)

We must give up all things, be attached to no thing, to find Jesus and the kingdom. Nothing of this world must hold us. And we must not return to such distractive attachment to idols as did the Israelites, though God is a forgiving God and wishes peace upon His people.

And today the young man who has been closest to being a son to me leaves to go away to college on a long bus trip (still traveling now). His leaving brings many tears from his family. It is not easy to think of such separation.

Yet this is an example of how we must be toward Christ - ready to leave all behind, not in disdain toward others but in love, straining forward in patience and in pain to find Him. It is a kind of death we must suffer, but it leads to life.

Lord, please watch over this young man,
and bring *this* young(?) man into your presence.

August 18 (Jgs.9:6-15; Ps.21:2-7; Mt.20:1-16)

First of all, Jesus is King.
He alone does as He pleases,
for He alone is good.

The priest this morning (in neighboring church) gives a wonderful homily on God's justice and how, mingled as it is with mercy, it goes beyond mere legality. God's justice brims over with compassion, and so must our own.

How true it is that God does not judge as we judge.
How much we must be ready to give of ourselves.
How I am convicted of my lack of generosity.

(I spend some money today on necessities.)

Lord, teach me to give rightly
and without judgment.

August 19

(Jgs.11:29-39; Ps.40:5,7-10; Mt.22:1-14)

A warning. This is what the priest calls today's gospel.
And this is what I find in a dream the night before.

Last night a disturbing dream ends as I find myself in
a hell-like place where people invite me to carouse with
a drink they raise. The Lord saves me from there, but I
wake worried about my own salvation. I think of a terrible
earthquake which has shattered Turkish cities this week
(a tragedy I have not prayed about enough) and what would
happen were it to happen here - and I am fearful, knowing
I am not ready. I yet lack the proper wedding garment.

The day does improve from this fearful start,
but yet must I be diligent.

Lord, you accept me and my Confession;
may your healing be complete.

(Note: As I tried to explain yesterday's (and today's)
gospel and sermon to my friend, I unconsciously moved
through a red light (delayed green). The officer directly
behind me pulled me over. He exemplified the justice
of God by understanding my mistake and not giving me
a ticket. (May I be so fortunate on judgment day.))

August 20

(Ruth 1:1,3-6,14-16,22; Ps.146:2,5-10; Mt.22:34-40)

Love covers all laws and makes us sons of God.

Such love Ruth had, to give up all and follow her
mother-in-law. Such love we all must have to follow God.

On this cross of love for God and neighbor
we find our lives.

(On this day my friend goes away again,
and I begin recording (again) *Songs for Children of Light.*)

What shall my love be?
How shall I follow you, Lord?
(Let it be.)

(Today there is a praying mantis on my sister's headstone.)

August 21 (Ruth 2:1-3,8-11,4:13-17; Ps.128:1-5; Mt.23:1-12)

I see more clearly this morning how priests are extensions of Christ Himself. Christ is first and the foundation, and no one is His equal; first in silence God is, then in the Blessed Sacrament He becomes present, and in the priests He finds an instrument, as well as in all of us and all that serves to make Him known...

The eternity beyond this world where God dwells I touch on a train ride to New York to purchase tapes, and in the blessed recording of *Songs* - which ever seems to build into eternity, no time passing...

And the blessed Ruth is as Mary, leaving her father's house to become the king's bride - and how Boaz shows forth the hospitality awaiting those who come to the true God.

Lord, you save me.
Let your blessings remain.

August 22

(Is.22:19-23; Ps.138:1-3,6,8; Rm.11:33-36;
Mt.16:13-20)

The Lord chooses whom He will,
and He has chosen Peter.

A couple of young men, Jehovah's Witnesses, come to my door today and I witness to them, with love and in humility, of the Catholic Church and its designation by Christ through Peter as His own.

We speak of the many churches and the many interpretations of the Bible, and they ask me how you can know which to follow. I tell them of the unbroken succession of Popes from Peter to this day and the power they have been given.

And today there are baptisms during Mass. And despite what seemed a lacking of faith by some family and friends, yet the Holy Spirit was present to bless the children. And they are welcomed as new members of the community.

Jesus, thank you for providing a guide for us;
thank you for sharing with us your body
and your life.

Keep us one with you.
(And bless our Pope.)

August 23

(1Thes.1:2-5,8-10; Ps.149:1-6,9; Mt.23:13-22)

The Lord speaks with power today against the blindness of the Pharisees, and I would do the same to that of the Protestants - as even I speak with a priest of evangelizing today.

The first reading makes quite clear that it is not primarily by the written Word - Scripture - that the gospel is spread, but by the spoken word. And this spoken word is nothing less than Tradition in action. Scripture is not the primary (or sole) source of doctrine and teaching - the living, breathing, spoken word in the mouths of the apostles and saints of the Church, living in each of us - that which is the Holy Spirit - is the source of teaching, of doctrine, of truth.

Scripture is indeed sacred and serves well for instruction, but one cannot remove the instructor Himself - God's Spirit working in the Church.

We are founded upon the apostles.
What man has founded your church?
What idea has crossed his mind?

A crown awaits us.
(St. Rose of Lima, pray for us.)

Lord, be in your Church;
fill it with your presence.

August 24

(Rv.21:9-14; Ps.145:10-13,17-18; Jn.1:45-51)

St. Bartholomew.

Yes, the apostles are the foundation stones of the kingdom.
Those who know the Lord know them, too.

As I await my friend's call upon her return from a five-day journey, to find out if she may have met someone she might marry, I remember that this is the feast day of the name I have suggested for her son - Nathaniel, he in whom there is no guile.

And the Lord seems to convey to me at Mass this morning that He will bless me soon. (I know not how.)

Lord, may the apostles pray for us
and may we be guided by their teaching,
which is your own.

August 25

(1Thes.2:9-13; Ps.139:1,7-12; Mt.23:27-32)

On this the feast of St. Louis the great king who ruled with compassion and Christian love, it is somehow apropos that a television report on Peru's policy of forced sterilization as a means of birth control sparks controversy: my friend agrees with the sentiment of sterilization for poor peasant women who have many kids and can't take care of them - and I am shocked. Her worldly reasonings ring similar to abortion defense (though this she opposes), and I begin to see how those separated from the Catholic Church, its teaching and sacraments, lack the strength to maintain a spiritual way of thinking. This carnal mind is evident in inability to see beyond the statue a Catholic prays before, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist (calling us cannibals), and so many other things. I chastise her as Christ would a Pharisee. (She is also in a car accident today.)

Lord, bring all your children into communion with your Church
and your way.

August 26

(1Thes.3:7-13; Ps.90:3-4,12-14,17; Mt.24:42-51)

The Lord's warnings seem appropriate considering the monsoon rains we had over an hour or two this morning before Mass. It is evident to me that we must *always* be ready, that Jesus is always knocking at the door, is always coming. (What a day that will be!)

And how inappropriate Paul's praise of the Thessalonians seems with regard to my friend/brother/former charismatic prayer partner whom I had lost contact with over the past year or so and whom, I found out today, has divorced his wife (with four kids) and remarried - all in the last six months. It is a shock. (I pray for his soul and the well-being of his wife and children.)

There is an observation here: this sort of thing has become so common that even the religious begin to accept it as status quo. We are in great danger of losing all our bearings.

When will words such as Paul's be able to be said
about us, O Lord?
When will your Church become ready for you?

August 27

(1Thes.4:1-8; Ps.97:1-2,5-6,10-12; Mt.25:1-13)

Paul's exhortation to the Thessalonians to avoid immorality and find holiness seems particularly appropriate on this the feast of St. Monica, who through prayer guided her son from his own immorality to becoming a saint and great doctor of the Church.

It is appropriate also that the Mass intention is for a young man who was a contemporary of mine who died, I believe, because of drugs (family members in attendance), and that a long-suffering mother of another of like kind is in attendance, and that I should pray for my own brother in the Lord today who seems to have strayed so from the fold - and that I continue to struggle with making progress (title for autobiography comes from first reading), especially regarding immorality.

Lord, help me to pray and believe that I, as well as others,
may escape sin
and come to your wedding feast.

August 28

(1Thes.4:9-12; Ps.98:1,7-9; Mt.25:14-30)

On the day Paul exhorts us to work quietly and Jesus speaks the parable of the ten talents, I finish recording *Songs for Children of Light* one more time. (*Bearing the Birth Pangs* done, in keeping with end times readings we've been hearing.) And I conceive during Holy Hour the book I need to put together for a class this fall - I will use *Songs* as the foundation for a language text, each album serving as a separate thematic chapter in a conceptual whole. (And I will have the music as a supplement.) May the Lord bless this idea and allow it to bear fruit.

Lord, make me industrious and fruitful
in working in your garden -
may all the talents you give to me
be blessed in practice this day.

August 29

(Jer.20:7-9; Ps.63:2-6,8-9; Rm.12:1-2;
Mt.16:21-27)

How our minds must be transformed, as Peter's, from concerns for this world and this life to the laying down of this life, as Jeremiah does, for the sake of the *eternal* life of heaven.

So much so of late in the readings and in discussions this distinction is becoming clear - there is the life of the body and there is the life of the soul, and it is better the body die than the soul be sacrificed. It would be better for me (or a brother or anyone) to die than to commit and live in a mortal sin.

And how right the priest is this morning in preaching that we need a new Jeremiah to cry out the truth in these times without morality.

Lord, help us.

Help us to be convicted and thoroughly grounded
in the truth of your kingdom.

(I speak again today with Jehovah's Witnesses, who may return again. May the Lord give me a mouth and wisdom.)

August 30

(1Thes.4:13-18; Ps.96:1,3-5,11-13; Lk.4:16-30)

They could not touch Him; they could not hurt Him because He did not will it so. And so through their midst He walked until it would be His time. And soon now He will come to judge the earth; may we all be found waiting for Him.

There is so much sin, Lord;
how shall we be made ready for that day.
Let your grace and mercy be upon us,
and let us walk close to you.

August 31 (1Thes.5:1-6,9-11; Ps.27:1,4,13-14; Lk.4:31-37)

May the Lord cleanse all unclean spirits
from all children of light.

Amen, Lord.
We need your authority and light
to take hold on this earth.

(Down the shore where the waves do rage from the hurricane
well out at sea - there to visit divorced friend's wife
and kids. The light of Christ be with all.)

September 1 (Col.1:1-8; Ps.52:10-11; Lk.4:38-44)

May the Lord heal us all
and make us faithful Christians.

Feeling a little ill this morning, I pray to the Lord
for strength. Today is the first day back to school
and, to some extent, work, and it feels well to be
up and about.

Lord, take my work and my studies -
make me fruitful in your name.
Give me your blessings as you pass this way.

September 2 (Col.1:9-14; Ps.98:2-6; Lk.5:1-11)

May I be caught in Jesus' net
and come somehow to "perfect wisdom
and spiritual insight."

Lord, forgive me my sins
and give me knowledge of your will.

(I accidentally smash my finger this night -
may be a punishment for sin.)

September 3

(Col.1:15-20; Ps.100:1-5; Lk.5:33-39)

Jesus, He in whom "everything" resides, speaks the truth of the new covenant to the bearers of the old even as it fades away, attempting to instruct them in its way. We must allow the Lord to lead us to a new place.

The Lord is merciful to me today. I was up all night (literally) with throbbing pain in my injured thumb; I went to the emergency room in the middle of the night. Fortunately, the doctor told me what to do - poke a hole in my nail to allow the blood out - and I was able to treat myself and get to sleep, finally, at 6:30 a.m.

Then, in rather great need of Confession, I found a priest after an 11:30 Mass at one church and made 12:30 Mass at another... The Lord, in whom all is, watches over us.

Lord, I thank you for your grace and mercy.
I pray I shall somehow come to know
your awesome presence as it is.

Make my skin ready for your wine.

September 4 (Col.1:21-23; Ps.54:3-4,6,8; Lk.6:1-5)

The Son of Man is Lord of life and death and all else that comes between - nothing on this earth or in heaven is outside His rule. And so He is able to save us.

A tired day. But the Lord in His providence and in response to my prayer saves me from further sin - I could not "hold fast" without Him.

Lord, awaken my conscience
and found me in your way.

(Of late, I have been suffering some financial trials,
the reason why I am not quite clear about.)

September 5

(Ez.33:7-9; Ps.95:1-2,6-9; Rm.13:8-10;
Mt.18:15-20)

I try to warn the two Jehovah Witnesses who come into my home today. As they leave I entreat them, pouring out my heart in its sadness, commending their service of witnessing but telling them of their going against the Church and Truth.

After they leave, I am most sad as the problem of disunity comes to the fore again. It is some months since I've visited my friend's church and so awareness of Christian division has not been so evident - but today it returns.

We must pray in faith for the Holy Spirit to act,
and He shall.

Jesus, unite us in your love.
Reveal yourself to all
in all your glory.

September 6

(Gn.1:26-2:3; Ps.90:2-4,12-14,16; Mt.6:31-34)

Labor Day.

In the beginning man was as a child, faithful and without worry, trusting in God without having even to think about it. The perfection of the Lord was with us and we were one with Him and His creation. (I think of this even on way to Mass this morning.)

It is only as a child that we shall enter the kingdom of heaven, whose doors Christ opens for us. (And, in application to my schooling, my work, it is as a child we best come to learn a language, that special gift of speech the Lord affords us humans.)

May the Lord grant success to the work of our hands as we give all things over to Him for His blessing, and so in this way may our path to the kingdom be paved.

Lord, into your hands I commend all I am and do;
make me as your child of light.

September 7

(Col.2:6-15; Ps.145:1-2,8-11; Lk.6:12-19)

(I am writing this the morning of the 8th in a chapel
in a Catholic hospital.)

I have much to say - may I say it well.

Last night I was favored by the Lord to experience a kind of dark night of the soul - a terrible fever was upon me. But the Lord taught me something of the joy of suffering, of the spiritual pleasure one may find in uniting physical pain to His cross. It may be said to be pleasure-filled not because one likes the pain but because of two reasons; the first is that it is purgatorial. In accepting the pain and laying down my life through it, I am blessed to know my sins and to find repentance for them, and so cleansing by the Lord. The second is more significant; it involves a sharing in the cross of Christ. In essence, we may suffer not only for ourselves, but also for others. In either case, it is not really we who suffer but Jesus who takes our pain, who suffers in our place. When we accept this, what joy can fill us. For then we rise above the pain and are seated, or crucified, with Jesus.

Several Scriptures come to mind and many events of the day are relevant.

I think of the thief on the cross who realized he was being punished rightly and accepted it, whereas the other thief fought against the pain. Here I would like to make a point much involved with my suffering, and that is the acceptance of it in the rejection of any kind of pain killers. It is most evident that in this day and age people will go to great lengths to avoid pain. Drugs which would mask the pain but do little to heal the problem are prevalent throughout society. One can find temporary relief in medicine or tea or this or that, but I believe it most necessary to go *through* the pain, face the pain. (This belief caused disagreement with my friend.) A line from one of my songs comes to mind: "Darkness falls upon me and surrounds me... Let it dominate the circumstance. Do not run away. Do not hide away. Face the fears and let it take the evil from your heart." I believe there is support for this in the fact that Jesus refused the hyssop <actually, the drugged wine> which might have eased His pain on the cross.

Yesterday I spoke with one sick, medicine-taking friend about this and had intercourse with several other ailing people. (One blessed encounter had an elderly Jewish woman standing over me imitating her mother, saying, "God will take of you.")

There is so much to write of this, perhaps in a separate work. (I have already, for the first time, gone beyond a page - curious, since a book I was studying with a student spoke of transgressing the boundaries in teaching.) I will end by thanking the Lord for allowing me to share in His cross.

Lord, help us to accept our crosses
and lay down our lives
under your light burden.

(Addendum: A diagram of Dante's trilogy -
spendthrifts in hell, ice and fire...
A book on chastity - may the suffering cleanse me.
A compliment from a fellow student for standing
by my faith.
All things seem to coincide today.)

September 8

(Rm.8:28-30; Ps.13:6,Is.61:9; Mt.1:18-23)

Birth of Mary.

She was predestined. She was called. She was justified.
She is glorified.

We thank the Lord today for the special grace
of the Blessed Mother's existence.

(I wish I were able to better celebrate,
but my illness has weakened me.)

May she who is glorified at the side of the Lord
pray for our souls in this world.

Lord, let us not be exposed to the law
but be called by you.

(Cup, chalice, and Grail spoken of today -
Mary is the Grail which holds the Lord.)

September 9

(Col.3:12-17; Ps.150:1-6; Lk.6:27-38)

Though the readings are those for the day (as the priest mentions this morning), they are most appropriate for the feast of St. Peter Claver. This "slave of the negroes" truly reflects the love of Christ which breaks all boundaries in his work with those most oppressed and dehumanized.

Today, too, I am brought to tears in class while viewing a video including Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech. This man made real the teachings of Jesus. His love of his enemies is evident in his humble manner while seeking justice.

We have come a way, but there is much left and much to be made straight. As a letter from a Brotherhood I get today says, "Jesus is the answer to the real needs of the world." Amen. May we work to achieve these ends in Him.

Lord, bless us with laborers
who give their lives
for your righteousness
and truth.

Renew the face of the earth
and cast all darkness from us.

September 10

(1Tm.1:1-2,12-14; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-8,11;
Lk.6:39-42)

O, I am attempting to remove the log from my eye, and the Lord is providing sufficient grace to sustain me in this effort. The most special grace is to understand the difficulties and consequences of this struggle, and to be patient with myself and my situation. In essence, it is to see the plank in my own eye and what needs to be done to remove it. Other planks may crop up - as I seek to become chaste, I may have to control my anger - but with Christ, in time, step by step, we can overcome them all.

And it is not so much at others I should look as at myself. And so I seek to take responsibility for my sin.

My illness I pray shall be a catalyst for growth.

Thank you, Lord, for opening my eyes -
strengthen me as I try to leave sin behind.
May I be your wise student.

September 11 (1Tm.1:15-17; Ps.113:1-7; Lk.6:43-49)

Putting into practice the words of the Lord.

It is become God's great grace to me
for me to know my sin,
for me to renounce my sin,
for me to lose my sin
by the blood of Jesus,
and to become a new man,
working with all my life to serve Him.

Such great joy I know on this beautiful day
after Mass and Confession and Holy Hour,
and feeling well again physically...

May the blessings the Lord has given me remain with me.

There is a day coming, I know, Lord,
when all the darkness of this world will be gone.
Prepare us for that day.

(Deer frolic at the golf course.)

September 12

(Sir.27:30-28:9; Ps.103:1-4,8-12; Rm.14:7-9;
Mt.18:21-35)

We must not judge; we must forgive.
We must remember the Lord's great kindness to us
in forgiving our debts against Him, and we must
reflect that mercy to others. It is quite simple,
yet we find ourselves failing in this regard.

The saying goes, "To err is human, to forgive divine,"
and part of that erring seems to be an inclination to
judge others, as if we were God. But if we were God,
or at least godly, we would not judge as we presume
to do, for it is so that to *forgive* is divine.

Help us to reflect your mercy toward others, Lord,
to practice it daily in our lives.
Help us to let go of the condemnation bug.

September 13

(1Tm.2:1-8; Ps.28:2,6-9; Lk.7:1-10)

In peace with all we would live, if we had but faith.
For faith allows us to transcend all things and to
become one with Jesus, and if one with Jesus,
then one with all and, so, at peace.

And all our prayers would be answered.

Lord, bless all those in positions of power
that the earth might know of your presence.

(Today I seek to use prayer in learning a language,
but I am not sufficiently collected.)

September 14

(Nm.21:4-9; Phil.2:6-11; Ps.78:1-2,7,34-39;
Jn.3:13-17)

He has come down from heaven;
He has been nailed to a cross;
He has been lifted up for all to see -
He is our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Between earth and heaven there is a cross
which spans the two
and serves for us as a ladder to the lights
which shine in the firmament...
Jesus is that Cross.

(The insights discovered last week are particularly
relevant today - by suffering we come to know God.
And is my friend a cross I must carry?)

Lord, may I not be separated from your holy cross,
that your glory might never escape me.

September 15

(Heb.5:7-9; Ps.31:2-6,15-17,20; Lk.2:33-35)

My downfall is upon me today, and I would cry out to God in tears for my sin. It is not the sorrow of the cross of Christ that I share with the Blessed Mother, as it should be; it is the pain of my own sin.

It is Christ's sufferings we should be sharing, brothers and sisters! It is this that should be driving our lives. Let us be one with the angels and the saints, and the Blessed Mother.

How shall we find our way to you, O Lord,
through the darkness of this world.

(Our foes press on from every side;
in Him we must take refuge.)

September 16

(1Tm.4:12-16; Ps.111:2,7-10; Lk.7:36-50)

Confession this morning... So much has been remitted for me by the Lord - but yet do I fall short of the great love I need to show.

How I wish I could make Paul's words to Timothy my own, to watch my life and watch my work. To be pure, to be righteous and loving - and to attend to my duties well. How clear this instruction is, and yet how far...

And how like Simon I am.

Forgive me, Lord.
Where is my love?
How shall I express it?

Help me.

(Hurricane skirts our shores today.)

September 17

(1Tm.6:2-12; Ps.49:6-10,17-20,Mt.5:3;
Lk.8:1-3)

"Assisting them out of their means."

"Provided one is content with sufficiency."

"Love of money is the root of all evil."

"No way can a man redeem himself,
or pay a ransom to God."

The readings today clearly speak of the evils greed will bring and the blessing of trusting in God's providence.

Two masses today. This evening we are visited by a blessed priest from His Love Ministries, and the word for the day is "love" - and how I need it. The Holy Spirit, the loving Spirit, is very much present at Mass and after Mass as I catch for the priest and am slain myself.

Love, not money.

O Lord, answer my prayer for love, true love,
your love to fill my days.

September 18

(1Tm.6:13-16; Ps.100:2-5; Lk.8:4-15)

"Perseverance."

Sometimes it seems so hard. Sometimes the questions and difficulties seem insurmountable. It sometimes seems in waiting that the Lord will never come. And my stomach grows nervous, and trepidation fills my heart, and I fear a fall - and I find it.

I am one of the weak.
For all the blessings the Lord gives me,
yet I do fail to find Him.

Yet I have faith that He shall come,
and somehow I will come to be with Him.

Lord, leave me not alone in this world,
subject to its temptations and fears.
Help me to make it through to you.

September 19

(Is.55:6-9; Ps.145:2-3,8-9,17-18;
Phil.1:20-24,27; Mt.20:1-16)

In the final hour, at the last moment, I turn to the Lord again - and He hears me, and He heals me. How patient can He be with one whose thoughts are so far from His own?

Lord, let me know that it is not too late
to turn to you
to be forgiven
and to work in your vineyard.

September 20

(Ez.1:1-6; Ps.126:1-6; Lk.8:16-18)

How remarkable that this pagan king recognizes God and orders the temple rebuilt, with the generous help of the Gentile peoples. It seems a truly joyful moment which foreshadows the coming of the New Jerusalem, when such joy will find perfection. (The reading shows that all are children of God.)

Afflicted with a cold, it is difficult to shine my light today - but perhaps it shines more so than usual, when I am ever anxious about its beams.

I always think of *Songs* when I hear this reading and how this light does not seem to shine.
(Someday?)

O Lord, let my light shine, somehow.

September 21 (Eph.4:1-7,11-13; Ps.19:2-5; Mt.9:9-13)

There is something about Jesus' words which lie beyond explanation for their truth and perfect beauty and love... Those with whom He eats, He feeds.

And on this the feast of St. Matthew we are reminded that the Church continues to be built by those gifted so by God, until it should reach perfect stature and unity with Christ. (That has yet to happen, and so we still have need of "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.")

O Lord, let your message go out to the ends of the earth,
and let us be formed in perfection with you.

(Another terrible earthquake kills thousands, in Taiwan;
and our water is not drinkable because of last week's storm,
which took the homes of many.)

September 22

(Ez.9:5-9; Tb.13:1-4,6-8; Lk.9:1-6)

To be raised from the dead we must first die; to be saved from our sinfulness we must first recognize our sin; to have power over this world we must first leave its confines, its trappings.

How well Ezra models what our prayer should be - it has the characteristics of honesty, of humility before God, and of hopeful expectation and praise. He unpacks his heart with words which clearly express his situation, his (and Israel's) sinfulness and need for redemption... and answer to his prayer is suggested.

And, too, the apostles must die, they must leave all of the world behind, to find power in Christ over the evils all around.

Lord, help us to recognize and acknowledge
our sinfulness before you,
that we might obtain blessing and strength
for our lives.

(It is a cold, dark day, but there is promise of better weather... And I contemplate more so how difficulties, such as my illnesses, could be blessings to be thankful for, and how we must accept all that God gives - death being the ultimate and most challenging example - in Him and not be afraid or run away.)

September 23

(Hag.1:1-8; Ps.149:1-6,9; Lk.9:7-9)

God first, and all else is joy.
(Believe.)

Lord, that it would be so.

September 24

(Hag.1:15-2:9; Ps.43:1-5; Lk.9:18-22)

The Catholic Church shall be built again. This is the clear message I find in the readings. Despite the darkness which is upon it now, despite how it has stumbled and begun to crumble - yet it has the faith which Peter possesses, yet it has the rock upon which it is built... and it shall be built again. After these sufferings, it shall rise.

And I begin to see more clearly that it is She alone whom I can trust, She alone whom I can truly love - She alone whom I can marry. There is none else to whom Her purity can be compared.

O Lord, save me from my sin
and let me rise again
with your people.

September 25 (Zec.2:5-9,14-15; Jer.31:10-13; Lk.9:43-45)

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

(In the day of the Lord we shall sing in His glory;
after this day of sorrow, great joy shall follow.

I seem today to have separated from my friend.)

September 26

(Ez.18:25-28; Ps.25:4-9; Phil.2:1-11;
Mt.21:28-32)

The decision to part with my friend seems to be confirmed today as the priest, in accord with the readings, speaks of sometimes having to make U-turns in our lives - and encouraging us to do so. It is most wise not to put yourself in the way of temptation, to turn from its way - and if we are not "united in heart", what hope have we.

Again, into the Lord's hands I commend my spirit
and my life,
and pray for all to be blessed by Him.

(And I am left to consider what other U-turns
may need to be made.)

Lord, thank you for your justice,
which is fair,
and which refreshes our souls -
and helps to keep us alive.

Let your will be done.

September 27 (Zec.8:1-8; Ps.102:16-23,29; Lk.9:46-50)

Children in Zion... in heaven.

But I have on my soul the leading astray of a child,
my friend, and I know not where I shall turn.

I cry for this sin an hour on end, and seek resolution in
my heart and actions. (Today I consider and move towards
leaving school and my assistantship, to continue my U-turn.)

What shall come of me, O Lord?
How shall I find your way?

I pray you hear me as I beseech you,
as I cry out.

September 28

(Zec.8:20-23; Ps.87:1-7,Zec.8:23; Lk.9:51-56)

God is with us, His home is within His Church
and His people,
and we pray He shall dwell with all.

How I would that my friend would take hold of the edge
of my garment and beseech knowledge of my Catholic home,
of the true mountain of God's people. How I wish all
would flow there, led by a blessed Pope such as we are
blessed with. But let us not call fire down on those
who would not. Let us move on, praying and working.

Estoy triste y confundido. My U-turns are growing U-turns
and I feel myself going in a circle, not knowing where
to get off. The resolution of separation from my friend
seems not to stand, and I cannot decide to quit school.

O Lord, let me find my home in you.

September 29

(Dn.7:9-10,13-14; Ps.138:1-5; Jn.1:47-51)

The Archangels.

I pray it is blessed that I continue my studies and that my relationship with my friend continues as well. There is something of a sign about the former: after leaving director of graduate studies office having informed him that I would continue, I worked with a student from Sri Lanka, a Buddhist who had some exposure to the Catholic Church. About halfway through the tutoring session, conversation turned to religion and he asked me several questions re the Church and Christ. This instruction lasted the remainder of the hour and beyond as he listened with attention to my responses.

If I can keep God first, all He gives me may be blessed.

Be near me, O Lord.

(And might the gospel about Nathaniel be a sign re the latter?)

September 30

(Neh.8:1-12; Ps.19:8-11; Lk.10:1-12)

Upon hearing the first reading and the psalm I thought they might have been the proper readings for today the feast of St. Jerome. It seemed quite appropriate to hear of Ezra opening the scroll before all the people and reading the book of the law of Moses (and interpreting its meaning for them).

But perhaps more appropriate for the day is Jesus' sending out the disciples in poverty to proclaim His coming, because I read, too, an article on voluntary poverty written by a couple who give their lives working with the poor, and because this remains an unfulfilled ideal for me - one which I thought to attempt to find by quitting school and the search for a job inherent to it.

Shall I ever give my life entirely to the service of the Lord?

Lord, let me remain in prayer with you
that I might not cease ever to seek your will.

(Thank you for answering my prayers today.)

October 1 (Is.66:10-14; Ps.131:1-3; Mt.18:1-4)

St. Theresa of the Child Jesus,
and we hear of the importance
of being as a child,
of taking quiet comfort in the Lord's presence -
of bowing humbly before Him.

In prayer we must come as a child, honestly and innocently
confessing our sins and asking in faith and with tears for
His guidance.

He leads all His children.

O Lord, let me sleep in peace with you
after the trials of this day are done.
(Mommy, help me find the Lord's peace.)

(I wish I could take rest at my friend's breast.)

October 2

(Ex.23:20-23; Ps.91:1-6,10-11; Mt.18:1-5,10)

On this the feast of the Guardian Angels, after Mass and having come from Confession, I pray to the Blessed Mother in the presence of Jesus during Holy Hour. She confirms that the great sin of abortion shall end "soon." I ask her about the Church and she tells me that change will come when they (members) want it. I interpret this to mean the Church is always here and faithful; it is the individual members who must turn to God to be renewed. I ask also about Christian unity, but she is silent - she cannot answer...

I believe that in this time when man is most trusting in himself and his own powers, when science and technology amaze the world and seem to be able to do all things - in this time and after the great horrors we have seen throughout this century and are now viewing every day on the news... at this time God will intervene. He will come and work such things by *His* power that the human mind cannot even imagine it - and the world will never be the same.

With the angels' blessing and guidance may the Christian era of peace be ushered in by the Hand of God.

Lord, let thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

(And after repeated entreaty (she is silent at first)
the Mother tells me of my friend - "She will convert."
Perhaps with the rest of the world and Church.)

October 3

(Is.5:1-7; Ps.80:9,12-16,19-20,Is.5:7; Phil.4:6-9;
Mt.21:33-43)

Do we produce good fruit? (And do I?)

Priest (visiting) speaks very well today of the danger of our losing our place in the Church and as the Church if we are not faithful producers of fruit. Historically, when members of the Church have not been faithful, the Church has suffered, most notably being fractured as in the Great Schism and the Protestant Reformation. And now we are suffering again.

May the Lord indeed intervene.

(And I am convicted, too, of not living up to my call.)

Soon, I pray, O Lord -
soon.

(I believe it is upon us.
I am finding faith, and hope for truth.)

October 4 (Jon.1:1-2:1,11; Jon.2:2-5,7-8; Lk.10:25-37)

The Lord challenges us, challenges us to love,
challenges us to enter the heavenly gates.

For the second time in less than a week it is remarkable that the gospel could not have been better picked for the feast day - though it is Ordinary. Today as we commemorate St. Francis of Assisi we hear of the compassion of the Samaritan - there have been few with greater compassion than Francis.

But I am more like Jonah... and I am especially worried about our administrator who seems very anxious and concerned of late. I am worried about him and pray for him. And I am anxious myself, losing control in the traffic as I travel to school this morning, taking it out on my friend.

O Lord, pour your oil and wine
into our wounds of despair -
heal us with your compassion
and help us all to love.

October 5

(Jon.3:1-10; Ps.130:1-4,7-8; Lk.10:38-42)

There is a kind of forgiveness today, a kind of redemption.

I thought to go to another church to avoid Mass with our administrator, who will ellipse the gospel and rush the Mass, but I went as usual to our parish. And I found - even as I prayed for forgiveness and peace and release from my own anxiety - that he had slowed down a bit (even a fellow parishioner remarked so) and did not presume any abridgements... Yet I have a long way to go to overcome my anxieties, and I am sure he does as well. We must learn to consistently keep God first and be humble before him.

O Lord, help us, please -
let thy will be done
and let us trust in you.

October 6

(Jon.4:1-11; Ps.86:3-6,9-10,15; Lk.11:1-4)

We should always say "your kingdom come," and let His will be done in our lives. This is what Jonah misses.

And he misses, too, the need for compassion and forgiveness central to the Lord's prayer and to the Lord Himself. How beautifully He conveys this to Jonah through the short-lived plant and the long-standing nation of Ninevah - *God cares for all His creatures*, and we must do the same.

Teach us your ways, Lord,
and help us to live them.

October 7 (Gal.4:4-7; Lk.1:46-55; Lk.1:26-38)

Born of a woman, Jesus has come amongst us as a sure sign, an undeniable witness to truth - a living embodiment of God's love.

A rather blessed event today: several workers at my office profess their faith in Christ to a young woman whose belief has waned. It was very poignant, very beautiful evangelization. And I am left to wonder at God's blessing of those who surround me.

And on this Our Lady of the Rosary feast day my beginning the rosary in chapel is most sincere and clear and blessed... (Would it were always so.)

Jesus, reveal yourself to the nations,
may all your children come to you
who are our brother and Lord.

October 8

(Jl.1:13-15,2:1-2; Ps.9:2-3,6,8-9,16; Lk.11:15-26)

Weeping. I spend time weeping in the darkness this night. Weeping for my sin, weeping for the darkness which surrounds us and longing for the light. (I find refuge in these tears.)

And I think of Jesus' words: "If a man loves me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love Him, and we will come to Him and make our home with him." I think of this in relation to the gospel, for if Jesus had made His home in the man, there would have been no room for evil spirits - there is room for nothing but love with the Lord. And if the Pharisees had made room for Jesus, they would not have had such wicked thoughts. And if I made a home for Jesus, I would not be so prone to sin. (And I cry to be more hospitable.)

We must be hospitable to the Lord. Hospitality was a quality treasured by the Jews, and in a very real way, we must welcome the Lord into our lives - our hearts, minds, bodies, and souls - in any way He comes to us.

I would my doors were more open to Him,
then they would not give place to the coldness of sin.

Lord, thank you (and my Mother)
for the warmth of my tears tonight.
May they give growth to a tree
under which you might find shade.
Let your light shine with me, in me, and through me.

October 9

(Jl.4:12-21; Ps.97:1-2,5-6,11-12; Lk.11:27-28)

The day begins in darkness, but light comes.

Continuing to think of making a home for the Lord in me, and considering Mary and the saints and their doing the will of the Lord - and contemplating especially St. Paul's statement that he no longer lives for himself, but it is Christ who lives in Him... I come close to understanding what it is to be a saint, to be truly holy, in Christ, of Christ. To live completely for the Lord we must but accept His presence; all the saints contribute to their sainthood is their humility, their willing acceptance of Jesus. And it is this for which they are honored, for which they are blessed: that they live the life of Christ, that they in effect are Christ.

Lord, help me to make progress, to become a Christian,
to be more like you.

Bless me with the sweetness of humility before you.

October 10

(Is.25:6-10; Ps.23:1-6; Phil.4:12-14.19-20;
Mt.22:1-14)

On this day when food (and rest) are so much and so blessed a part of the readings, it is curious that because of my gluttony (and laziness) I suffered nightmares last night.

This is not our world. This is not the festal day. And so we should not set our hearts on the fare of this world - our souls should be in no way set on food and drink and sleep. Christ is our food and our drink. Our daily bread is the doing of His work and His will; and in Him we take our rest. It is death we must find in this world, death to this world; patiently awaiting the coming of Christ, we shall find the light, and the wedding feast.

A garment of patience may I sew, dear Lord;
 bless me as I await your kingdom.
(In death let dawn the perfect day.)

October 11

(Rm.1:1-7; Ps.98:1-4; Lk.11:29-32)

"The Lord has made known His salvation."

As Columbus Day is celebrated here in the United States, the priest makes a point I hadn't really considered very much - despite any and all mistakes that might have been made by those who came, those who came (represented by Columbus) brought Christianity to this part of the world, and that itself is something to be thankful for.

And now in this evil age we need again to find Christ, whose shadow hovers above us all. We need to accept again, as did the Romans for St. Paul, the Word of God.

Jesus shall return to this land.

(And I do see people talking; I do see the turn beginning, Jesus returning to the hearts and minds of the people, with His Church.)

Amen, Lord, come.

October 12

(Rm.1:16-25; Ps.19:2-5; Lk.11:37-41)

Not only should God be obvious to all, but Jesus has come to remove any doubt... And I think of His last words: "It is finished." And the day of the Lord has come; though not complete, I know, yet somehow it is come. In heaven the celebration has begun. (Time is a funny thing, to which God is not bound.)

And how shall I give what I have
and have my slate wiped clean.

I have no money, but what I have I must give.
(Soy no generoso.)

Help me, Lord, to find the way.

(Music... Art... Bible...)

October 13

(Rm.2:1-11; Ps.62:2-3,6-7,9,13; Lk.11:42-46)

The chastisement of the Lord is a wonderful thing -
how truth cleanses!

(I almost envy the Pharisees and lawyers
addressed by the Lord;
if they take His words humbly,
how blessed will they be.)

And upon clear realization of the common sense of Paul's
chastisement, I must almost laugh at the absurdity of those
who judge and condemn others for doing what they themselves
do, thus saying that they themselves should be condemned.
(Not to mention the absurdity of their presumption to judge,
God's domain alone, in the first place.)

When we condemn anyone else,
we condemn ourselves,
for we are all guilty of sin.
(If we could but realize this.)

O Lord, cleanse us of all sin
by the blessed truth of your words
and your presence.

Let us listen to you.

October 14

(Rm.3:21-30; Ps.130:1-7; Lk.11:47-54)

Christ has died, and we are justified - if we believe.

How important belief is, how important faith. It is the key which opens the door to a new world, a new life - a resurrection in Christ.

It is done. It is finished. We need but believe.

O Lord, harden not my heart as the Pharisees;
let me not be separated from you.
Let me not kill you, but die with you.

October 15

(Rm.8:22-27; Ps.19:8-11; Jn.15:1-8)

St. Teresa of Avila.
(And my father's birthday.)

Once again today it is remarkable to find the above readings this morning; in it I find the hand of God. The gospel was quoted to me by my friend the night before and had been on my heart. The first reading reflected my prayer for the Lord's help...

In another remarkable occurrence blessed by God - in Confession this morning I spoke of my lack of patience and trust in the Lord and so my anxiety and unkindness, and the priest made suggestion to play a sport. I had only the night before been praying about whether or not to go golfing again today and found answer to that prayer this morning.

But we must remain in the Lord to find His hand so wonderfully at work in our lives.

Remove not your Holy Spirit from me, Lord.
Make me as your own.

October 16

(Rm.4:13,16-18; Ps.105:6-9,42-43; Lk.12:8-12)

Those who are of faith are sons of Abraham and,
so, sons of God - he is the father of many nations.

"Hoping against hope, Abraham believed."

I pray this shall be taken as witness before men of the Son of Man and not profanation of Sacred Scripture, for it is upon my heart to speak of this year's baseball playoffs and, more specifically, tonight's Mets game. It is the 30th anniversary of the Amazing Mets World Series victory and there are "You Gotta Believe" signs everywhere in the stadium as the Mets face elimination, down 3-0. For the first three games I had been anxious for them to win, vainly seeking such belief in victory. But tonight I was calm; I had the quietude that is true confidence. I had sympathy for the other team - no hatred - as well as the acceptance of the faults of those whom I don't particularly like on my own... And the Lord blessed me with the ability to see that this, as with all things, is in His hands: I could but watch it unfold. And my favorite player, a particularly humble man, provided the victory late in the game.

We must let faith be our guide
and trust in the Lord.

You are with me always, Lord;
I thank you.

October 17

(Is.45:1,4-6; Ps.96:1,3-5,7-10; 1Thes.1:1-5;
Mt.22:15-21)

Give to Caesar what is Caesar's
and recognize that all is in God's hands.

Two stories:

Our administrator had Mass this morning, and he was standing next to a couple of Knights handing out pro-life roses as I walked up. I said I only had my collection money to give to (pointing at administrator, who heard) him... but a friend lent me money to donate for my roses.

The Mets win again, in the 15th inning after other team had scored in the top of the inning - in the longest game in playoff history. Four hours into the game, about an hour after an average game would be over, I went out to my prayer meeting. I came back an hour and a half later and the game was still on. (I saw the entire last inning.) And, again, another amazing victory.

God works in all things.

Lord, teach me obedience to your ways -
allow me to humble myself before you
that all may be joy.

October 18

(2Tm.4:9-17; Ps.145:10-13,17-18; Lk.10:1-9)

Hallelujah! The reign of God is at hand.

On this the feast of St. Luke we celebrate the spreading of the gospel, which reaches to the ends of the earth. The Word shall be known to all - for this we celebrate.

And I speak to my Japanese student of Christ's teaching to "Love thy enemy" (re your competitor in a sporting match).

All shall know of Him.

All shall know of you, O Lord;
come into every home.

October 19

(Rm.5:12,15,17-21; Ps.40:7-10,17; Lk.12:35-38)

If Jesus can redeem us from our sins, we who had fallen so mightily, then, indeed, all things are possible with God - we must wait for Him, ever keeping hope alive.

I continue to use Mets games as a kind of fleece to see what God will do. Tonight they fall well behind early and seem out of it. At one point, as they come to bat, I go to take my shower, proclaiming that one must indeed keep hope alive, that all is in His hands and so all is possible. As I come out, they've scored three runs and are close again. (Also, it had started raining at the game, and "stopped as suddenly as it started" after the inning.) The game is still in progress, and they have fallen further behind, but the Lord has shown me again the importance of hoping, of believing, of trusting in Him and waiting for His coming. (He is coming and will make a change.)

All powerful God, all is in your hands;
let us watch for your coming,
trusting in you.

P.S. While I was writing this, with TV off, Mets tied the game (from 7-3 to 7-7) - the Lord continues to compound His message. (Unbelievably believable)... The Mets took lead; Atlanta tied it. Mets took lead in 10th; Atlanta tied it. (You just never know.) I'm going to bed.

Notes - greater self-control of late
- looking into organizing Bible study group in parish

October 20

(Rm.6:12-18; Ps.124:1-8; Lk.12:39-48)

How appropriate Paul's and Jesus' words seem this morning. I have begun to move away from giving my "mortal body" to sin; I have begun to make progress. I must be ready for the devil's attempts to break in and destroy my confidence in the Spirit.

(And how dark it is this morning, how rainy and ominous...
we must be ready, brothers and sisters.)

O Lord, make us good stewards of all you give us,
following the steward you have set at the fore.

October 21

(Rm.6:19-23; Ps.1:1-4,6,40:5; Lk.12:49-53)

Jesus is anguished over the division He must bring to the earth. As the first psalm states and Paul makes clear, the wicked must be separated from the just. It does not please Him to bring death to one and life to the other; it is His will that all should live. But many will be unable to accept His word.

I pray I shall be on the side of the just.
(I pray I am so even now.)

Maintain me in your justice, Lord.
Lead me to eternal life.

October 22

(Rm.7:18-25; Ps.119:66,68,76-77,93-94;
Lk.12:54-59)

I interpret the present time for a fellow tutor, about which she is in general agreement, but then I must chastise her for less than steady views against abortion.

I myself fall short of fully living the Word and following the law of the Lord. I should have gone to Confession this morning while I was yet on my way to sin, to nip my weakness in the bud - I needed Jesus and His grace - but I do not resolve to, lose confidence, and end in sin.

I do not wish to go to purgatory.
I don't want to have to pay the last penny...

O Lord, may I settle with you
and with my neighbors
along the way.

October 23

(Rm.8:1-11; Ps.24:1-6; Lk.13:1-9)

As I listen to the readings this morning, I am blessed with the sense of hearing them for the first time, of opening myself up in humility and listening as a child - and the Spirit, who had cleansed me of my sins in Confession, enters in.

I pray again, and in a wonderful way, for Jesus to come in and make His home with me. If He should do so, if I should desire it so, there could be no opening, no place for Satan. And bowing before the Lord, humbly adoring Him, I know it is humility, being of the earth, of the dust, knowing my lowliness, that serves as the manure which would make the tree grow and bear fruit.

Let us truly ask the Lord to come into our lives,
into our hearts, minds, bodies, and souls,
and live with us.

In the Spirit we shall bear fruit.

Lord, we are all sinners -
let the newness of your gift of grace
be always with us to nourish us.

October 24

(Ex.22:20-26; Ps.18:2-4,47,51; 1Thes.1:5-10;
Mt.22:34-40)

Yes, if we love God and love neighbor (as priest says) what a different world this would be. Indeed, I can imagine it, even if those who profess to love God, those of varied religions, did so, what a world this would be. It shall be so some day, it shall be so...

And oh that the Lord would come and make His home in His Church.

Lord, let us live by your law of love.

October 25

(Rm.8:12-17; Ps.68:2,4,6-7,20-21; Lk.13:10-17)

I am trying to stand up straight,
and the Lord assists me.

O to be as a child of God!

In the Spirit let us dwell.

O Lord, make us as your own.
(Take our hardness of heart.)

October 26

(Rm.8:18-25; Ps.126:1-6; Lk.13:18-21)

Patience. Patience.

I remember an episode of the TV series *M*A*S*H* narrated by the priest character in which the conclusion was his statement, "Sometimes the thing is to just keep moving" (through the tragedy). I think today that sometimes the hardest thing is to go through the motions, for things become very difficult today and sin and the devil begin to predominate.

Indeed, we groan inwardly in this world as we await the return of the Lord. And, moreover, we struggle hard sometimes knowing our way.

How do we simply let the kingdom grow in us
and through us?
(This is the challenge.)

Help me, Lord, to suffer with you
and not against you.

October 27

(Rm.8:26-30; Ps.13:4-6; Lk.13:22-30)

Only the Lord could make the sinfulness of my soul
into something good.

O Lord, let me not be barred from your kingdom.

(I groan in the Spirit
and cry out His name...
may my tears serve for cleansing.)

October 28

(Eph.2:19-22; Ps.19:2-5; Lk.6:12-16)

Sts. Simon and Jude.

Interesting conversation this evening with professor re constructivism vs. behaviorism, but really about religion and relativism, etc. I tried to make the point that not all is relative and perceptual, particularly with regard to religion, because the Catholic Church is the holder of Truth. He seemed to think the Church had changed, but couldn't state a substantial example of such changes, because in the domain of faith and morals it has never changed - though it continues to grow from the foundation of the apostles.

Yet we are here, as in the first days,
as it shall ever be,
and come to be known more clearly.

Lord, bring your Word to light.

October 29

(Rm.9:1-5; Ps.147:12-15,19-20; Lk.14:1-6)

What has happened to the Israelites?
Once they were blessed in every way;
now whether a man should be healed or not
they cannot say.

And what of Christ's Church now?
What of us?
We must be silent no longer -
the gospel, Christ's love, must go forth
(to the ends of the earth).

(It is a rather ordinary working day,
and for this I thank the Lord.)

Lord, work your healing miracles
in the hearts of all men.

October 30

(Rm.11:1-2,11-12,25-29; Ps.94:12-15,17-18;
Lk.14:1,7-11)

The Jews are particularly blessed, so it can be particularly difficult for them to humble themselves before, first of all, Jesus the Christ, and, second, to the fact that the Gentiles are entering in before them. But they shall... "God's gifts and His call are irrevocable."

Beautiful readings today. Should be read aloud before anyone with anti-Semitic leanings.

And for me they tell of how much I need to break my own pride, to humble myself that I might be open and kind to all and judge none.

(Before the Lord in the Eucharist this morning I can almost imagine being in heaven before Mary, the saints, and Jesus. In a Holy Hour we come to the edge of heaven.)

Come, Lord Jesus, gather in all your children.

October 31

(Mal.1:14-2:2,8-10; Ps.131:1-3; 1Thes.2:7-9,13;
Mt.23:1-12)

As we prepare to go to the nursing home to bring communion, the priest notes that this is both a corporal (visiting the sick) and spiritual (giving communion) work. Isn't this the point of today's readings, and the point of Christianity? He who is the Word made flesh calls us to serve Him in both word and deed. There must be teaching, yes, and this teaching must have flesh and bones; faith must find its expression in works. The message is directed especially to our priests, who are the first who must serve all, but we are very much all called to priesthood, to bringing Christ to the world with our very lives. And when all parts of the Body function properly, all are one and share in one another's blessings.

Let us do, brothers and sisters, the work of the Lord;
let us pray and do.

O Lord, send us holy priests,
and make us their holy flock.

November 1 (Rv.7:2-4,9-14; Ps.24:1-6; 1Jn.3:1-3; Mt.5:1-12)

How shall I be made pure,
who have no mercy,
who have but pride in my heart?

There is an anger, an edge to me
that is judgmental
and, so, shall bring me into judgment
if I cannot lose it.

Patience and death to self
is what I need.
(May the saints intercede.)

Break the hardness of my heart, O Lord.

November 2

(Is.25:6-9; Ps.27:1,7-9,13-14; 2Tm.2:8-13;
Mt.11:25-30)

"The Word of God is not chained."

He shall overcome the world,
darkness and death are no obstacle.
This is what the children know.

Wisdom you give, Lord.
Wisdom may we accept
as we lay down our lives,
as we die to this world.

(Do not fear.)

November 3

(Rm.13:8-10; Ps.112:1-2,4-5,9; Lk.14:25-33)

If we could but love...
such is all we need.

To be generous, giving, and kind.
To care for others before ourselves.
To give all we have
and have nothing left
but Jesus...

Oh what joy to follow the Lord!
This is the place to which we must come.

(And, again - in conversation today -
if we but followed our religions and loved God,
the world would be a different place.)

Lord, may I follow you?
(Help me to draw closer.)

November 4

(Rm.14:7-12; Ps.27:1,4,13-14; Lk.15:1-10)

The Lord it is who gives us life, who is life.
And see the concern He has for the life He has made:
the least and most sinful are His concern,
and He leaves all else to find them
and bring them home -
He even dies for them.

Do not doubt the Lord and the love He has for
all His creation. Do not venture to blame Him
for the harm which has come by your hands.

O Lord, I pray for the conversion of sinners
and repent of my own wayward heart.

November 5

(Rm.15:14-21; Ps.98:1-4; Lk.16:1-8)

The priest gives a fine sermon this morning on how we must, though not deceitfully, use our faith and knowledge to evangelize others. I try again to speak with my friend. She seems almost to listen and almost to agree to attend Mass with me (and I would return to attending her church), but we shall see... Something must give soon.

We must use what the Lord does give us to bring others to the faith. (I pray these apostate times will soon become apostolic times.)

Lord, make us wise in doing your will in the world.

November 6

(Rm.16:3-9,16,22-27; Ps.145:1-5,10-11;
Lk.16:9-15)

We must be true in this world - true to the part we must play in building up the Body of Christ.

During Holy Hour I seem to hear the Lord ask me if I would become a priest - "Yes," I respond. Then if I would be a brother - "Yes," again. And a deacon - "Yes." And to die - "Yes." Each time I respond readily. But when He asks me if I would marry, I hesitate... It is easier to imagine ourselves ready for things greater than ourselves - it is most difficult to live the life we are called to.

And the Lord inspires me with an idea for a paper/project for a class - using Jesus' teaching as an example for a teaching method I've been researching.

My life be lived in you, O Lord,
according to your Word.
(Thank you for your blessings, your grace.)

November 7

(Ws.6:12-16; Ps.63:2-8; 1Thes.4:13-18;
Mt.25:1-13)

Today the Lord blesses me with further inspiration - an idea for a presentation for a class. I will write on the board "Who are you?" for my fellow students/teachers and then write a dollar sign (\$) and a flame. They will have to ask themselves "Who am I?" as I go through my demonstration lesson.

This country is lost. It has no soul. Like the rich man, it has sold its soul to gain the world. And it is crass about it. Commercials laud the happiness luxury will bring. An athlete today brings his earnings to 6.6 million dollars, not to mention another 40 million to sell a product made by impoverished children in third world countries - and it is all encouraged. The society is diseased. It is, as Mother Teresa has said, the poorest country on earth, making a billion dollar business of destroying life in the womb.

The Lord will come and turn it upside down.
Will we be able to stand when all is right again?

O Lord, may our soul's flame burn for you.
May it banish the darkness.

November 8

(Ws.1:1-7; Ps.139:1-10,24; Lk.17:1-6)

God sees all, knows all, and judges all,
and if we but had faith in Him
we would be as He is,
holding the world in our hands.

But as our hands are tainted,
He shall wrest the world from us;
as we attempt without Him,
we shall be found empty.

This is not wisdom, what passes as such
in this world of sin,
for here there is no faith -
truth is far from us.

Wisdom, O Spirit of God,
come upon this place
and make it holy,
and make it true.

November 9

(Ez.47:1-2,8-9,12; Ps.84:3-6,8,11; Jn.2:13-22)

His body is the source of living water for all who come to Him; and we must be streams of that river that flows from His holy heart - we must be His Church.

O to be a temple of His Holy Spirit!

I begin to write what was conceived the other day, looking at Jesus as a model teacher - the one whom I pray I shall form myself by. ("Jesus is the teacher.")

Lord, in your hands let be my life;
may I flow always in your channels.

November 10

(Ws.6:1-11; Ps.82:3-4,6-8; Lk.17:11-19)

Yes, our faith shall make us whole.

And our priest king shows signs of humanity and spirituality
today as he speaks of the renewal of the parish...
And if I could but come down from my own throne.

Of these things I write in education treatise.

And, too, I see that the world will change,
that this darkness cannot go on much longer -
primarily that Christians will unite
(by the power of the Holy Spirit).

Whole make us, O Lord,
as we stand by our faith in thee.

November 11

(Ws.7:22-8:1; Ps.119:89-91,130,135,175;
Lk.17:20-25)

The Wisdom of God fills all things;
the reign of God is in our midst.

And I read today of Aristotle's belief that, as opposed to Plato who saw the ideal forms existing 'out there' or above us, what he called "species" - this ideal form, say, of humans - is *within* us. In truth, the kingdom of heaven is both above and beyond us *and* within us.

May the day of the Son of Man be with us always.
(O that Wisdom would truly dwell with me.)

Wisdom of God, how shall I find entrance into thee?

November 12

(Ws.13:1-9; Ps.19:2-5; Lk.17:26-37)

Yesterday's looking at Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" seems appropriate for today's readings.

But what excuse have I for chasing shadows of this world, I who know of Christ, who call myself "Christian"?

These are difficult days.

Lord, let me not hold on to things of this world,
nor make provision for sin.
Let me come unto you.

November 13

(Ws.18:14-16,19:6-9; Ps.105:2-3,5,36-37,42-43;
Lk.18:1-8)

The Lord is faithful -
but are we?

Voice of God, speak through the darkness of this life
and call us home.

(Playing in darkness at the golf course,
everyone having gone home;
television show uses *Wizard of Oz* theme poignantly,
especially "There's no place like home";
and I pray constantly during Holy Hour -
even as darkness falls upon my faith
I continue to pray.

There is a land to which we are called.)

November 14

(Prv.31:10-13,19-20,30-31; Ps.128:1-5;
1Thes.5:1-6; Mt.25:14-30)

Alert and sober and working for the Lord is as we must be. This is not a time for laziness. As the good wife performs her duties faithfully and with love, so should we all serve the Lord according to what he gives us.

And the question comes to me again today of how one can see man's salvation apart from his participation. The parable is so clear: God provides the talents and we *must* use them well - if we do, He welcomes us into heaven; if not, we are cast into hell. How could it be any clearer? ("You fed me..." or "You didn't feed me...")

And there is also the question of how to give to the poor - without considering the situation (re "Will he use it for alcohol?") or with a degree of judgment. We do not want to hesitate in being generous, yet we do not want to encourage laziness and sin. May the Lord give us right judgment and generous hearts.

Lord, let no talents be wasted.
Let us share all with you and our neighbors.

November 15

(1Mac.1:10-15,41-43,54-57,62-64;
Ps.119:53,61,88,134,150,155,158;
Lk.18:35-43)

Oh the wickedness that can possess mankind. That wickedness is evident in Maccabees as the chosen turn systematically from God. And it is evident in today's world, when in effect the same occurs, for today religion and religious culture are all but dead.

I remark in class that really there seem only to be two cultures - the old world and the new world - and that the latter is essentially a lack of culture. (It is later I realize this is due to modern dismissal of religion, the basis for culture.)

And we must cry out like the blind man desiring to see if we are to avoid utter disintegration.

Let us see your hand at work, Lord,
healing the blind and forsaken.

November 16

(2Mac.6:18-31; Ps.3:2-8; Lk.19:1-10)

O Lord, I can see how those of corrupt and darkened pagan minds can set themselves in opposition to the chosen people, as the Gentiles do in Maccabees to Eleazar and the Israelites - but I struggle to comprehend how those who both claim to be your own can prove so antagonistic toward one another. How is it such a split in the Church can come about? I know the answer is human pride and sin, but yet I pray, O Lord, not for those who willfully and arrogantly, knowingly and selfishly sow seeds of discord, but for those who genuinely seek you who remain apart from your table because of the situation, the illusion which has been crafted. Lord, there must be many who are kept apart from you and from their brothers out of naiveté. Let them not spit out the good, holy food you provide. Is it not important that they come to your table? Do you not thus desire to save the lost? Help me to fathom these things, Lord, and to pray for their rectification.

May the Lord be with us all.

November 17

(2Mac.7:1,20-31; Ps.17:1,5-6,8,15; Lk.19:11-28)

The Lord will return
and all shall receive a just reward.

Stand fast
and serve Him with your life.

Make us fruitful, dear God;
make us faithful unto you.

November 18

(1Mac.2:15-29; Ps.50:1-2,5-6,14-15,23;
Lk.19:41-44)

Mattathias recognizes the time of his visitation;
he is not blind to the terrors around him on every side.
And he stands fast.

Does the Lord weep over us today, too? Mustn't He?
Are we not grown blind to the loss of faith?
Though all else turn away, we must stand fast.

Lord, may we never be blinded;
 ever remain near
 and guide our hands
 and hearts.

November 19

(1Mac.4:36-37,52-59; 1Chr.29:10-13;
Lk.19:45-48)

The purification of the temple -
and, again, that this temple would be purified
(but I am a forgetful hearer).

Someday, maybe, the Word will take root in my soul
and my soul will reflect the glory of the Lord
consistently and completely -
but as it is I am a forgetful hearer.

(Note: it is more than curious that the Blessed Mother's
appearance and her monthly messages come on the 25th day -
the day upon which, in Maccabees, the temple was defiled,
and the day on which it was reconsecrated. The Blessed
Mother comes to rededicate to God what has been lost.)

Lord, may I be consecrated to you.

November 20

(1Mac.6:1-13; Ps.9:2-4,6,16,19; Lk.20:27-40)

Today's gospel reminds me of a beautiful thought I read yesterday in a newsletter. It said eternal life begins even now, when we follow Jesus, and that death is for these an open door to walk right through. So shall the resurrection be for those who love God and live for Him. But for those like Antiochus in the first reading, death is quite something other.

Let us pray that though we deserve it not,
Jesus shall make us ready for eternal life.

O Lord, that my heart might be contrite
for all the wrong its done,
and that I might lie down
safe within your arms.

November 21

(Ez.34:11-12,15-17; Ps.23:1-3,5-6;
1Cor.15:20-26,28; Mt.25:31-46)

If the Lord is my shepherd, I should not want.
If the Lord is my shepherd, I shall come to eternal life.
If the Lord is my shepherd, I will live like He.

The Lord lays down His life, He humbles Himself that we
might serve Him in the least of these and show ourselves
worthy of His kingdom, for He is the servant King.

May the Lord shepherd us into His kingdom;
may we lay down our lives for His sheep.

(I give a ride to two 'beggars',
but not cheerfully...
what reward is there for that?)

Lord, so far are we from your kingdom -
calm our hearts and take our hands.

(Thank you for your provisions.)

November 22

(Dn.1:1-6,8-20; Dn.3:52-56; Lk.21:1-4)

First of all, it is clear that the Lord gives the health,
not the food, as it is He who gives wisdom and understanding.
Second, it is sure that we must give all we have to find
the Lord looking upon us.

Glance up at me, O Lord,
and may what you see please you.

(I pray you take my schooling
and make me as Daniel
in knowledge of you.)

Last night I thought about dying
and became a little afraid,
but I realized I must put all in God's hands
(as difficult as it may be to have faith).

November 23

(Dn.2:31-45; Dn.3:57-61; Lk.21:5-11)

(Attended a schoolchildren's Thanksgiving Mass
but will concentrate on the readings for the day.)

All these things shall come to pass.

"There are many things in heaven and earth"
which are beyond our comprehension,
which are heavenly in nature.

But the coming of the kingdom shall be known.

How shall it all be, Lord?

Let thy will be done.

November 24

(Dn.5:1-6,13-14,16-17,23-28; Dn.3:59,62-67;
Lk.21:12-19)

Daniel gives witness before the powerful pagan king,
and not a word of his falls to the ground. So the
Lord is with all who trust in Him, who glorify His name.

All will listen to the word of truth because it is undeniable
- all know it when they hear it and cannot escape its power.

If there were stigmata upon my hands,
perhaps then I could give true witness;
but as it is I can but offer
humble contrition for my sins.

Lord, continue, please, to take my words
here on these pages
and daily in my speaking of you.

November 25

(Zep.3:14-15; Ps.67:2-3,5,7-8; Col.3:12-17;
Lk.17:11-19)

How we all should be thanking the Lord for His gifts,
in particular His saving us from our sins;
for once we were lepers,
but today He is with us.

Such thanksgiving would keep us right at all times.

And I thank the Lord for all He gives me each day, and
especially for Himself, His Church, and His sacraments -
today I am thankful to again find the grace of Confession.

(And it is a blessed time visiting friends and family
throughout the day...)

Thank you, Lord, for saving us,
and giving us the opportunity to thank you.

November 26

(Dn.7:2-14; Dn.3:59,75-81; Lk.21:29-33)

As we reach the end of the Church year, a year which ends a millennium, and approach the new millennium and a holy year, a year of Jubilee, it is most appropriate that we hear of Daniel's vision of the beasts overcome and the everlasting dominion of the Son, and that Jesus instructs us to watch the signs for His reign to come...

And it is appropriate, too, that it has rained every day for a week, that there has been virtually no sunshine during this time. The end of the world passes through these days - may it bring the light of the Ancient One.

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my life,
my spirit,
and the life of this earth.

November 27

(Dn.7:15-27; Dn.3:59,82-87; Lk.21:34-36)

It is the final day of the Church year, the end of a millennium, and the end of a century which has been given into the hands of Satan. The day is dark, again, but there is light on the horizon, for the Jubilee is upon us; a year of favor, of freedom, of release from the bonds of the evil one, is near. And in Holy Hour this morning I can sense its approach.

The official beginning of the Jubilee year will not be until midnight Christmas Eve (for this reason I had thought to continue this year's writing until then), but with Advent the harbinger arrives...

The Light is coming.

(May our hearts be prepared to welcome Him.)

Lord, subtly and brightly your light does come
to those prepared to welcome you -
fill us entirely with your grace
and make us a new creation in you.