

Days 2000

(The Great Jubilee)

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November 28 (1999) (Is.63:16-17,19,64:2-7;
Ps.80:2-4,15-16,18-19; 1Cor.1:3-9; Mk.13:33-37)

After a solid week of darkness, the sun shines throughout the day today - not a cloud to be seen. And certainly it must be said that it is most appropriate for this the beginning of Advent, the beginning of the Church year, the first notes of a Jubilee year that should prove a majestic opera of the Lord's grace. Now is the beginning (especially for one liturgically-minded as I) of the end of the century placed in Satan's hands. Now the veil shall be lifted and Truth shall come, and Light shall shine.

Certainly we must watch and have faith, but I certainly sense that what Paul states to the Christians will be true for myself - not a spiritual gift will be lacking as we await Christ, that He will strengthen me to the end. Already I palpably feel His grace beginning to pour forth.

And how appropriate that the Archbishop says Mass for us today, rededicating our refurbished church - and that he calls us to evangelization.

There is a Light coming...

Lord, may the faith and confidence (and joy)
I begin to feel today
be fulfilled in thee.

Indeed, bless this holy year.

November 29

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

The nations shall come and find a place of peace
in the heavenly Jerusalem; all shall stream there.

Jesus is the hope of all peoples and the light of the world.
May all come to Him in these days.

We praise you, Lord, as we come to you
expectant with faith.

November 30

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

They left their work to preach the word which now goes out to the end of the world. The apostles are the foundation upon which the Church is built. And that Church shall reach unto heaven.

Keep me on the right path, O Lord,
that my soul may dwell in your presence.

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

The Lord heals us, forgiving our sins; the Lord teaches us, speaking His words; the Lord feeds us, providing His body - this is the substance of the Mass, the Mass which, confirmed by a recent volume on Revelations and the Mass, touches heaven each time it is prayed, which brings us to the mountain of the Lord, His kingdom.

And Isaiah's prophecy of the removal of "the veil that veils all peoples" seems particularly relevant for our own time, when the Lord shall remove the veil Satan has cast over this century.

Dear Lord, heal me, teach me, and feed me
each day,
that I might come unto your Day.

(Yes, today I am exhausted -
I need nourishment, I need rest...)

December 2

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

O to enter those gates,
to be strong enough, steady enough
to do so...

O to keep faith in Him.

These are the times for entering there.
The doors are opening to us -
we must be ready to do so.

(The Lord maintains me in His grace
in this Advent season.)

Lord, the gates to heaven
are heavy
and can be difficult to throw open.

Help us now to find the strength.

December 3

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

As I read at Mass this morning, I find great truth in the words of Isaiah, applying them to the imminent Jubilee year. This is a time when these things shall come to pass - I believe it will be an especially acceptable day.

Now we must be confident,
and now the Lord will heal us.

(He continues to bless my days,
watching over with His grace.)

O Lord, may I found my trust in you
and in your promise
and witness your light coming.

December 4

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

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

How true Isaiah's words ring this morning, particularly

"From behind a voice shall sound in your ears:

'This is the way, walk in it,'

When you would turn to the right or to the left."

and, "He will heal the bruises left by His blows."

For I do feel myself upon a genuine renewal, a genuine following of the Lord's command and leaving sin behind.

I thought not to go to Confession this morning because the Lord's grace has remained with me, but I remembered what I have often said about it being necessary to go at least once a week if I am receiving daily. In Confession the priest asked me to pray for my family, students, fellow parishioners, etc., and I realized how selfish I've been, concerned only with my plight. And I remembered what this same priest said to me, I think it was in my first Confession with him - that the worst thing about my sin is what it keeps me from doing.

We are called by Christ not just to care for our own soul, but to lay down our lives for others as He did. It is when we are living for others and not ourselves that we know our souls are truly safe. We are all called to labor in the Father's field.

So much I could have accomplished... but the Lord's blows for my sins are healing, and I think perhaps it all may have been necessary to keep me humble, for I see, too, how one could lose oneself in pride for one's accomplishments.

O Lord, let this be the time I truly begin
to give myself to you
and to my neighbor.

May I now truly accept you into my heart
and follow your words.

(At Holy Hour this morning I think of Christ's words about "the log" in our eyes - once it is removed, then we can see clearly to help other's remove theirs. May the Lord make me a channel of His peace as He cleanses me from sin.)

December 5

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

Now is the time for the way of the Lord
to be made straight.

I continue to feel this Advent season
the appropriateness, the timeliness of this message.
The Jubilee is upon us.

(May I be ready.)

Lord, make us ready for your coming.
So many are without sight;
help them to see.

(The time is at hand -
He does not delay.)

December 6

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

After a solid week of sunshine, it rains today, throughout the day, and I falter though I am kept from falling.

On this the feast day of St. Nicholas, I give a presentation on constructivism and contrast it with behaviorism - the light contrasted with the dark. All are tired today, everywhere I go and in class. Perhaps we must awaken. Perhaps we must turn on the light, in ourselves and in our children.

Lord, let your true light shine down upon us
and banish all darkness
and forgive all sin.

Help us to reflect your glory.

December 7

(Is.40:1-11; Ps.96:1-3,10-13,Is.40:9-10;
Mt.18:12-14)

Today I imagine on a couple of occasions what it would be like to live in a truly religious, a truly Christian society, wherein God indeed was first, where this was recognized by all, whether they believed well or not. Living in contemporary USA this is almost an impossible stretch - yet it once was. It once was in many times and places, and can always be again.

The priest this morning spoke of Ambrose's fight against the Arian heresy, which divided the Church for some 400 years. And I can't help but think of the Protestant Reformation, which has divided the Church for some 500 years. The Arian heresy is now a thing of the past... There is hope, always (however difficult it may be to believe).

O Lord, that the path might be made straight before you.
Seek out the lost sheep.

December 8

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

It is with her the change begins;
it is through the Immaculate Heart of Mary
redemption approaches our sinful souls,
for it is through her Jesus comes.

Lord, may your instrument of love please pray for us.
Mary, Mother of God, intercede for the Church
in its time of trial.

(After eating, uncomfortably, at an expensive restaurant,
I attend a play on Jewish immigrants in the early part of
the century with a parish priest and another parishioner -
from riches to rags. I prefer rags.

And witnessing Jewish culture presented made me realize
Jesus (and Mary) was a Jew, and just how blessed God's
chosen people are.)

December 9

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

Changes come. They do.
What is today shall no more be tomorrow.
Have faith.

The kingdom was taken by violence until the Baptist hailed
Christ's coming, and if you would believe it, He has come
and made all new.

Water shall flow in the desert,
trees shall sprout in the wasteland -
the sin of this age will pass away.

I thought of the change today.
There is no reason to think the darkness of this age,
this culture of death
wherein aborted babies' body parts
are sold on the market,
shall not come to an end,
shall not be pulverized into dust
and cast to the breeze.

It will come.

(And I find myself in the poor graces of my supervisor
for advocating for my international students regarding
an unannounced rise in tuition - much as the union
organizers in last night's play. And I am a bit
firmer with our administrator.)

Lord, hasten the change that will come.

December 10

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

We must follow His commandments and His example;
this is wisdom.

All temptations elsewhere are wanderings in the perversions
of a will diseased by pride.

We must not be tempted thus, to place our wills upon the Lord
and His ways - His ways are perfect; ours are solid as sand
in an arid desert. Let us follow Him.

(John the final prophet of the old covenant must fast;
Jesus who redeems the flesh by His own can eat.)

Jesus, let me dance to the tune you pipe.

December 11

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

The fire of Elijah is present in John the Baptizer.
Prepare yourselves for the time is at hand.

May the hearts of fathers turn toward their sons,
that we might be saved from the wrath to come.

John the Baptist hails the coming of Christ much as does
the season of Advent. And so He is with us now, even as
in anticipation of my Confession this morning I already
begin to feel the Lord's graces upon me.

Come, Lord Jesus,
and remain.

December 12

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

On this 3rd Sunday of Advent, set aside for rejoicing in Christ - I indeed "rejoice heartily in the Lord." Joy is with me throughout the day. And though the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is preempted, yet the bishop crowns her statue in our church (of Spanish and English), and I hand out pro-life newspapers and see a wonderful picture of our parish priest with a child who died after two and a half hours... not to mention bringing prayer and comfort (and Jesus) to the elderly in the nursing home.

I am even joyful praying with a sister who had rather severe complications after a third surgery around a mastectomy. I could tell her of Mother Teresa's comment of suffering being the kisses of Christ, and we could agree that this is so.

(I feel joy, too, in speaking in truth to our administrator.)

John is the voice, dear Lord,
and you are the Word.

Indeed, without the Word the voice is noise.
Free our tongues to speak your praise.

December 13

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

I continue to struggle to get my tents in a row,
to listen to the teachings of the Lord,
to be able to proclaim with confidence that Jesus is God.

Let us move forward, Lord;
let us move forward
to greet your coming.

December 14

(Zep.3:1-2,9-13; Ps.34:2-3,6-7,17-19,23;
Mt.21:28-32)

The Lord forgives sins;
He gathers the poor who cry out to Him
into His kingdom.

I pray this morning that I would somehow do the work of the Lord, but I cannot think of having done anything but my work, and perhaps being a bit kinder with others.

I wonder how the Lord might work in such mundaneness,
and how He might call us to dramatic witness...

Lord, let your forgiveness come;
draw us unto your home -
let us do your work on this earth.

December 15

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

Justice shall come.
For a time we may have to suffer,
 locked in the darkness of a prison like John,
 but justice shall come - be assured.

The teaching seems applicable to our parish, which strains
under the iron hand of our administrator, and to the Church
in general I suppose.

Like John, we await the release only Christ can bring.
May the Jubilee come.

Set us free, Lord, from that which binds us -
 let us be healed
 by the light of your justice.

December 16

(Is.54:1-10; Ps.30:2,4-6,11-13; Lk.7:24-30)

Here at the end of time and the beginning of time, a man is born of a barren woman - he is the greatest of men, the greatest of prophets of the old who hails the new that all might be greater in this new kingdom... The barren tree of the law gives place to the fruit of divine grace.

(My final act of this semester is to give witness (in class) to Christ's teachings re my paper relating them to constructivist principles.)

Lord, help us to accept your grace;
let us not defeat your plan in our regard.

December 17

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

These are the generations of the king -
it is through such a line He
who is God
comes to us.

And He shall reign forever.

Yet I struggle...

Shall I struggle forever, Lord,
or will you intercede?
How shall I become part of your lineage?

(A (half) Jewish friend speaks (though not seriously) of
"my people" today - there is something special yet about
God's chosen people. Jesus was a Jew.)

December 18

(Jer.23:5-8; Ps.72:1,7,12-13,18-19; Mt.1:18-24)

Jesus, the Lord our Justice,
Emmanuel, Our Savior from sin -
this is His name.

The Lord is one and the Lord is many things -
all of this is He who has come.

Jesus, come now and redeem us,
come now and be with us -
come and bring your justice.

(The blood of His compassion
flows upon all
from His outstretched arms.)

December 19

(2Sm.7:1-5,8-12,14,16; Ps.89:2-5,27,29;
Rm.16:25-27; Lk.1:26-38)

The Lord builds the house.

It occurs to me today that Jesus is the quintessential Jew; the Jew is the quintessential man; and man is God's quintessential creation (His reflection) - and so it is fitting that Jesus is a man, a Jew, the Son of God.

O Chosen One, be with us
and bless us.

May we accept you into our hearts
and live as your children of light.

(Jesus is incarnate,
and the faith of the Christian is incarnate
in Him and in His Church and its sacraments.)

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

"The virgin shall be with child."
Such is the prophecy,
from God Himself.

Mary is that Virgin; Jesus is the Child.

The time has come,
and is now upon us.
May He be born in us.

O Lord, be born in me;
as painful as it might be,
I know it is beautiful.

(I am now in Florida with my parents.)

December 21

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

I have opportunity to sit with He whom my heart loves
in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament...

And I still find remarkable that "when Elizabeth heard Mary's
greeting, the baby stirred in her womb." The oneness of
Mother and Child is so evident in this reading, in this
event. Mary brings Jesus to us all.

May Life return!

(to this place where consideration is given to formally
recognize homosexual union as marriage, where it is
considered unconstitutional for a parent to be allowed
to choose to send her children to a religious school,
where 4,000 babies are killed each day with the blessing
of the law...)

Come, Lord Jesus! (please.)

December 22

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

We are God's,
and He blesses us
if we give ourselves to Him...

(Let us be one with Him and with His will.)

Being in Florida with my parents, I have had greater occasion to watch television, including political talk shows - I am praying for and looking towards a great openness and honesty (a far cry from what we have been used to), a truth, a present truth coursing through society which is so obvious, so clear, it cannot be denied.

Come, Lord Jesus,
give yourself to us
as we turn toward you.

December 23

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

John is born, Elijah is sent -
the hearts of the children
are turned to their father.
Our redemption is near at hand.

(I feel a certain kinship with John of Kanty, a university
professor whose feast is today - could be my patron.
And I remember again how often I am miscalled "John",
which is my confirmation name.)

At the beach fishing with my father,
I think of heaven as I pray the rosary.

Lord, I thank you for this time at my parents' house.

Note: Most unusually, I catch a baby hammerhead shark and,
of course, return him to the water.
(One day to the Jubilee.)

December 24

(2Sm.7:1-5,8-12,14,16; Ps.89:2-5,27,29;
Lk.1:67-79)

The door in God's house is open;
the Jubilee year begins.

Long have we waited,
and this holy man who sits upon the throne
in the Basilica of Peter
opens with his frail body
the door to peace.

And we a race of fearful creatures
mired in this culture of death
look with hope to new life.

Walking from Confession to chapel for adoration this morning,
there is a white dove (pigeon)
unfrightened as I walk by...
And I watch a taped television special on our pope,
who challenges the world to come from destruction
to the instruction of the Lord.

Lord, visit us with your lasting grace and faith.

December 25

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

Merry Christmas and Happy Jubilee.

May the Word become flesh again in us His Church.

But there is no mention made of the Jubilee this morning at Mass, and my "Happy Jubilee" regards to the priest and deacon seem to be met with a certain confusion... It will be but slowly that this sleeping Church will wake from its doldrums.

But I have a certain hope, and the joy of prayer the Blessed Mother spoke of in her message last month I finally find today: it is a great blessing to share in the will of God and His power.

The time long-awaited has come;
 may my heart be open to His blessings.
O Incarnate Word of God, be with us
 throughout this holy year.

Let us see your arm at work.

(As my father drove me to Mass this morning, he noticed an ostrich - he pointed it out to me on the way home. I can't help but think it is time for the Church to take its head out of the ground.)

December 26

(Gn.15:1-6,21:1-3; Ps.105:1-9;
Heb.11:8,11-12,17-19; Lk.2:22-40)

Actually, attended a Latin Mass wherein only this gospel was employed. (No mention of Abraham and his covenant with God.) On this feast of the Holy Family, went to the Mass with my mother, who was reminded of her childhood. (My first time, save perhaps when I was a baby in my mother's arms.)

I pray rosary and other prayers for my family - my mother, father, and brother - today. My prayer is strong and consistent and I hope the Lord answers with His protection.

It was whispered to me by a sister in the Lord a short while ago that the Lord will give us what we ask in this Jubilee year. Without fail in playing cards with my mother, the Lord gives me the cards I request, remarkably. I pray answer to my prayers are so evident, so well-fulfilled.

O Lord, send your light;
 bend your ear
 and fulfill your covenant with us.

May we see your salvation.

December 27

(1Jn.1:1-4; Ps.97:1-2,5-6,11-12; Jn.20:2-8)

May we accept what John proclaims,
may we believe what he has heard and seen -
may we be one with he and Christ,
His holy Church.

And may we, too, evangelize.

Speak.
I speak up a little,
but need to a little more.

Let the truth shine like a light,
undimmed by the darkness of this world,
undeniable by all.

(The Church shall stand against the onslaught and be proven
wise (with our Pope) as the world awakens from its near
demise.)

Lord, may your Word go forth...

December 28 (1Jn.1:5-2:2; Ps.124:2-5,7-8; Mt.2:13-18)

The Holy Innocents -
O for an end to abortion!

May we acknowledge our sins this Jubilee year
and find release from their bondage.

O Lord, bring thy grace and mercy;
pour over us thy blood to make us clean.

(Home again after a restful and rather blessed holiday with my parents. Had three things to suggest to my brother, one a little difficult, but - in accord with priest's challenge this morning to speak out - I managed to offer all three, with the blessing of success.)

December 29

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

Priest speaks well - again we are encouraged to live the gospel, to be children of light, Christ in the world... (The new evangelization is upon us.)

And I try to bring light to my relationship with my friend; and the Lord blesses my conversation with her (as I ask Him to).

Now shall we live out our beliefs, our knowledge,
our prayers.

Lord, bless us in being your Body,
true to your word.

Note: On plane home last night, looking out the window and considering the differing views on the age of the earth, I believe that thinking in the billions can serve to add to the trivialization of life (thousands makes things more real), but I realize that however old it is, in the mind of God - with which we should think - it is but a day. Think of the world as created yesterday, or better, that it is still being created now, and you are part of that light and life and eternal and unchanging newness of God...
"A Baby Is Being Born".

December 30

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

Fear and trepidation re the "carnal allurements" of this world seems to overcome my joy in the Lord today and serves to lead to illness. I would like to bring light to such circumstances that might lead to temptations, but I fear I lack strength - and so the strength leaves me. I have yet to conquer the evil one.

Lord, keep me from a fall,
but make me not too fearful.
In your power all is overcome.
Let it be so.

December 31

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

As the sun attempts to rise on a foggy millennial morning, I have been sick all night with fever and cold, and continue so.

I didn't understand why in this time of Jubilee which should be joyous I had begun to cry and become ill; it did not seem appropriate. Then in seeing how this millennium is celebrated in a terribly pagan manner, with no thought for He whom the two thousand years marks, I realized the reason for my sickness and began to accept it and suffer it for the great sins of the century and the day. (Unfortunately, I had also to suffer for my own sin, which is not as edifying.)

And after the fever seemed to break and while I was in the dark shower, I had to smile to myself as I thought that China would lead the way this Christian century. It will be they to whom Christ seems most foreign who will, with their great wisdom, clear up the difficulties of disunity. (We shall see.) And as my fever broke, a light snow, of purity and coolness, fell. May I somehow find that purity.

Dear Lord, forgive us
and bring us into your presence.
(Leave us not alone.)

January 1, 2000

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

The streets are dark and desolate as I make my (ailing) way to church this morning. But a few hours later the sun is shining brightly. And so there is hope that we will shed the shackles of this dark century and be wholly blessed by God this Jubilee year.

(Sick and visited by friend and her mother with foods and medicine.)

Lord, let your face shine upon us and bless us;
reveal yourself to the world.

January 2

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

O let the nations come!

It seemed the lector was trying to encourage me that the Jubilee year is real as he read from Isaiah and I sat alone in the choir loft, continuing with my sickness. Over the better part of the past two days I had virtually forgotten what has been a kind of personal epiphany for me - prayer and fasting is what heals. But I preferred to watch TV and eat and drink, and continue as I was. Thank God, this evening I finally turned to the Lord, spreading out my arms and accepting and treasuring my suffering, offering it to Him, and ceased to eat and drink. Now (after midnight) I am markedly better.

Fasting and prayer are two sides of one coin - one cleanses you out, engendering deeper breathing and concentration; the other unites you with the Lord and provides the strength for fasting.

O Lord, let me go on in faith
that your light will come,
and that it will remain in me.

January 3

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

They come from all around to be healed by Jesus,
but they may not all recognize
that He is God in flesh - the Christ.

And how many of us come to Him for healing, for help,
and quickly forget, or completely ignore,
who He is.

There are several Chinese at Mass this evening...
one which the priest must whisper
as he is losing his voice.

And I stutter to a start to begin to rise from my cot
and hope tomorrow to approach normalcy.
(But will I remember my Lord, my God.)

The Jubilee begins slowly - I pray it builds.

Lord, heal me, yes,
but let me remember it is you who do so.

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

Jesus feeds the world with His love,
with His body and with His blood.

He sustains life,
for He is the source of life.
(Not the Big Bang, not any lustful thing,
not the dollar bill...
He is the Word spoken by the mouth of God.)

Lord, sustain me with your love,
and your blood.

January 5

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

How like the disciples with their minds closed I still am,
to what extent is love not perfected in me,
for I am yet afraid, afraid of so many things
and confused about their meaning.

And this is the Jubilee, too, and still I am not renewed.

I had to cry out for spiritual and emotional, mental and
physical unrest. The Lord enters into my boat when I do so,
but oh so often I lose faith.

Lord, release me from such anxiety.

January 6

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

I cannot seem to completely forgive my elderly landlord his unreasonable disturbance of my peace while sick. I know he is an old man and that I should let it roll off me, but, perhaps due to my sickness, it is taking longer to forget.

And I am still waiting for this year of the Lord to begin for me, still unable to come from the forest of illness. I pray this weakness shall go and I will be able to stand again, with the Lord.

He has come, let it be known.

Heal me, Lord,
and let your graces begin to flow.

January 7 (1Jn.5:5-13; Ps.147:12-15,19-20; Lk.5:12-16)

We possess eternal life in Jesus;
by Him we are healed.

May I be restored to His graces;
may He give me strength.

O Lord, your mercy endures forever;
let us not forget the gift of life
you give us.

January 8 (1Jn.5:14-21; Ps.149:1-6,9; Jn.3:22-30)

He's the one, the one who cleanses us of sin,
washing them away in living water,
water which is He.

Let us join with Him who is our own,
for whom we have waited,
and serve Him,
diminishing as He increases...

Still waiting for His touch of healing,
I thought I felt it this night -
may direction be found through prayer;
may His blessings be upon my open heart.

Lord, I wish to find strength again in you,
and see your hand at work in my life.

Take all sin from me.

January 9

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

He is the beloved, the chosen,
the light to the nations
by whom all shall come to the water
and be freed.

Let us be baptized in Jesus,
in He who is God's only Son.

Light of the nations, draw us all unto thee
and wash us clean in your waters.

January 10

(1Sm.1:1-8; Ps.116:12-19; Mk.1:14-20)

Today at the beginning of Ordinary Time we hear of poor Hannah's barrenness and of Jesus beginning His ministry and calling His apostles. From Hannah's barrenness will come a great prophet, and from Jesus' ministry and His cross will come eternal life.

Curses and blessings. They often exchange disguises. Hannah is barren but Samuel will be born of her. John is arrested, but Jesus goes forth; His cross will come, but it will lead to life eternal.

And sometimes blessings are not so. This apartment is becoming a source of misery as my unstable landlord finds it permissible to set dates for my departure at his whimsy... And today, too, I discuss the possibility of post-graduate work with a professor. Where the blessing and curse begin and end is sometimes hard to say. (But with the Lord all is for the good - this must be remembered. Hope springs eternal.)

Lord, into your hands my spirit be commended
this and every day.

January 11 (1Sm.1:9-20; 1Sm.2:1,4-8; Mk.1:21-28)

Authority is the Lord's,
all authority on heaven and earth is His.
He teaches. He heals.
He gives life and takes it away.

And it is remarkable how similar Mary's Magnificat is to Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving, perhaps lending credence to the idea that Mary may have overheard Elizabeth at prayer in the temple, and concurred, and so her faith upon hearing of John the Baptist's conception.

I continue to fight against sickness, along with half of the tri-state area it seems. I've never heard of so many ill people.

From these ashes we shall rise.

Lord, lift up your Church for all to see;
may this barren tree bear fruit.

January 12

(1Sm.3:1-10,19-20; Ps.40:2-5,7-10; Mk.1:29-39)

(Actually lector read reading and psalm from one week before... "love".)

Samuel says "Here I am" and "Speak, for your servant is listening," and Jesus states, "This is what I have come to do." Ready are they to do the will of God.

And I try to seek the Lord's will for me, particularly with regard to my friend, who insists that I should marry, if not her, then someone else. Am I ignorant regarding this? Am I ready to do His will? Am I open to Him? I believe that if one seeks, one finds, and so since I have yet to find answer, I must not seek well.

So I offer again my life and pray for my friend - and sense a coming closer to truth.

Lord, let thy will be done.
Please intercede.

(I am becoming ready - this is the Jubilee.

A certain comfort in church (another) today, even feeling as if I might be slain in the Spirit while awaiting communion.)

January 13

(1Sm.4:1-11; Ps.44:10-11,14-15,25-27; Mk.1:40-45)

The utter defeat the Church has known will be turned to victory - our leprosy shall be healed. (Again we shall rejoice in Him.) Do not cease to pray.

And I have found healing for my illness; I am coming around and beginning to trust in the graces of this holy year.

The sins of our past shall be remembered no more when the Lord redeems His people.

Grace of the Lord, be with me
and remain.

January 14

(1Sm.8:4-7,10-22; Ps.89:2,16-19; Mk.2:1-12)

Jesus is King, of everything -
let us never ask for another.

I go on pilgrimage today, seeking plenary indulgence at a church in a neighboring town assigned for such in this Jubilee year. It is my first real experience of this and it is wonderful. (A mostly Polish church in which I feel at home - the painting of Mary over the altar even looks like my mother.) Deeply I am able to pray and sense the presence of Christ and His mother.

He is all we need,
and if we seek Him, we shall find Him,
for He appreciates our efforts
and forgives our sins.

(Also sent off *Days '99* for copyrighting,
and friend is off for another weekend away...
I pray Jesus' blessings upon her.)

Lord, help us to draw ever closer to you
(especially in this year)
and find your kingship over us.

January 15

(1Sm.9:1-4,17-19,10:1; Ps.21:2-7; Mk.2:13-17)

It is not the appearance which makes us holy, as is seen with Saul and with the Pharisees. The outward show shall account for little. It is the inner man which needs to be renewed, which needs to be beautified.

Jesus is king, always and forever,
and only the humble may enter into His reign.

I continue to seek renewal of my inner self.
(And another church pilgrimage for plenary indulgence,
as well as other prayer...)

May I hear His call.

Lord, closer I come by your grace;
may it increase.
(This is the time I have awaited.)

January 16

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

The Lord called Samuel.
The Lord named Peter.
The Lord would make us His own.

Something of a hush seems to fall as I read the second reading re immorality <at Mass>. We are temples of the Holy Spirit.

(I complete a third day of pilgrimage, praying in the cathedral today. I then visited the cemetery for the first time in a while, and found a wonderful sense of peace... nothing of this world is important - heaven matters.)

May we all come to do your will, O Lord.

January 17

(1Sm.15:16-23; Ps.50:8-9,16-17,21,23; Mk.2:18-22)

How different Saul is from David, the true king,
obedient to the Lord.

And how different Jesus is from the law keepers,
for whom custom had become preeminent
thus stultifying the workings of the Lord -
Jesus brings this grace anew.

Now we come voluntarily as servants of the Lord,
and He makes us not servants
but friends,
sons.

Lord, make me productive according to your word.
I fear being slothful and indecisive,
waiting too much;
and I fear presuming upon your will,
waiting too little.

Your will be done.

(And in evening prayer I seem to enter the marriage feast
of the lamb, mouth agape and the words ringing true,
so real... a certain ecstasy upon me.

And I see that Mary is the Mother of the Church and model
of the Church, for we are the bride to Jesus - our souls
are wed to God.

May our skins be fresh to receive His Word.)

January 18

(1Sm.16:1-13; Ps.89:20-22,27-28; Mk.2:23-28)

"Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart."

"The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath, that is why the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath."

Two great quotes. And I think they can be related: the Pharisees preoccupation with sabbath and other laws, much like the Protestant exaltation of Scripture above and exclusive of living Tradition, is essentially a failing to see as God sees, failing to see in a transcendent fashion into the living heart of things. (Both are unable to see the living Lord before them.)

Lord, you are first before all -
open our eyes and hearts
to you, your presence, and your will
eternally.

(Thinking today at Mass of how all is always new with the Lord. God is life, He is who is, what is, and each day, each moment, He is new. Though our lives are repetitious, though the Mass is a ritual, though I go every day, it is always new... And it occurs to me, too, that when things seem to go bad, when the devil seems to triumph, the Lord is always ready to trump him with a greater good than before, making his efforts oh so futile. Also, I am continuing daily pilgrimages - today fifth of nine days. Finally, as this week of prayer for Christian unity begins, I speak again with my friend about our differences... mining for honesty, truth.)

January 19

(1Sm.17:32-33,37,40-51; Ps.144:1-2,9-10;
Mk.3:1-6)

"Be not afraid."

With these words our pontiff began his reign more than twenty years ago. And now this frail old man stands in the breach, standing against the sins of this age, this culture of death, and calls for renewal in this year of Great Jubilee.

And toward the end of my hour of prayer before Mass in the Polish church again today, I sit up straight and pray in strength against the evils of our day, unafraid.

Be strong and work for the Lord.

Lord, bless us with strength;
lead us into battle against the enemy.

January 20

(1Sm.18:6-9,19:1-7; Ps.56:2-3,5,9-14; Mk.3:7-12)

It comes to me this morning that Jesus must be first in our lives (as has said the Blessed Mother). Nothing else in my life is necessarily wrong, except that Jesus does not take first place. One cannot do anything or love anyone if one does not love Jesus and do all in His name. For example, I cannot love my friend if I don't love Jesus first. This is ordinate.

And there is a good deal of spiritual excitement in my soul at church this morning. And the snow we had this day which I initially feared, I stood amongst and found a certain joy.

All trials we can come through with God.
He is the source of all healing, of all wholeness, holiness.

Jesus, be first in my heart
that all things may be ordered properly
and blessed by you.

(Arrows through St. Sebastian, Jesus' blood I thirst for.)

January 21

(1Sm.24:3-21; Ps.57:2-4,6,11; Mk.3:13-19)

David shows the justice of the Lord, sparing Saul, the Lord's anointed, and Jesus calls His twelve apostles, who are to be so just, who are to reflect His authority.

But today I attend a funeral Mass for an elderly neighbor who died, for me, unexpectedly. On this the penultimate day of my novena pilgrimage for plenary indulgence, it seems quite appropriate. I pray for her soul and another acquaintance (from soup kitchen) who died this week, as well as all souls, and my own. The Lord's grace has been most with me in this devotion. (Praise God.)

We shall all die and have to account for our lives; may my prayers help my brothers and sisters in purgatory and bring us in closer communion with all the saints. (O to escape punishment for my own sins.)

Lord, your light breathe upon the dead
and bring us all into your graces.

(Today I do laundry, and it is so cold the liquid detergent in my trunk freezes solid.)

And I pick up a copy of *The Ascent to Truth* - which has peace symbol I made upon my sister's grave today on the cover - from the library.)

January 22

(2Sm.1:1-4,11-12,19,23-27; Ps.80:2-7;
Mk.3:20-21)

Today is the anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision and so a day of mourning. We have our pro-life Holy Hour, and I complete my novena pilgrimage thinking of and praying for the souls of the aborted and those who aborted them. In prayer the Blessed Mother seems to tell me "now" is the time (for an end to this grave sin).

We must cry, for we are surrounded by this sin and overwhelmed by its horror.

O Lord, may now indeed be the time.
Let us pray.

(The graces of the Lord begin to overwhelm me;
I am finding a great thirst for His presence
and His Church.)

January 23

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

Respect Life Sunday and our priest gives a powerful preaching on the sin of abortion. How like Ninevah is this country (and how like Jonah our priest today).

We must all do as we are called - the priest in his preaching, the mother in her raising her children, each to his own call. The priest also expresses doubts about how well he and his brother priests speak out against abortion. And how well do we all?

It is time to awake.

Lord, now may we awake
and walk with you.

(The Lord blesses our ministry to those in the nursing home today.)

January 24 (2Sm.5:1-7,10; Ps.89:20-22,25-26; Mk.3:22-30)

What's good is good,
and Jesus is good.
And all the Lord blesses, such as David's reign,
is good.

I pray the Lord bless me as I begin student teaching
at a local high school today. May it be the first
day of a fruitful employment.

(It was passing this school I smelled roses (in April) on
more than one occasion. At the time I had driven to N.J.
from Florida to interview for a job at another high school.)

Lord, bless the work of our hands
and make us fruitful.

January 25

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

The Conversion of St. Paul.

On a snowy day (no school) on which I do little but sleep and eat and pray, I perform a rather exceptional pilgrimage: I go out through the snow to the neighboring town where the pilgrim church is. It seemed an unlikely possibility this morning, but I prayed to the Lord and he gave me the confidence I sought and cleared the way. (As I left a neighbor warned, "You'll never find a parking space," but of course there was one in front of my house upon my return.) I desired to find a measure of Paul's courage, and the Lord was compliant with His grace.

Lord, may we all find our call in you,
and fulfill your work in our lives.

(Notes: Time was limited when I went out, and the ice on my windows looked as if it would prevent my going, but at the moment it seemed darkest, the ice began to melt and break up. Then my neighbor doubted that I would get out of the parking space, but the car went right through the snow... After Mass and prayer, a kind elderly woman asked me where I was from and expressed surprise that I had come from Jersey City - though it's really not that far. I told her I'd come for the pilgrimage; she understood, and I kissed her. I believe I will try to attend daily Mass at this church - Sts. Peter and Paul - a cavernous red-brick structure which reminds me of the catacombs, from which the Church may soon be emerging.)

January 26

(2Sm.7:4-17; Ps.89:4-5,27-30; Mk.4:1-20)

<Proper first reading not proclaimed.>

Where shall be my yield?
My house how shall the Lord bless?

Will all His Word be choked off
and bear no fruit,
or will I become bountiful?

There must be a way, and I must find it -
a lighted path awaits us all.

O Lord, this House your Church
please bless with your grace,
and every member in it,
that all might come to know you well
and grow to perfect fulfillment.

January 27

(2Sm.7:18-19,24-29; Ps.132:1-5,11-14,Lk.1:32;
Mk.4:21-25)

We must shine our light forth
or it shall be dimmed.

I commend a young woman whom I overhear speaking of the Lord. Though she is separated from the House proper, it is encouraging to hear His Name spoken of well. And a Jehovah's Witness approaches me at work as I eat my lunch and read my Hours...

It is time for we who have the benefits of living in the House of God to now come praising the Lord - we have been gifted, privileged, and must share our blessings.

And I read of rumblings in China, as the government takes action in opposition to religions (including Catholic) out of fear for a growing thirst for faith...

O Lord, let your true light shine.

January 28

(2Sm.11:1-10,13-17; Ps.51:3-7,10-11; Mk.4:26-34)

An appropriate day for me to go to Confession - a Friday on which David's sin is exposed, Psalm 51 the psalm. And the priest points out that a little bit of sin, a little bit of lust can cause great tragedy, as a little bit of goodness, a little bit of love can lead to heaven's kingdom.

I would sow good seed and grow in the grace of God -
I pray sin not overtake me.

Lord, lead me to do your will
in my teaching,
and in my life.

May I remain with you.

January 29

(2Sm.12:1-7,10-17; Ps.51:12-17; Mk.4:35-41)

David could not control the lust which visited him,
but the Lord controls the wind and the waves -
all is under His authority.

And there is a certain wisdom which is upon me today,
in particular at Holy Hour, as I learn by the grace of God
to control my desires. Indeed, His graces overwhelm me like
a fire, like light filling my mind. (Though it does spill
over and makes me a little sharp with others.) All the
Masses, Confessions, prayers, and pilgrimages show effect
at Holy Hour, in prayer; I begin to think of what Merton
says in *The Ascent To Truth* about acquired and infused
wisdom, etc. and especially about the Name of God.

Merton states, in faith, that there is no specific means
to mystical union with the LORD, but I wonder if His NAME
is not a means. And contemplating and speaking "YHWH"
in a state of grace I am infused with wisdom to resolve
paradoxes of light and dark, birth and death; for example,
how asceticism, dying to the world, possessing nothing,
is the source of joy, of life, of possessing *all* things.

And the significance of the NAME intensifies: "YH" -
breathing in, life and light, birth; "WH" - breathing out,
death and darkness, the cross... Breathing is life here on
earth. (In heaven it is not; I think we no longer breathe.)
And Jesus is Man, Human - the subject of a new Humanism
(should be).

And with Him and His purity is all authority.

Lord, your graces, of forgiveness and wisdom,
set my mind and soul afire.
Let the flame burn for you alone,
and in your way.

(You can't breathe in if you don't breathe out - and vice
versa - and so the parallel paths of light and dark which
lead to God.

My body is exhausted as my mind shines...
I try to sleep but am repeatedly awakened.)

January 30

(Dt.18:15-20; Ps.95:1-2,6-9; 1Cor.7:32-35;
Mk.1:21-28)

The readings today prompt several questions regarding my life and even what was written here yesterday. First, is my prophecy true? Is what I say about God's NAME correct? And what of all my writings...?

Second, should I marry? It is clear to me as I reflect even on my day yesterday how true St. Paul's words are. I came from such profound prayer, and soon found myself in anxiety primarily in interaction with my friend.

Still I ask to what the Lord is leading me. Still I seek not to harden my heart. Still I look to be like Him. And in this year, in these days, I trust He will answer (and I will obey).

Daily pilgrimage continues, and this may be a source of casting the demons from me thoroughly.

Lord, help me to trust your word will come
and I will follow in confidence.

January 31 (2Sm.15:13-14,30,16:5-13; Ps.3:2-7; Mk.5:1-20)

(Actually, priest read greatest commandment gospel from Mark
- I don't find it designated for John Bosco...?)

If the Legion could be cast from the man at Gerasene
and David find forgiveness after His afflictions,
then there is hope.

The Lord continues to hear my cries as I continue my
pilgrimages. And should Don Bosco be a patron saint
as I begin to teach in the high school? His instruction
is certainly blessed. We must love and we must lead.

Lord, continue your graces growing in me,
though I fall short in charity.

February 1

(2Sm.18:9-10,14,24-25,30-19:3; Ps.86:1-6;
Mk.5:21-43)

The king no doubt finds himself guilty by his sin - bringing the sword into his house - of his rebellious son's death. And, yes, death is but sleep, so, indeed, trust; do not fear.

I wrote a poem on Sunday -

At My Sister's Grave

There is peace.

I need such peace and healing as I become exhausted in recent days, and grow anxious... The peace is with me at this moment (though it wasn't earlier in a phone conversation re a company's having no record of a check I mailed to them and received cancelled from my bank); may anxiety not return later in the face of tiredness, of overwork.

Lord, touch and heal me from my fear,
and let your peace remain with me.

(My pilgrimages serve in this year as a washing clean my garments in Christ's blood.)

February 2

(Mal.3:1-4; Ps.24:1-6,8; Heb.2:14-18; Lk.2:22-40)

Only the pure of heart enter into the temple of God,
and so Jesus' entering there prepares the way for
us all to enter through the purity He offers forth.
If He had not gone before us, we could not enter,
for only He is pure and only in Him are we free.

Thank you, Lord, for coming to us in the flesh
and offering yourself so completely.
May we follow in your footsteps.

(Today I begin to search out what I can and cannot teach
re religion in my public school.)

February 3

(1Kgs.2:1-4,10-12; 1Chr.29:10-12; Mk.6:7-13)

Solomon is prepared, and the Twelve are sent out.
And are we fulfilling our call, our position?
And am I?

I am tired, very tired, and still not sure if it is a good,
Christ-like tired which drains me, or another.
Still I ask is this teaching that to which I am called.

Lord, please may I commend my life into your hands,
and bear the fruit of peace
only in your Name.
(Are there roses there?)

Indeed, I ask the Lord for a sign of such today,
and find signs of roses for sale next week.

February 4 (Sir.47:2-11; Ps.18:31,47,50-51; Mk.6:14-29)

It is well to praise Godly men - the anointed of the Lord are meant for our reverence, for it is they who praise Him most, with their lives.

Today I speak with the principal about using religious sources such as the story of David and Goliath, and he is not perturbed but remains calm and most reasonable about what can be done or not. And I believe I understand the distinction between indoctrinating or overplaying a religion and teaching *about* religion and God. This may be my call. (And he mentions too an opening in the ESL department, but I do not know how it would affect my student teaching status.)

Lord, let not the lusts of this world
distract us from you
and speaking and living your Word.

February 5

(1Kgs.3:4-13; Ps.119:9-14; Mk.6:30-34)

Today I am pulled from all sides like never before, having more things than could be done in two days, but I do not react with love as Jesus did when belabored, but with anxiety and fear. Last week I screamed in jest in my car after coming from an extraordinarily crowded supermarket; today the screams are genuine.

The priest spoke this morning of homosexuality and its machinations infiltrating the Church, and in the Holy Hour I volunteer to suffer for my own sins and to take those of these lost souls. Did this have anything to do with my screams? Or is it just my own sin and confusion, my own foolishness and blindness - my own separation from Christ?

And I wonder when I will be able "to distinguish right from wrong."

Lord, teach me your decrees
and cleanse your Church of sin.

February 6

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

How like Job I feel, still battling exhaustion. I excuse myself from a couple of commitments, and after a three-hour sleep that seemed but five minutes, I believe I could sleep on for hours on end... completely lacking in strength.

But then I sit up and say my Hours: I am suddenly strengthened. I had prayed that whatever I can do or not do be the Lord's will today, and now I found inspiration to visit the pilgrim church (which I thought I would miss) and my friend's church for baptisms there (she wanted me to go).

Lord, all strength is in you;
our lives are in your hands.
Please, as I struggle,
be with me to guide me.

February 7

(1Kgs.8:1-7,9-13; Ps.132:6-10; Mk.6:53-56)

I am not well, continuing tired, and I wonder if I am cut out for this kind of work or if perhaps the Lord does call me into His temple. Do I just need to develop strength, or should I follow a path like that of the son of a teacher to whom I speak - the consecrated life?

May the Lord take the exhaustion from me and provide clarity of mind, peace of soul, strength of body - wholeness in His Name.

Each day I come to you, O Lord;
accept my offering I pray.

February 8

(1Kgs.8:22-23,27-30; Ps.84:2-5,10-11; Mk.7:1-13)

The Lord deigns to dwell in a temple, to dwell in His Church, in its sacraments and prayers, and to dwell in us - but though the physical universe is made holy by Christ's taking our form, we must not worship the body nor give it undue attention.

I have occasion to speak up in class today against seeking happiness in material things, essentially chastising students against shallow pleasures and encouraging them to seek deeper, more fulfilling and longer lasting, *true* happiness.

Lord, make our temple holy,
and accept the prayers we offer here.

(It is encouraging that the kids seem to understand these things.)

February 9

(1Kgs.10:1-10; Ps.37:5-6,30-31,39-40; Mk.7:14-23)

The temple is glorious - and this too is in the hands of the Lord - but the temple is passing away and there shall not be left one stone upon another. The body is beautiful and a blessing of God, but where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered. Be not attached to the wisdom and riches of this world; they are but earthly means to the heavenly reign.

Merton is correct in defending the importance of reason in the search for union with God, and also correct in seeing its irrelevance once that union is attained.

Lord, we thank you for all your gifts;
may they serve to lead us to purity
of heart.

February 10

(1Kgs.11:4-13; Ps.106:3-4,35-37,40; Mk.7:24-30)

Curious readings for the event of this day.

Was observed by supervisor for the first time today. Her only recommendation was to be more sensitive to the religious diversity in my (ESL) classroom - I had used the example of not getting the Christmas present you wanted to illustrate "disappointed."

I feel myself called to bring teaching about religion to the classroom, to bring education, openness and a true tolerance to the school. Two situations I wish to avoid: first, doing as Solomon has done in giving himself over to any and all religious practices (thank God such extreme paganism does not exist in the members of my class - I know of having Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians); second, the use of my position as a podium for indoctrination. The gospel makes it clear that all can come to Jesus, if they come in faith.

Lord, if this would be my course,
I pray you bless its path.

(Police cars seem to be everywhere this morning
(and afternoon) as I drive to church and work.)

February 11

(1Kgs.11:29-32,12:19; Ps.81:9-15; Mk.7:31-37)

Israel is rent from the House of Judah - sin brings division; and Jesus opens the ears of the deaf man. (I always think of the charismatic healing priest formerly in our parish when I hear this gospel; he said Mass in our church tonight, but I was not there.)

Some difficulties with students today causes me to question teaching vocation (what of art, religion, study...). But perhaps I shall find confidence.

O Lord, let us hear!
Let us speak!

February 12

(1Kgs.12:26-32,13:33-34; Ps.106:4,6-7,19-22;
Mk.8:1-10)

Only Jesus can make a place holy,
only God ordains where His temple stands,
not man.

Jesus in a deserted place says a blessing and distributes
His bread to feed the people. But not on any high place
will God allow a vain worship. A calf made by hands will
not be accepted.

It troubles me somewhat that my friend's name
is also associated with false worship...

In Jerusalem may your name be praised, O Lord.

February 13

(Lv.13:1-2,44-46; Ps.32:1-2,5,7,11;
1Cor.10:31-11:1; Mk.1:40-45)

The Lord continues to make me clean this Jubilee Year, particularly through my daily pilgrimages for plenary indulgence. Never before have I addressed the cleansing of my soul so deliberately and with such real results. And I long to come closer to God.

Lord, thoroughly found your healing graces in my soul.
Make me whole.

February 14

(Js.1:1-11; Ps.119:67-68,71-72,75-77;
Mk.8:11-13)

I seem to be finding the "pure joy" of which James speaks.
(And certainly I must seek wisdom.)

The fires of purgation are coming not only from my daily pilgrimages, but also from my student teaching in a high school. I was "tested" Friday (this is Monday) by the behavior of the students upon being left alone with them for the day. It caused me to think, to question myself and my ability. And I came up with a sort of philosophy, based on my "Four Corners" treatise.

First, one must be at peace with God, in His grace. (A let-down in perseverance in God's way may have given students an opening through which to persecute me.) Second, one must love, in this case, the students. If you do not love God, you will not love the students. You may find yourself there for the money, and you will not be able to maintain yourself. Third, you must have the knowledge, the planning, the wisdom. (e.g. Teacher showed excellent wisdom today in developing a seating plan and making the idea seem to come from the students.) Fourth, one must have strength, especially physical strength from eating and sleeping properly (I was most tired last Friday, and fasting...), in order to properly administer discipline.

Note: Sign of roses on this Valentine's Day was not particularly strong, especially since I could not buy one (had to be ordered last week).

Lord, a clear path set before me
to walk in your ways.
(Your will be done.)

February 15

(Js.1:12-18; Ps.94:12-15,18-19; Mk.8:14-21)

The priest speaks my soul when he asks how many times we have had to say to people, "Don't you understand?", as I try to communicate with my friend... and become angry.

Perseverance I pray for to endure all the trials of this earth. (I stay home today to find respite from my exhaustion.)

We must have our eyes and hearts open to hear His call.

Lord, through the dangers lead me;
teach me your ways.

February 16

(Js.1:19-27; Ps.15:1-5; Mk.8:22-26)

This morning I see clearly (and check my reflection)
from where temptation comes, and God is with me to
face it without fear and, so, conquer it.

A prank phone call this morning confirms that temptations do
not come from God, but the devil, and that innocence is meet
to stand against them.

Lord, open our eyes
and make us strong
in walking with you.

February 17

(Js.2:1-9; Ps.34:2-7; Mk.8:27-33)

Clearly, God's ways are not our ways;

His thoughts and judgments are far above ours.

Man judges by appearance, by the laws of this life -
in short, by the created things and not the Creator.
The Spirit is what gives life, and the Spirit cannot
be judged according to the flesh.

May we judge more by your Word, O Lord;

may your mind be with your Church.

February 18

(Js.2:14-24,26; Ps.112:1-6; Mk.8:34-9:1)

"Happy are those who do what the Lord commands."

Again, we must bear fruit worthy of the kingdom -
this is our obligation (by our very beings).

Continuing to read Merton, he speaks on just what the gospel iterates - we must deny ourselves to find union with Him. This is perhaps the most basic teaching of the gospel, and is present throughout it.

In doing for God we die to ourselves
and come to life in heaven.

Dear Jesus, let us be your flesh and blood;
may your cross be inscribed upon our hearts.

February 19

(Js.3:1-10; Ps.12:2-5,7-8; Mk.9:2-13)

If I could only do what Scripture says and not what my own tongue would utter, then I might come to see the living God before me, then Jesus would be with me and I would accept His cross.

The key to the purgation which I now endure is the controlling of my tongue, especially my thoughts - reining them in from straying.

Lord, be with me in this process.

(And today I find a measure of charity - giving the smiling old man in the pilgrimage church a few dollars to share with a homeless woman who inhabits it (contributing to his ministry) - and it smooths the path before me.

And I try to learn from Merton not to practice acts of penance for their own sake, but for the purpose of coming closer to God.)

February 20

(Is.43:18-19,21-22,24-25; Ps.41:2-5,13-14;
2Cor.1:18-22; Mk.2:1-12)

Forgiveness. Forgiveness comes through Jesus.
Forgiveness is possible on this earth, and through men,
men who are in Jesus.

Let us come to the well and drink of His grace.

Lord, forgive us our sins
and renew the face of the earth.
From death let us rise
to walk with you once more.

(TV show about a man who heals; some possess such gifts.
But it is the priest who is the ordinary means through
whom such graces flow.

As regards myself - there is a Jubilee Mass for deacons
today at the Sacred Heart Cathedral... I discover this
while performing my pilgrimage, but do not stay for the
celebration.)

February 21 (Js.3:13-18; Ps.19:8-10,15; Mk.9:14-29)

I am praying that the lustful and proud, fearful and lazy, blind spirit be cast from me this Great Jubilee year and that I will be found in my right mind, in innocence and peace, with a wisdom that will shine forth and bear fruit unto the kingdom of heaven.

Indeed, before the Blessed Sacrament today I am captivated by the Lord and stay to share in a rosary after Mass, and another mystery on my own...

By these prayers and these pilgrimages I believe I shall be made clean. (His presence is within me.)

Lord, may I live rightly by you
with all my life
and all my gifts.

(Continue this good work in me.)

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

It is appropriately ironic I suppose that it is on this the feast day of the Chair of Peter that my friend tells me, and seriously, that she doesn't want to see me anymore. It is basically the Chair of Peter which stands between us - but I cannot deny what is so dear to me. (Peter's power and that of the apostles and their followers is eminently clear in today's gospel and throughout Scripture.)

It is also somewhat ironic that her expression of this desire for separation comes just as I have begun to control myself against temptation and we had really started to become friends.

Perhaps the Lord is calling me to make this sacrifice for His will and kingdom.

(And I can barely sit due to pain in my hip/back area.)

Lord, come.

February 23

(Js.4:13-17; Ps.49:2-3,6-11,Mt.5:3; Mk.9:38-40)

(Actually written the following day.)

This day I have such severe lower back pain, I can barely move without wincing. It is most agonizing.

The cause of my suffering, I believe, is that I try too hard to take matters into my own hands, pushing my religious practice to the extreme and becoming compulsive about my work. So, I kneel too long on hard surfaces and retain excessive tension, all the while ignoring proper exercise of my body - against the warnings of my friend. (And it is kindness toward her which is perhaps therefore most lacking.)

I also lose my wallet...

And still I wonder why we can't live together peaceably!
(We can. We must.)

Lord, may I live and work in right relation to you
and my neighbor.

February 24

(Js.5:1-6; Ps.49:14-20,Mt.5:3; Mk.9:41-50)

(Rising later, I go to parish church - making pilgrimage later; priest/administrator uses other readings, from whence I know not.)

As I gradually recover from my suffering, returning it seems to strength, I consider again my desire to avoid the fires of purgatory (much less hell). If indeed suffering for our sins is so disturbing in this time, what must it be like then?

And yet, oh how we fall into sin and distraction again and again, unknowingly, yet culpably. Again and again we become blind to our disobedience, and the Lord must chastise us to bring us back. I thank God He does, but I wish I would need less of it - and none of it upon death.

And I thank the Lord for finding the salt of peace in my relationship with my friend. (I will go out loving.)

Lord, forgive us our sins,
and protect us from every evil
as we make our way through this life.

(And thank you for your healing graces - heal all in need.)

February 25

(Js.5:9-12; Ps.103:1-4,8-9,11-12; Mk.10:1-12)

James offers encouragement, but my trials of late do tend to overwhelm me.

And I cry this evening for the separation from my friend which is becoming real (the first Friday I have not spent with her and her mother).

I must endure and not turn to sin.
I must be patient and find wisdom.
I must not be afraid.

(But sometimes it seems there is nothing to live for.)

Lord, how patient Job was in his trials;
grant me a measure of such patient suffering.
I am so weak and blind.
Lead me (especially in ways of marriage).

February 26

(Js.5:13-20; Ps.141:1-3,8; Mk.10:13-16)

I begin the day in prayer and end it in song, because
"the elders of the church" pray over me (in Confession).
My prayer comes like incense before the Lord,
and He blesses my path.

O Lord, may we ever be like children before you.

(I cannot seem to tie it into the Scripture readings, but
there is a theme re the black man running through the day.
I search out information on slavery (for class) in the
library; on TV show main character fights against the Klan
to save a church (and unity); and a black woman is most kind
to me at checkout line in supermarket. And I see several
interracial couples, and speak about Mary to my friend...
May all God's children come to Him.)

February 27

(Hos.2:16-17,21-22; Ps.103:1-4,8,10,12-13;
2Cor.3:1-6; Mk.2:18-22)

We must be born of the Spirit.
Our lives must be made new by the blood of Christ
and find life in the Spirit,
not the flesh.

The Lord opens new paths for us;
He takes away our sins,
our bondage to this earth,
and prepares us for being filled
by the Holy Spirit.

Let us thank Him for His kindness, His grace.
May our lives be lived according to His Word.

Lord, today we eat your body and drink your blood.
May these vessels be readied for your glory.

(In prayer, in His temple,
the presence of heavenly angels seems to descend upon me.
A new word, not of these letters, I seem to hear -
this as a Spanish Mass is readied for beginning
and I say my pilgrimage devotion.)

February 28

(1Pt.1:3-9; Ps.111:1-2,5-6,9-10; Mk.10:17-27)

We must be with God.

I continue "to suffer the distress of many trials", having lost my wallet and my hat, and now locking my keys in my car... and I wonder if the Lord would not just take all these worldly things from me. (I don't think I'd mind if I knew it were so.)

This forgetfulness is becoming commonplace in a life in which it was almost unknown, and I can't see a good end to it till I finish student teaching. (And this is really just the tip of the iceberg.)

I must be with the Lord to see my way through this impossible state.

Lord, help me.

(Funny, today I receive new ATM card, credit card, and AAA card in the mail, and pick up new driver's license and registration. The world comes back to me.)

February 29

(1Pt.1:10-16; Ps.98:1-4; Mk.10:28-31)

We are last. In the line of salvation, we in these final days are last. But we shall be first, we shall be with the Lord, if we walk with Him, making all men and women our brothers and sisters and suffering all things for the sake of heaven, for the souls of the blessed.

I must continue to strive to live soberly,
if I hope to be holy as He.

Lord, guard me and guide me along the way.
(For much of what is ahead remains cloaked in darkness.)

(For what it's worth, discovered wallet today.)

March 1 (1Pt.1:18-25; Ps.147:12-15,19-20; Mk.10:32-45)

He laid down His life for us.
God became man.

And now we men must lay down our lives
to become like God.

I speak with a Jehovah's Witness today;
they do not believe in the divinity of Christ.
And two separate people, less than a half hour apart
(as I go to meet with my friend), mention monastic
life to me.

To what, O Lord, do you call me?
Still I do not know.
Help me to remember you.

(And I realize that as when in difficult times we must
remember our joy and vice versa, so it is in the Body
of Christ: the poor must take refuge in the rich, and
the rich support the poor, for we are one.)

March 2 (1Pt.2:2-5,9-12; Ps.100:2-5; Mk.10:46-52)

We must be eager to find Jesus.
We must call out to Him
as He passes us on the road.

We must remain faithful,
fed always at His table
and by the Mother's milk.

Let us follow the Lord ever closely.

I read of a man taking quite literally his imitation
of Jesus - dressing in a white robe, walking and speaking
of Jesus, staying where they welcome him and accepting
and using no money... We must all be eager to serve Him.

Lord, I want to be.

(Teaching seems to be getting into my blood
and into my flesh and bones.)

March 3 (1Pt.4:7-13; Ps.96:10-13; Mk.11:11-26)

The power of prayer.

Am I ready to believe I shall receive what I ask for?

Ironically, my friend says that I should be ready to move mountains for what I want. I certainly would that she understood Catholicism and even that she would come to believe - but I do have inner doubts, reservations.

Lord, this I offer you.
Increase my faith,
and help me to forgive.

(Swimming in pool at school today -
other ironies abound:
in the water with my Baptist friend;
her instructor a friend of my long-time neighbor,
he the SCUBA instructor/fireman with a pool
(the pool which was part of my vision)...

And looking in the mirror, I notice the face of suffering -
it has become part of my visage of late.)

March 4 (Jd.17,20-25; Ps.63:2-6; Mk.11:27-33)

(Actually, readings I heard were for pilgrimage Mass.)

On this the feast of St. Casimir, we visit, as a parish, the Polish pilgrimage church in a neighboring town, and I make efforts to see that those who are confused or unaware of requirements for plenary indulgence (when I mentioned them to the priest administrator who accompanied one bus, he thought one just needed to enter the church) <are informed,> while, through my devotion, I seek to snatch souls, as it were, from the fires of purgatory.

Where does this teaching come from?
Does it not have divine origin?
Is the Church not designated by Christ
to serve as instrument for the dispensation
of His mercy and forgiveness?

You must say so, or not know.

Lord, make us truly one with you
and doing as you would do.

(I continue to strive to survive my trials,
getting stronger.)

March 5

(Dt.5:12-15; Ps.81:2-8,10-11; 2Cor.4:6-11; Mk.2:23-3:6)

Considering the Sabbath and its central significance to the Israelite community, to the Jewish nation, I realize that we are indeed the new Jews - that yes, Christ, a Jew, is the quintessential man, but that we Christians, and especially the Catholic Church, are the Body of Christ, and so we are the born-again Jews. We are the quintessential humans. We must act like it; we must be a light for the world, extending to the four corners of the universe - to the Protestant heart, the Buddhist mind, the Hindu soul, and the Islamic body. And we must be ready to die for others, as Christ has done.

In your hands are all things, Lord.
May we be worthy of becoming your face.

March 6 (2Pt.1:2-7; Ps.91:1-2,14-16,; Mk.12:1-12)

Today's gospel confirms yesterday's thought: yes, Jesus is the cornerstone of the new structure, the new Church, the New Jerusalem; and now His priests reside in the Catholic faith.

In this vineyard we all toil, but the ox is not muzzled as it plows the fields - we have His holy blood (and body) to feed us on the way.

Lord, bless your Church.
Please, make it faithful to your Word.
(Build us up in you.)

(Today I dance for the first time in years (in home alone to music). Where has been such emotional exercise?)

March 7 (2Pt.3:12-15,17-18; Ps.90:2-4,10,14,16; Mk.12:13-17)

He answers all questions, for He knows all things;
we cannot trick Him.

And if we remain faithful, if we strive "to be found without
stain or defilement" and grow in grace, He shall answer all
our prayers - all our lives will be made right with Him.

Give me your patience, Lord,
to make it through these days.

(Did I mention that I smelled roses in a stairwell at the
high school after having come from a lunchtime meeting about
a multicultural event? The two students who passed by said
they didn't smell anything.)

March 8 (Jl.2:12-18; Ps.51:3-6,12-14,17; 2Cor.5:20-6:2;
Mt.6:1-6,16-18)

Ash Wednesday, and so it begins -
the holy season of Lent in this Great Jubilee Year.

One can only expect that this shall be a most special time,
a crucial time for a Church in need of renewal. "Now is the
acceptable time!" if we are "not to receive the grace of God
in vain."

And in my own life the crisis time with regard to my friend
is upon me, as is that for my student teaching and my
decision about my calling.

Into His hands let us commend our spirits,
holding a prayer and faith deep in our hearts.

(Patience. And the cross.)

O Lord, bless us in this time in a mighty way;
may we see your hand at work
renewing the face of the earth.

March 9

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

Choose life! And yet life is a kind of death for us Christians. To live means to die - to die to ourselves, to die to this world. And then we shall have life, the true life that is in Christ, that waits for us in eternity.

"Stop and smell the roses" is our idiom for today. But I rush through so much that my leg feels as if it will fall off. When shall I find patience? When shall I rest in Him?

And *Land* is the short story we read.
Land is what the Israelites inherit;
but Christ's body is as our land,
which will bring us to the kingdom.

May life be ours, O Lord,
in all its glory
with you.

March 10 (Is.58:1-9; Ps.51:3-6,18-19; Mt.9:14-15)

O that our fasting would be right,
that our penance would be true:
it would unite us to Him who is our life.

I wake in the middle of the night, and it is not until I find
blessed repentance for the sins of the day, especially anger,
that I am able to rest again. "A broken, humbled heart"
saves me.

(How sorely I need patience - calm, poise, and balance -
to see me through.)

O Lord, bless our fast this Lenten season;
make your Church acceptable to you.

March 11

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

I am a sinner. I see it in how unprepared I am to meet the Lord; I cry to think of His overwhelming light and the measure of malice and lack of concern for the poor still in me. (How shall we stand with Him?)

But He is always our refuge; if we but call upon Him, He will always answer - this must always be remembered. And He will repair the breach in His people and in His Church, for He has come to do so.

Come to Him.
Sit at His table.
Find forgiveness
and a change of heart.

Lord, heal us.
Lead us.

March 12

(Gn.9:8-15; Ps.25:4-10; 1Pt.3:18-22; Mk.1:12-15)

Jesus goes into the desert.
When He returns,
He comes with the remedy for our sins;
 He comes with a new covenant,
 a new rainbow
 to serve as a sign of our forgiveness -
 if we but repent.

I find myself filled with a sorrow for my sins, and for
sin in general. (The foolishness of my youth returns to
my mind.) And I am sick, and I am weak. But I make my
pilgrimage, and there find refuge in the Lord. There He
restores my soul, in prayer and in the Stations of the Cross.

He was so patient. He suffered for us.
Who are we to complain?

Lord, fulfill my sorrow and repentance,
 that I might be whole again.

March 13

(Lv.19:1-2,11-18; Ps.19:8-10,15,Jn.6:63; Mt.25:31-46)

Love is the law, the law of our God, the law of the Creator -
the Law of Life. Praise God that He *is* a God of life,
that He is just, and that all creation is ruled by love.

Jesus, you are love, you are life.
The laws of the Father refresh my soul
as I follow them unreservedly:
they bring me peace and refuge,
strength and renewal.

And you, you O Lord of Love, Word of Life made flesh,
are the fulfillment of these holy commandments.

O Lord, may I know the grace of following you.

(I see today my anxiety and my sickness come from not
trusting in the hand of God and putting my life in His
glorious power. He does indeed rule all, in His love.)

March 14

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

O that it might be the Word of God that lives in me,
that I might be fruitful.

But for Him to make His home in me, for my life to become His
field, I must have a sincere, forgiving heart. My words must
be true and my love must be real.

It seemed to me in saying my short Stations of the Cross
that my prayer was coming closer to communicating with
the Lord: it sometimes occurs to me that I have never
been completely open and honest with Him, that I have
never really communicated with Him - that I do not know
how to pray. Though I know there have been times I have
felt His presence so near, yet must I come closer to Him.

(And is my rosary valuable as a discipline even
if it is often not said with concentration?)

Lord, take my prayers, guide my prayers.
Make my life your prayer.

March 15

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

Repent and reform; show your contrition by your actions.
Those who are contrite and humbled, the Lord will not scorn.

It is so refreshing that the Lord always accepts those who
humble themselves before Him. It gives us hope as we fall
to our knees. And it is so blessed to have this time to
repent and make more room for God in our lives.

I struggle through each day, but take refuge and find
strength in God and in prayer.

Lord, accept my trials as penance I pray.
Lead me through this walk,
that I shall not die, but live.

March 16

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

Esther pours out her heart before the Lord,
and her mouth is filled with the Holy Spirit -
she receives the answer to her prayer
(even as she prays).

For the Lord is faithful; He hears the broken-hearted.
True words cannot help but reach the ears of He who is Truth.
And so, to speak the truth is to find answer from Him.

Those who seek Him find Him.
This is His will.

Lord, help me to find you
and your way in my life.
I beg your grace and blessing upon my days.

March 17

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

We must do what is right; we must walk the path of virtue until the end, never wavering, never turning to the right or to the left, and always calling on the Lord for forgiveness.

And the Lord continues to work on this wicked man. There is yet anger in him which needs to be rooted out; there is yet iniquity from which he must turn. But I continue to seek Him.

It seemed a eucharistic minister from whom I begged the last drop in an apparently empty cup last week had been angry with me (not looking at me), but today I look into her face as I take the cup, and the barrier seems to go.

Lord, you are good and forgiving;
may my conversion to your way be complete.

March 18 (Dt.26:16-19; Ps.119:1-5,7-8; Mt.5:43-48)

If He is our Father, we should be like Him, perfect as He is.
If we follow His commands and love as He does, loving all,
we cannot but be holy.

After Confession this morning, the words and prayers of the
Mass ring so clear, ring so true... The Lord comes so near.
My desire for Him is being piqued. I wish I could always
be so clean, so pure (as He is).

Lord, teach us to love.
Teach us to take seriously your command
to love our enemies.
Let us be such a light in this world,
never showing hatred,
always carrying love.

(This is our call as Christians - the cross.)

March 19

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

The Beloved Son's life is offered for our sins -
the law and the prophets,
the saints basking in His light,
agree...

He is the Son of God
and His death and His rising therefrom
saves us.

Deeper must we go into His death
to fly unto heaven with Him.

O Lord, continue to guard me and guide me
through my trials.
Grant me a glimpse of your glory,
that it might buoy me up.

March 20

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

Jesus is come; born into the House of David, born in faith,
He is the One who fulfills all prophecy.

Today is celebrated the feast day of St. Joseph and the House
the Lord has built here on earth, fulfilling His promise to
David as well as Abraham. And clear it becomes to me that
that House is now the Catholic Church. The faith may exist
virtually anywhere, but the Catholic Church is the chosen
form to hold that faith (as Mary was the chosen Mother and
Joseph the foster father). And it is the faith that saves
and not the church - just as it is the water that sates
thirst and not the river - yet if one speaks of "religion"
and the form that God has chosen here on earth, it is the
Catholic Church. It is the temple of the New Jerusalem,
necessary until we come to heaven where there is no temple,
where all only worship in spirit and truth.

Lord, bring together faith and form in your House.
Rebuild the holy altar, that due sacrifice
may be offered to you.

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

We must indeed clean up our act.

The Pope recently asked publicly, ceremoniously, for forgiveness of the sins of members of the Church through its history. It is a humble and wise act. We must recognize sin, and forgiveness is much-needed all around. But it must be recognized too that though the water the river carries may at times become polluted, the river remains. The river of the Church may even at times begin to dry up; but the river is still there - it always returns...

I begin a research project with my classes on "My Religion". I have Hindus, Muslims, Catholics, Buddhists and Sikhs in my classes. I pray this work will be a means to harmony, to understanding - to a true tolerance.

O Lord, may all turn to you;
 bless all your children.

(And the Pope begins a pilgrimage to the Holy Land this day.)

March 22

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

The Lord comes "to give His life as a ransom for many."
Jesus comes to die, to suffer and be killed,
and to pray for those who kill Him.
Jesus comes to show the Father's love.

Those who are great in the kingdom are necessarily great in love, for God is love. And love is never more evident than in suffering and dying for others, especially those who are your persecutors.

We are called to the kingdom: we are called to love,
we are called to die - we are called to drink of His cup.
This is our blessed call.

It is not easy to drink of this cup of love, Lord,
except that we remember you.

March 23 (Jer.17:5-10; Ps.1:1-4,6,40:5; Lk.16:19-31)

Jesus has risen from the dead, and am I yet convinced?

Let us not be wicked, or we will be condemned.

Let it not be so, O Lord;

let us not veer off from following you.

Let us not wither, even now as your graces are offered forth.

Let us stay the path of goodness and virtue.

(Even in class virtue and vice are spoken of,
and hypocrisy.)

Vice yet needs to be trained from me.)

March 24

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

Supplanting. Ever supplanting. As Jacob supplanted Esau, so the Christian Church supplants the Jewish. And supplanted soon will be the kingdom of this world by the kingdom of heaven.

But if we should attempt to supplant another, as his brothers do to Joseph, the Lord will inevitably thwart our plans - and it is we who shall be supplanted.

All must be left in God's hands.

O Lord, supplant evil with good in my life,
that I might be a good servant
in your vineyard
and become your friend
in heaven.

March 25

(Is.7:10-14,8:10; Ps.40:7-11,8:9; Heb.10:4-10;
Lk.1:26-38)

The Annunciation.

"A body you prepared for me."

Mere sacrifice is no longer sufficient; we must
give our very lives to God - we must live His will.
(And I see I fall short.)

Jesus comes in the flesh, God living amongst us as a fellow
human being. I sense during Holy Hour the interplay of time
and eternity, of flesh and spirit, of sound and silence - of
words and the Word - as I contemplate Jesus who is from the
beginning being born, living, and dying in our time. By
Mary does His flesh come among us, and so all is made holy.

And He is one as we are called to be one with Him
and with the Father.

Holy Spirit, breathe upon us the eternal presence
of Christ the Son.

March 26

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

Will the temple be purified?
There are moments when I think it shall?

Appropriate on a Sunday we hear the Ten Commandments, a videotape of individuals witnessing to the blessing of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is played during the homily - this in preparation for a reconciliation weekend planned for our archdiocese in a couple of weeks. It seemed as if people were beginning to listen, as if the giant might awake from its sleep - as if Catholics might recognize and come to the graces offered forth by Christ and His Church. (We continue to hope.)

The Year of Great Jubilee marches on -
the pilgrimage continues...
may it bear lasting fruit.

O Lord, rebuild this temple in all its members
according to your Word.

March 27 (2Kgs.5:1-15; Ps.42:2-3,43:3-4; Lk.4:24-30)

When I am cleansed by the Lord, I pray I shall say, too,
"Now I know there is no God in all the earth, except in
Israel."

When shall we come face to face with Him?
When shall we no longer see with human eyes
and a human mind,
but look upon His majesty and His glory
and see all in His light?

These human eyes, this human heart,
must open to His presence
and trust in His Word.

O Lord, I am tired and on edge;
may my soul find rest in you.

March 28 (Dn.3:25,34-43; Ps.25:4-9; Mt.18:21-35)

The Lord has mercy on us,
and we should show the same.

(It is true - greatly forgiving has God been to me;
how foolish it would be not to forgive others.)

Retirement Mass and party for our powerful preaching
priest this evening; conversation with a devout Buddhist;
and a sense of sorrow and forgiveness for our administrator.

Lord, watch over and guide all things.
Let us never be proud,
but always forgiving.

March 29

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

The commandments, the laws - the words of God meant for our instruction, to keep us on the right path that we might live and prosper... They will live as long as there is life on earth, for it is they which bring life to earth. (In heaven we shall need them no more, for the Word will be all.)

Still trying, still grinding my way through Lent, through my work at student teaching and trying to stay on the right path and grow in grace... We must continue on following His ways until the end.

O Lord, may I be taught by your Word,
and may I learn my lesson well.

March 30

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

We must be with the Lord; we must not turn our backs to Him.
We must not be against God and His goodness, but for Him -
or we will not stand.

Why is it we harden our hearts against the Lord?
Why is it we have such pride?

May it be gone.

Lord, I pray your will be done in my life;
may I let your goodness rule me.

(Sister's birthday and I am applying for work as a teacher
in the public schools...)

March 31

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

Far from me is the reign of God today, as I am distracted by anxiety and anger and not filled with love. This tension stems mainly from my classes, where I have often been left alone of late, and from uncertainty and disappointment with regard to my friend.

What shall become of me, Lord?
Still I do not know.

May I return to you and to your love
and be fed with your wheat,
and take rest in your arms.

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

(Actually, happened upon a pilgrimage Mass,
but will consider the readings for the day.)

I have to humble myself today to find the Lord's forgiveness.
I have to realize I am a sinner, and a tear comes to my eye
to cleanse me. I have to see that, in the words of the
priest, I am but an ordinary man - it is the ordinary
Jesus calls.

Down to earth I am brought;
there it is I must walk
(on this pilgrimage).

None is better than another, for only Christ is good.

Lord, may my heart be broken,
that it might bleed for you,
that it might serve well in all I do.
(For if our hearts are not in our work,
it is all quite worthless.)

April 2

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

The Lord rescues us from Babylon, takes us from darkness, from sin, and brings us into the light of His love, His grace, His mercy...

I seek the truth for my own life, trying to come into the light, that the will of the Lord might be done and I might come into the holy land of heaven.

If the world, if the people desired to come into the light, to turn away from the darkness of sin - of physical and sexual abuse, of greed, of hatred and of violence... heaven would come to earth. To the degree we do this, heaven is here.

God is spirit, but when the Spirit dwells in man (as it has perfectly with Christ), it changes his flesh into heavenly form - uniting man to God.

Lord, take us from this Babylon.
From our exile, gather us unto you.

April 3 (Is.65:17-21; Ps.30:2,4-6,11-13; Jn.4:43-54)

Readings provide a ray of hope on a dark and tired morning - they are a measure of joy in the austerity of Lent.
(We shall be resurrected and live in His presence forever, and this will be but a phantom memory.)

On I go finishing my schooling, though I am not sure it is of the Lord's call. I pray this old man will someday find surety in the presence of the Lord.

Again I say, O Lord -
let thy will be done.

(Take me home.)

April 4 (Ez.47:1-9,12; Ps.46:2-3,5-6,8-9; Jn.5:1-3,5-16)

I am thirty-nine (nearly forty), a year more than those years suffered by the man in the gospel, and still I wait. Has a healing begun today with my friend returning my sister's ring, and with my beginning to see how foolish I am?

So many moments I recall today: discussion of the Nile River (and whether or not you can swim in it) with a Coptic acquaintance; a story of a man who put out his eye to avoid temptation - and later I close my eyes not to look upon my friend again; in class a question about looking at the sky, and how long it's been since I have taken the time... later I recall my heavenly thoughts (in clouds) of being a monk, ideas spoken to my friend over two years ago, and dismissed by her; medicated patches for healing; and in class I pose the pointed question: "Love or money: which is more important?" (And so it would show closure if this were my last lesson, the first having been on Valentine's Day.)

Lord, heal me with your water,
and let me never return to sin again.
To heaven take me
and those around me.

April 5

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

Jesus is that straight road which leads to the Father, for He and the Father are one, and to find Him is to find the Father.

How beautifully Jesus speaks of His oneness with the Father, and how powerfully. And how it reveals the Father's one love for us, and oneness with us - and our potential oneness with Him. For Jesus gives this same power to the Church and makes us one with the Father by uniting us to Himself.

Lord, that all may be one.

April 6 (Ex.32:7-14; Ps.106:4,19-23; Jn.5:31-47)

What do you believe?

Accepting "praise from one another" is akin to worshipping a golden calf: both are vain and lifeless, distracting from the true worship of God.

If we take pride in the work of our own hands, not turning to the Lord as the author of all works, then we are blind; then we have no light. And though He have patience with us for a time, we will never enter His kingdom with such an ill-disposed heart.

We must "seek the glory that comes from the One," and we shall live.

Lord, may my prayer focus better upon you.
Your Word be my breath and life.

(Reading an article on mantra and its relation to Christianity, I think again that "YHWH" is the WORD, the source of genuine meditation. No words can compare.)

April 7

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

I notice how the guys in the lunchroom at work have rather quickly realized my religious leanings. (I suppose it would be hard to miss since I pray, silently, before eating and read my prayer book there.) The odd remark occasionally passes their lips, but I take no offense - I wouldn't know what to do without such remarks - and I sense a certain respect... However, it is certain, too, that I fall far short of comparison to my Savior.

Tonight I attend the play *West Side Story* with my friend. It is more than ironic, since I began our relationship sharing the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* as part of a poem/artwork for her. (And we sort of met first and she first entered my car on West Side Avenue...) Our situation seems so similar in ways, the relevance cannot be missed.

And people seem in a good humor today...

Lord - our lives into your hands.
(I pray it shall be so.)

April 8

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

Where does God come from but heaven?

Where does God reside but heaven?

And where should we be?

And where is heaven?

In visiting three separate churches while making pilgrimage journey of Holy Hour, Confession, Mass and prayers, I see the purpose of the church pilgrimage as embodying and emphasizing our traveling to heaven, our journey there. Our prayers should always approach and enter those gates.

Yet certainly it is not to be taken too literally, for where is heaven? It is surely not a physical place, as a church or even a cloud: it is a spiritual 'place', and it is in our midst. We do not have to go anywhere to find it, nor will leaving this world/dying bring us necessarily closer. We come closer by dying to self, to this world, not by mere physical death. For it is not that the physical world is itself bad; it cannot be so because Jesus by coming into this world, and taking our form, has made all things holy, all things potentially blessed.

Jesus' coming has brought heaven into our midst. That is how heaven begins now, as we take on the body of Christ; as we live as He has, we enter heaven. It is not far from those who hear and do His will.

Lord, take us where you come from.

Help us to realize you are with us here today.

You are our shelter. You are our heaven.

April 9

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

Confirmation that as we turn from our sins, as God remembers them no more, we enter the kingdom where He is.

And I see again the Gentiles coming to Jesus, and what it means - it is His hour. The thirst, the longing for Jesus among those outside the Israelite camp is here first experienced by these Greeks. They and this desire to know Christ is as the seed of the mighty tree that will spread its branches throughout the earth. And for Jesus it is time to return to the Father, for His mission has been to the Israelites - it is the apostles He has formed who shall carry the message forth. (In this sense He is like Moses who is allowed to look out over the Promised Land - it is Joshua who will lead the people there.)

Again, death will bring life. But Jesus has been dying all the time - now it will be fulfilled.

I sense today what it would be like really to die as a martyr for Christ, realizing Jesus would always be there and it would be a joy. (In a sense, nothing would be different. Jesus remains.)

O Lord, continue your work in me,
your Word growing in me...
and may I indeed bear fruit
as I die.

April 10

(Dn.13:1-9,15-17,19-30,33-62; Ps.23:1-6; Jn.8:1-11)

If we could but cease to suppress our consciences...
If we could but live by the rule this small voice from God
teaches us... then we would see our sins and turn from them.
Then we would live in the light and no words could persecute
us; then would heaven remain with us despite all things.

When shall it be?

I wish all wickedness would flee from my thoughts
that I might dwell securely.

O Lord, how shall I accept your forgiveness
and sin no more?

April 11 (Nm.21:4-9; Ps.102:2-3,16-21; Jn.8:21-30)

Healing I need this day,
and the priest intercedes
and holds up the Lord before me...

All these sacraments are for our healing,
for our salvation.
All the works of the Church tend toward such healing
or are nothing worth.

May the great I AM be held up
ever before us.
(And may we come to believe in Him.)

O Lord, heal me always;
bring to me your salvation.
(Thank you again, my dear Jesus.)

April 12

(Dn.3:14-20,90-92,95; Dn.3:52-56; Jn.8:31-42)

Who is your God?

Who is your Father?

To whom do you bow down and worship?

Whose image do you reflect?

Lord, make us truly free in you,

that we might shine your light in this world
and nothing could ever separate us from you.

April 13 (Gn.17:3-9; Ps.105:4-9; Jn.8:51-59)

How difficult it was for the Jews to accept Jesus.
(This is why He continually attempts to reveal Himself
in a gradual fashion - "Tell no one"; silencing the
demons who would declare His Person; telling the disciples
they could not understand "now"; "You cannot follow me now.")
Here He declares Himself and His covenant greater than that
of Abraham, the father of all who believe. And so Jesus
will be forgiving with these same Jews who would stone Him
(as He is with we who sin against Him).

O Lord, open our eyes to the glory of your presence,
and help us to stand in that awesome light.

April 14 (Jer.20:10-13; Ps.18:2-7; Jn.10:31-42)

For good works we shall be stoned;
in this world
this is what it means to be a Christian.

In my own *small* way I stick out my neck a bit today at a conference. At a workshop promoting the use of folktales <in teaching>, I suggest the possible use of the Bible... (I can't say any real persecution follows, but I did speak up. It is remarkable how little recognition this cornerstone of Western civilization receives.)

And for us is confirmed again today Jesus' divinity.
Put your faith in Him.

Lord, help us to suffer more willingly
and fruitfully for you,
that all might soon come to know Who you are.

April 15

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

He will come, and through His death shall unite His people -
all His people. Here is the Son of David prophesied,
now come to die and give life to we who believe.

Holy Week is upon us;
may I take seriously its procession...

Lord, be with me in this time,
that I may walk in your shoes
to where you would have me be.

April 16

(Is.50:4-7; Ps.22:2,8-9,17-20,23-24; Phil.2:6-11;
Mk.14:1-15:47)

Passion Sunday. And so we see the Servant King.
Let us all await His kingdom, suffering all for Him -
let us be, as it were, fools for Christ (and not the world).

I bring palm to the nursing home today, and it is much-
appreciated (and not only by the elderly, and not only
by Catholics).

We all must serve Him who serves all.

Into your hands I commend this week, O Lord.
May my spirit be taken unto you.

April 17 (Is.42:1-7; Ps.27:1-3,13-14; Jn.12:1-11)

Lazarus was taken from the dungeon of death.
See - so may we all be.

I am reminded of the dungeon of drugs the Lord has long-removed me from as I watch a TV movie tonight - and that I must keep myself from falling into like darkness.

I must find peace in Jesus, not fear, and believe that He will keep me from faltering despite my weakness.

Reading more of Merton today as I have my car repaired - O to find the higher levels in the kingdom he speaks so knowingly of (and which I may be inclined toward).

There is light and it is Jesus. Find Him.

Dear Lord, yet I seek (often blindly) your presence
and your will.

(Dark and rainy days...)

April 18

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

I cannot take my denial of Christ by my sin.
Must we still sin? Must we still fall short?
When will I follow Him?

The promise of heaven I see and hear so clearly this morning,
and yet the darkness of sin hovers all about...

I am troubled, troubled by my weakness,
and wonder when the Lord's salvation shall reach my shore.

I would I were not so miserable.

O Lord, let me not despair
but hope in you despite all darkness,
and grow in you until you come.

These tears I weep please take from me,
and replace them with your joy.

(For a moment this day it seems all around me might
be plotting against my life - though my betrayal
comes from my sin and not a holy sacrifice of self.)

April 19

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

Jesus is betrayed. But He is strong.
He resolves to eat the Passover supper with His disciples,
though He knows *He* will be the slaughtered Lamb who is eaten.
And though He shall die for it, He speaks the Truth.

There is nothing I could say of my life
to compare with such self-sacrifice.

(I trek up and down rolling hills - at golf course -
and pound the pavement, helping friend and mother
find an apartment.)

Lord, take my life.

April 20

(Ex.12:1-8,11-14; Ps.116:12-13,15-18,1Cor.10:16;
1Cor.11:23-26; Jn.13:1-15)

The blood of the lamb by which the Israelites were saved is now the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by which all men are saved, and that blood calls us to service in His Name. We must be anointed, as were once the doorposts and lintel, by the blood of Jesus; and what does that mean but to show His love and confession in service of saving others.

I miss the bus for tonight's Holy Thursday pilgrimage, but long before the night takes on a Chaucerian quality. During Mass as the altar servers laugh and play, the foibles of those around me (and myself) become rather terribly clear. (O how human we can be.) But after Mass and while quietly chastising the altar servers individually, I find a certain calling as a teacher. Much could be said of this, but I shall only relate that the insight into what others lack, which they need to be taught, is given by God and is a certain burden to carry. It is akin to prophecy because no one is eager to hear the chastisement of truth, though such teaching comes from God, who loves us.

Lord, forgive my vain pomposity
as well as my reticent attitude -
anoint me for your call.

April 21

(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)

He was scourged for our sins.

I have not been participating a lot in my parish in recent years, but each year the priest does at least ask me to read for the Good Friday service. And I am quite pleased to do so.

I feel a certain affinity with the crucified Lord, with the spirit of this day. Perhaps it is something to do with my 'gaunt' type of Christian nature, but there is a profound love I have for Good Friday. And today is made more appropriate by the rain that falls throughout the day, and the thunder that peals during our reading...

The priest <pastor emeritus> asks me to notice that the reading from Isaiah is not all dark, that the Servant triumphs - I know this.

By your wounds we are healed, O Lord.
How sweet is your holy blood.

(And even now the wind does rage... And the psalms have such clear meaning in these days, especially in morning prayer communally said at pilgrim church.)

April 22

The rain abates, but the sun does not shine -
there is a silence upon the land.

(I finish Merton's *Ascent to Truth* -
a remarkably stirring, beautiful volume
on the immensity of contemplative Christian silence...

And the Giant's moving I feel most deeply and most clearly
as I sit in church following my Confession, the angels'
wings fluttering about my purged soul.)

(Gn.1:1-2:2; Ps.104:1-2,5-6,10; Gn.22:1-2,9-13,15-18; Ps.16:1,5,8-11;
Ex.14:15-15:1; Is.54:5-14; Ez.36:16-28; Rm.6:3-11; Ps.118:1-2,16-17,
22-23; Mk.16:1-7)

(Note: the above first readings and psalms were again
curtailed/selectively used into a story of our history.)

Another Easter Vigil celebration. It seems to get old, and
yet it is ever new: the Holy Spirit's presence sees to this.

I see more and more how the Church is something both mundane
and sacred, and how the sacred can exist amongst the mundane.
For Jesus God came to dwell amongst us humans, and so He
continues to do so.

I long to be a real part of a Catholic community;
I need to be. Where shall it be?

Lord, you are risen
in our hearts and minds this night.
Come and dwell with your people.

April 23

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

The cornerstone is laid; faith is born -
Jesus is risen from the dead!

In conversation with a couple of young people about the Church and God, it is evident that there is a great need for teaching (and a desire for it); and it is also evident to me that we who would teach must do so with love and humility (and in strength and truth).

O Jesus, never let me presume to stand above
any man,
or my faith will be in vain;
make me fruitful in your name.

April 24 (Acts 2:14,22-32; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-11; Mt.28:8-15)

Here is the truth which is so astounding
(one which we Christians so often take for granted) -
Jesus is risen from the dead!

Who can believe it?
Can it be true?
No lie will be able to hide it.

And we, too, shall rise one day
and join Him in incorruption.

Lord, bless and forgive my unbelief -
enter in and reveal yourself
unto all.

April 25 (Acts 2:36-41; Ps.33:4-5,18-20,22; Jn.20:11-18)

In great faith Mary sees the Lord;
in great strength Peter preaches His name.

May His Word, His light, and His presence
go out to the ends of the earth.

There is a day coming when all shall know of Jesus;
may that day come soon for us all.

(I spy a rose card made by the students for me,
and there is talk of an opening in the school
as I have my final observation.)

Lord, O Lord,
show yourself to the world.

April 26

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

We are all crippled from birth.
We are all walking a lengthy road,
discussing the meaning of life
and what shall become of us...

And Jesus comes to heal us.
And Jesus comes to teach us.
And Jesus comes to save us.

We *should* be joyful each day that the Lord breaks bread
in our midst and feeds us with this holy food. We should
be joyful that ever He listens to our prayers and the
desires of our hearts. But I fall short of such recognition
of the Lord and such celebration of His gifts.

My friend is particularly joyful today,
but, though blessed and guided by God,
I cannot claim such an Easter spirit.

Lord, in jubilation let us call to you
and thank you for your gifts and mercy.

April 27 (Acts 3:11-26; Ps.8:2,5-9; Lk.24:35-48)

The Scriptures foretold His coming.
The prophets announced it.
The Jews awaited Him...
 and now He has come
 and will save us from our sins.

How joyful the Jews must have been, the disciples must
have been, upon hearing of and seeing the Lord Jesus,
realizing He is the promised One - that He had finally come.

We should have this same joy. It should be as present to us.
I pray it shall be so.

Help us to realize, O Lord,
 that you are here with us.

April 28

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

Many fish the disciples would catch, more certainly than Jesus Himself, though it is really He who catches them all - for only by His instruction are we led.

Have been having students present their religion projects the past couple of days. (Today the Catholics line up and present.) It is good to see the students learning of what is foreign to them - I pray it might generate understanding and love.

Let us all contribute what we have caught in Jesus' name to the meal which He prepares; let not suffering impede us, but let us come to the light of the Spirit.

Lord, allow me somehow to gather souls unto you.

April 29

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

It is Easter time.
It is time to believe,
believe in the resurrection of the Lord,
believe in His grace -
believe He is God.

And I begin to.
I begin to sense I am crossing the threshold of hope,
I begin to lose fear and gain confidence
and self-control.
The Word begins to take root in my soul.

May it grow.

O Lord, today you are with me
as I give myself to you and your Church.
Bless me and bless my prayers -
come.

April 30

(Acts 4:32-35; Ps.118:1-4,13-15,22-24; 1Jn.5:1-6;
Jn.20:19-31)

"Do not be unbelieving, but believe."

Faith. What is more precious? What else gives life?

I recall that last year before this Mass I had a bout with doubt. How different this year is. Today I wake in faith; I feel as if Easter has finally come.

It is curious that today is Easter for our Orthodox brothers and sisters, and I wonder if perhaps somehow it was necessary for us all to have celebrated it in order for it to be fulfilled... Today is also a sunny day.

I am trying now to appreciate all the gifts of the sacraments and prayer that the Lord gives me and give them back to Him having borne fruit. And I am trying to have faith that all things are possible with Him (even Christian unity). And I am meeting with success.

The Lord is risen, alleluia.

O Lord, let your peace be with us.

Let us have faith,

and let us live that faith in your name.

May 1 (Col.3:14-15,17,23-24; Ps.90:2-4,12-14,16; Mt.13:54-58)

St. Joseph the Worker.

Find faith in God, yes, in Jesus.
And find faith in the mundane things of life,
 in all you do,
 in your work.

I need to learn the lesson Paul would teach us, that whatever
we do, to do it in the name of Jesus. My concern is too much
on what I should do rather than *how* I should do it. Whatever
your job, do it for God.

(And I rework my resume today...)

O God, let your work be done
 and your will be done in all work.

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

I think that those who sold all things and gave to the common purse, living as one as Christ's disciples, had a clear, concrete idea of what it is to be born from above, "begotten by the Spirit." In a very real way, such release from possessions lightens the load upon one's shoulders and allows one to breathe freely and without fear. We must rid ourselves of material things to understand and grow in spiritual things, and the first of these is sin.

Lord, help me to live the life you set out for me;
let me not fall short of laying all things at your feet.

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

The apostles Philip and James.

How invaluable are the apostles, who bring the Word of God through all generations. The Lord works through such as these.

For priests everywhere, let us pray.
And that each of us will find our call to bring forth the name of the Lord.

Let us not believe in vain,
but be fruitful until the end.

Lord, send forth apostles to preach your Word
and teach the nations.
Send us holy priests to stand in your stead
and serve us.

May 4 (Acts 5:27-33; Ps.34:2,7,9,17-20; Jn.3:31-36)

"Whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure the wrath of God" seems to be the same thing Peter is saying to the Sanhedrin: "So too does the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those that obey Him." (I believe Nicodemus takes it better than they, though.)

The Spirit is given to those who obey the Father. And it is given generously and without preference - witness that it is they without education (except from Christ) who are speaking so boldly to the leaders.

Brothers and sisters, finding ourselves filled with the Holy Spirit, may we escape the wrath of God.

O Lord, may we accept your true testimony,
and give that testimony to the world.

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

Those who come to Jesus, He feeds.

Such a beautiful Eucharistic scene: the vast crowd reclining on the green grass, and Jesus feeding them all as they enjoy conversation and company with one another...

I realize they probably were not expecting to eat, but Jesus knows our needs and wishes to give us all things. He wants to love us.

Today I ostensibly finish my student teaching (a week of observation left), and I do end where I started - on the subject of romantic love (*Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story*). What shall become of my teaching, I do not know, nor do I know what shall be of romance in my life. (Upon finishing my teaching I am exhausted again - I had become quite strong.)

Lord, what should I teach and where?
And what of my marital status?
Feed me, I pray.

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

The deacons are called. (And shall I be?)

I am not well: weak and short of breath as the temperatures hit record highs (after it had been cool for so long...). It is time to rest.

I run into two communion Masses today - one following Mass at my parish, and one at pilgrimage church as I try to enter.

And it is stormy, but the Lord comes to my boat and I find myself ashore.

Lord, how I need you to guide my days.

(And today I receive a word: the world is gonna change - from its intensely materialistic concentration on the vanity of physical beauty and all the blind sin that goes with it, to a love for inner beauty and light in the Spirit (of Christ).)

Kneeling/praying amongst the joyful noise after Communion Mass, I begin to transcend myself and hear things with a spiritual ear, beyond words.)

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

The preaching of the repentance for and forgiveness of sins is present in all the readings, and I continue to find myself strengthened as I continue to repent of my sins and do penance. The sacraments and my pilgrimages continue to be a source of strength in the mercy of the Lord, though I still am not perfected. (I do, however, sense myself attaining to a new plateau.)

Thank God for His forgiveness, for His patience,
and forget not to turn from your sin.

Risen Lord, be in our midst,
and teach the world
and those who would call themselves your Church,
your truth and your life.
May knowledge of you fill the earth.

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

Faith in Christ enables us to endure all things with the face "of an angel".

We are the descendents of the apostles; of this I am reminded today, perhaps because of a great Cardinal's funeral (and mentioned the hierarchy to a man of another sect). The Church is alive today, or should be, as it was when these books were written, when these miracles were occurring. It should be evident that we are alive - but yet we seem to wait to awaken to our faith. (And I speak of the Catholic Church's lack of evangelization to this Pentecostal pastor, and how all churches are robbed of life by the culture and people's attention to it.) Yet it will come...

Let us witness to you, Lord,
and find ourselves on the path to eternal life.

May 9

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

If we believe, we shall never thirst again,
for He is all we are thirsting for.
Stephen saw Him and was glad;
even though they stoned him to death,
he desired nothing else.

If we have Him, we have all things;
all things are in Him and all things are Him.
There is nothing good that is apart from Him.

So wonderful to be so fulfilled!
Nothing is wanting in a true Christian.

(Yes, I think of this and I think of that,
concerned about what will be;
but I know even this day He may be with me,
if I but say His Name.)

O Lord, in your presence we find our eternal home.

May 10 (Acts 8:1-8; Ps.66:1-7; Jn.6:35-40)

Stephen must smile from heaven to know how his death brought such wonderful, joyful fruit, that it was the catalyst for such spreading of the Word.

This is a basic quality of Christianity, that from darkness comes light, from death resurrection. Faith in God turns all things that seem quite bad into good. This is our strength; this is our power: that we have such faith in God, that we know of His ultimate power, that He can control any situation - that even our sins can become flowers of glory in His light, by His transforming presence.

We must always have faith in Him in all things and He will always act for good in our lives. And so we will come to eternal life.

O Lord, turn the darkness of this day
into joy in your kingdom.

(I read an article about a woman whose children ruined her garden tomatoes. Her friend asked if she really needed them all, and when she responded that she made spaghetti three times a week, the friend remarked that she probably needed more variety. They both laughed.)

May 11 (Acts 8:26-40; Ps.66:1,8-9,16-17,20; Jn.6:44-51)

"He invited Philip to get in and sit down beside him."

Here is evident the necessity of the desire for Truth on the part of the convert. (One cannot beat others over the head with the Word.)

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."

Here is evident the source of that desire.

After eating the Lord's flesh and drinking His blood today, my tired eyes are opened and shining brightly. It is here we find our source of life.

Draw me ever unto you, O Lord,
until all darkness is banished from my life.

(Preparing for graduation and the finding of employment.)

May 12 (Acts 9:1-20; Ps.117:1-2,Mk.16:15; Jn.6:52-59)

Wonderful (though difficult) passage on Jesus, the Bread of Life. He is the Bread which has come down from heaven, and we must feed upon this life-giving manna. As the Israelites wondered at the manna, questioning "What is it?", so the Jews now are doubtful about the Bread that is Christ. Reading it now it is clear to me, and I can taste this heavenly food which I sup on each day in my mouth. Bread from heaven He is. (Do not worry so much, "How can this be?" - have faith.)

And in Jesus' words to Paul again we see how we, the Body of Christ, are one with Him.

O Lord, knock us off our horses
and let us see your presence
dwelling amongst us.

(The Word and the Body meet in Christ.

Lengthy conversation with friend on divinity and humanity of Christ. She didn't seem to understand that Jesus is still man in heaven.

Practicing patience students recommend in fond farewell they give me today.)

May 13 (Acts 9:31-42; Ps.116:12-17; Jn.6:60-69)

The Twelve were convinced
and would convince others
by His power.

Holy Hour, in His presence,
deeply rooted He becomes
in my soul.

"But where would you lead us, O Lord?"
(Our faith must guide us.)

Prepare my heart for your arrival, O Lord.

May 14 (Acts 4:8-12; Ps.118:1,8-9,21-23,26,28-29; 1Jn.3:1-2;
Jn.10:11-18)

Jesus is the Shepherd, we are the sheep,
the children of God,
the blessed of the Lord.
In Jesus' name let us live.

An intriguing TV rendition of "Jesus". The film shows
a more human Jesus, who laughs and dances, who is so down
to earth. Though it takes a few liberties, the effect
is to make Him more real. He is human as well as divine.

Lord, become real to us
and be with us.
Walk and talk with us each day.

(As I watch Jesus heal a lame man, I realize that God is
always present, always new; each moment out of the blue
He does work, for at every moment He lives.)

Note: Parents arrive here today - a happy Mother's Day.)

May 15 (Acts 11:1-18; Ps.41:3,42:2-3,43:3-4; Jn.10:1-10)

The Gentiles hear the voice of the Good Shepherd coming through His apostle Peter (to whom Jesus had said, "Feed my sheep") and they cannot help but rejoice, knowing that to which He calls them.

To where do you call me, Lord?
May I hear your voice clearly
and rejoice in the Spirit.

(Resumes around, and conversations/interviews about teaching in community/small colleges... Some promise but perhaps not for permanency.)

May 16 (Acts 11:19-26; Ps.87:1-7,117:1; Jn.10:22-30)

All the nations praise the Lord.
They come from near and far,
for they know His voice;
they seek it.

The Lord of Jacob, of Abraham, and of Isaac
is the one true God,
and Jesus is His Son.

It is wonderful to see truth spread,
love spread,
the Word spread throughout the earth.

O that it would fill the earth!

O Lord, make of us all Christians.

(Graduation day -
and why are Christians like my friend and I apart?)

May 17 (Acts 12:24-13:5; Ps.67:2-6,8; Jn.12:44-50)

I'm afraid our administrator cannot speak as He is instructed - again cutting short the gospel at Mass - and I cannot bear such ignorance any longer.

We must in our walk be true to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to remain as His image in this world - in His Church as brothers of Jesus and children of the Father.

Where shall I find a proper church to participate in the Spirit of Christ?

Lord, please lead me through these days,
 remaining in your Word,
 and bring me to the place you would have me.

May 18 (Acts 13:13-25; Ps.89:2-3,21-22,25,27; Jn.13:16-20)

"He who accepts anyone I send
accepts me,
and in accepting me
accepts Him who sent me."

Jesus is sent by the Father;
the apostles are sent by Jesus.

Today is the Pope's birthday and serves as a reminder
that to this day Jesus sends forth His apostles.

And a man is arrested for vandalizing statues of Mary,
saints, etc., thinking he is sent by God and upholding
the Bible... (The mind of those who think we worship
statues continues to baffle me.)

Many may come along professing the authority of Christ.
But one can trace their lineage directly to Him.

Lord, when will there be peace?
When will knowledge of you fill the earth?

(And we who are blessed by Him must always learn to serve.)

May 19 (Acts 13:26-33; Ps.2:6-11; Jn.14:1-6)

He is the way; He is the begotten Son;
He it is who prepares our place in heaven.

O Lord, prepare a place for me
and let me rest there
when these imperfect days are complete.

(Still do not know where I am
as regards art, work, religion, or love...)

May 20 (Acts 13:44-52; Ps.98:1-4; Jn.14:7-14)

The Lord lets us know that we are one with Him
(and with the Father)
even as Paul turns even to the Gentiles
to draw them into the fold.

It has been on my mind of late how we (the Catholic Church) and the Jews are one, really one. Again, Jesus is a Jew, as are the apostles and first disciples. Jesus is the fulfillment of Jewish belief - we Christians are as the continuation of the Jewish line; the Catholic Church now holds the covenant. And I am reminded of how when I first read the Bible cover to cover I was surprised to understand that the Old Testament bled right into the New - there was no break.

O that we might live up to our call
and do great, loving things in Jesus' name.

Lord, let us fulfill your covenant.

(Jesus is risen from the dead.)

May 21 (Acts 9:26-31; Ps.22:26-28,30-32; 1Jn.3:18-24; Jn.15:1-8)

The Spirit convicts me this day of hurting my friend;
my foolishness and my sin are brought up to my eyes.

And I see too how little I follow the Lord, how negligible
a branch of the vine I am - that I do not bear fruit.
(And it seems to me, too, that the Church is less than
a vine of Christ.)

I need to be pruned and to bear fruit. This must be
the time. My relationship with my friend must be resolved
rightly. I must work more for the Lord. I must make
effort to do something with my writing... Specifically,
I must resolve to speak the Lord's NAME and to find a
spiritual advisor.

O Lord, make me your own.

May 22 (Acts 14:5-18; Ps.115:1-4,15-16; Jn.14:21-26)

Whoever loves God, God will love.
No one is excluded and no one is presumed.

Paul preaches to the Gentiles whose minds are yet
bent upon idols and Jesus calls all to love of God.
The Father is the father of all.

A word came to me - "all one" has two meanings: we are all
one in Christ as a whole community and also as individuals,
contained each in all and all in each.

Yet do difficult times continue as I seek resolution
with my friend and work... struggling to read the signs.

May the Lord's will be done and I find a way of being one
with Him.

Holy Spirit, closer do we need you to come,
as a Church and as individuals.

May 23 (Acts 14:19-28; Ps.145:10-13,21; Jn.14:27-31)

The Father commands that the Lord must die to save mankind and that His Church must likewise suffer, but always have peace and prosperity in the work they offer Him.

At sign of peace a mystical sense, a oneness - in fact, a strength throughout the Mass. And observing the cross I believe I might find my own cross and vocation teaching at a local college. (Is this my humble call?)

Lord, I am open to work for you
wherever you might lead me.
I only ask your peace be with me.

(Indeed, bless your whole Church, O Lord.)

May 24 (Acts 15:1-6; Ps.122:1-5; Jn.15:1-8)

The message of today's readings is clear: we must remain in Jesus, in His Church, living according to His words. Thus does Paul go up to Jerusalem to seek guidance and authority from the apostles; he does not wish to produce fruit on a vine apart from Jesus and His Church. And thus is it necessary to remain within the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, founded by Christ with Peter as its head.

I know the answer that will come from this first council, and so as I look out at my brothers and sisters at Mass - we who are greatly of Gentile origin - I find a moment of joy the early disciples of other nations must have felt upon knowing of their acceptance by the Father.

And the communion of saints is much with me of late; I find and nurture, especially through my pilgrimage prayers, a sense of the oneness of the Church triumphant, militant, and penitent.

May your whole Church bear fruit in you, O Lord.

May 25 (Acts 15:7-21; Ps.96:1-3,10; Jn.15:9-11)

The simplicity and the severity of the call of Christ to all Christians, recognized by Peter and the apostles at Jerusalem and continuing to this day, is succinctly expressed by Jesus in His entreaty for us to live in His love and keep His commandments. His commands are not as complex as the Jewish and Pharisaical tradition, but they will rob you of all sin: the burden is light but the way is narrow and rough.

Live on in the Lord's love.
Make Him first in your life.

(More discussion with friend today.)

Lord, help us to truly live in your love.

May 26 (Acts 15:22-31; Ps.57:8-12; Jn.15:12-17)

The Holy Spirit speaks through the apostles as He has through Jesus in His command for love.

It is remarkable sometimes how the Blessed Mother's message from Medjugorje seems so appropriate. One could say it is always the same, as in a sense it is, but it is also always particular. I had been thinking of how little consciousness of the Holy Spirit I have had of late and how I need to be renewed. Her message yesterday encourages us to embrace the Spirit's gifts and share them with our fellow-man (another thing I have lacked of doing). And last night my friend and I address the importance of the Spirit of Truth...

The Spirit it is who guides us and blesses us,
and must be present to evangelize us.

(Discuss need for evangelization in Church today, too.)

Lord, may we be led by and renewed by the Holy Spirit.
Close to you let us come.

May 27 (Acts 16:1-10; Ps.100:1-3,5; Jn.15:18-21)

Paul shows the continuation of the work and the persecution and respect Jesus received.

We are the Church, but not all of us believe this and so there is little we can do without faith. Conversation at relation's house reveals real skepticism about the Church and its authority, its divine nature - characteristic of this age in which obedience to authority is easily scoffed at and exaltation of individual judgment and preference is common. How we shall come out of this moral malaise I do not know. (Only by the Spirit of Jesus.)

O Lord, resurrect your Church this Jubilee Year.

May 28

(Acts 10:25-26,34-35,44-48; Ps.98:1-4; 1Jn.4:7-10;
Jn.15:9-17)

God loved us, and for this we glorify Him.

God loves us, and so we love Him, too.

Jesus lays down His life for us,
and so we lay down our lives for others.

Love makes the world of God go round.
Love is our life.
God gives us this life breath.

I am happy to have at least brought the Lord and the Church
into the conversation; I pray it may bear fruit in the
Spirit.

Lord, bless us always
and let us grow in your love.

May 29 (Acts 16:11-15; Ps.149:1-6,9; Jn.15:26-16:4)

(This is Memorial Day and other readings were used, but they were not those designated for the holiday - I'm not sure from whence they came - so I will just use the ordinary readings.)

Paul and the Word continue on, on to a time of persecution that will surely come, and on his way he meets Lydia, who is remembered here and eternally for her hospitality.

My parents stay with me draws to a close - it has been a blessed time (thank the Lord), though, as I say to my childhood friend, I still need to learn more of how to be a good host.

Lord, let your Church go forth without fear,
and make me more amiable toward all.

May 30 (Acts 16:22-34; Ps.138:1-3,7-8; Jn.16:5-11)

The Holy Spirit comes. The Holy Spirit guides.
The Holy Spirit shakes the prison. The Holy Spirit is power.

Paul and Silas pray and sing hymns even as their feet are chained. The Word cannot be chained. It will ever go forth, for it is Jesus who sends it forth and Jesus is solid rock faith.

May all my household be baptized in Jesus' name.

Come, Holy Spirit, in this Jubilee Year
and bless the Church with power.

(In meditation I realize today that the rosary provides a perfect three-act drama, and I see that the Crowning with Thorns provides the perfect climax: "Ecce homo!" - behold the battered, humble king with divine light shining from Him... And as I exit the church parking lot after prayer and meditation, a Crown-Victoria with license plate UR-333T ("T" for the cross) is directly in front of me.)

May 31 (Zep.3:14-18; Is.12:2-6; Lk.1:39-56)

(Columbian priest informs me today is the feast of The Queenship of Mary in Latin America - this crown provides the resolution of the drama, for it is where we shall all end.)

She trusted,
and so the Lord's words are fulfilled
and we find our salvation in Jesus.

Rejoicing in the Lord should be ours,
for His mother has brought Him to us.
If we do not rejoice,
we are not prepared to live His mission for us.

I struggle and strive to do so,
praying, faltering, moving forward
trying to reach Him.

Be with us, Lord,
that we might rejoice in you.

(Friend talks of heaven today.)

June 1 (Acts 1:1-11; Ps.47:2-3,6-9; Eph.4:1-13;
Mk.16:15-20)

Ascension Thursday.

The Lord works through His Church;
we carry the baton now. We do His work.

My friend and so many Protestants do not seem
to understand how Christ works through His Church,
separating Head from Body. It continues to be,
I think, the fundamental cause of division amongst
brothers.

Jesus, you entreat us to go forth in your Name.
May all believe and be baptized.

(The Spirit must be stronger among us.
How shall I share the gifts the Lord has given me?)

June 2 (Acts 18:9-18; Ps.47:2-8; Jn.16:20-23)

O Lord, when will the sadness of this life cease,
the sinfulness of this world be gone?

(In the novena awaiting the Holy Spirit at Pentecost -
this must be the climactic time of the Jubilee year,
and a crucial time in my life.)

June 3 (Acts 18:23-28; Ps.47:2-3,8-10; Jn.16:23-28)

The Lord tells us to ask in His name, and at Mass and throughout Holy Hour and pilgrimage I entreat the Lord to bless my friend and to guide my life. (He must hear me.)

I have been listening to recording I made last year of *Songs for Children of Light*. It sounds good, but I do not know what I should do with it or even if I dare to ask.

O Lord, produce this fruit through me.
Into your hands I commend my life.
Come, Holy Spirit.

June 4 (Acts 1:15-17,20-26; Ps.103:1-2,11-12,19-20;
1Jn.4:11-16; Jn.17:11-19)

"Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers."

"As you sent me into the world, so I send them
into the world."

All the apostles are sent by Jesus, by God,
and Peter stands up in their midst.

Today I go through my writings of the past seventeen
years, immersing myself in them that I might come to
know how they might be used as tools of apostleship.
(It has been a long time since I have focused on my
writing; much of what I read seems worthwhile, and I
begin to organize.) Can I be an artist for Christ
again?

O Lord, all of us you call and send forth.
As has the Blessed Mother who has preceded us
to heaven,
let us fulfill your word.

(I am close to Mary and the saints in prayer today -
especially re Assumption, which is most natural and
necessary - communion with heaven is near. And in
the apostles' trust in lots and my trust in my
writing, I see how we must trust all to God's hands.)

June 5 (Acts 19:1-8; Ps.68:2-7,33; Jn.16:29-33)

Suffering must come, persecution, too,
but we glory in this as well,
for it is joy to join thus with Jesus;
as Paul, we are not afraid.

Holy Spirit, give us strength.

(I continue to organize my artwork and find a measure of hope. Today I pull out the keyboard and look to add to basic music track...)

June 6

(Acts 20:17-27; Ps.68:10-11,20-21,33; Jn.17:1-11)

Parting words from Christ and Paul as each finishes the race he has run. Faithful to the end must we all be that those who follow may be just so and all may become one in God.

Chains and hardships await Paul; the cross stands before the Lord. Yet the race must be run. Yet we must go on...

I cannot say the path I shall travel, but I have faith the Lord is watching over.

(It rains throughout the day, and I rush from task to task too much. Peace must yet be rooted in me; balance must be found. Now let my breathing be calm; let me be still.)

Lord, I love you.
Draw me ever closer to you
and away from my straying heart.

June 7

(Acts 20:28-38; Ps.68:29-30,33-36; Jn.17:11-19)

I found a fortune (from a cookie) last night which read: "You are about to embark on a most delightful journey!" and I begin to believe it. For it seems this balloon may rise after all.

I take great strength in the bread that is work today - proofreading (first six months of this work), writing, playing guitar... and especially playing keyboard to accompany guitar track of a song from *Children of Light* which I intend to play for a class I will teach in July. Finally I am happy with the basic track, and adding this keyboard and voice track is a step toward making the song real.

Also, at an interview at a nearby high school I see an exercise/play area very reminiscent of my own stages for *Children of Light* - could this too be produced.

But what has this to do with the sadness and suffering of which the Scriptures speak? It is suffering; I feel it after playing the keyboard. It is giving yourself completely. It is in a sense a dying, an emptying of oneself. (And strangely enough I come upon a funeral in pilgrim church in neighboring town.)

O Lord, let me give myself to you;
and help me bear every delightful moment
of such sacrifice.

(The novena continues...)

June 8

(Acts 22:30,23:6-11; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-11; Jn.17:20-26)

Jesus continues to reveal Himself and the Father,
continues to lead the Church,
coming to us even as He did to Paul.

The Lord is at my side more of late, but not today,
for I am in an anxious rush most of the time, unable
to calm down and avoid the devil's clutches.

But yet I think I might move forward in the Lord
somehow, as the graduates whose Mass I come upon
this morning.

Help me, O Lord,
and do not let your angels leave my side.

June 9

(Acts 25:13-21; Ps.103:1-2,11-12,19-20; Jn.21:15-19)

A day of peace - a blessed fast (and reading of writings) allows me to recollect myself.

And the day begins with Confession: "Lord, you know everything." I think of what my friend said last night - that the Lord sees right through to your heart. It struck home. For His throne *is* in heaven and His eyes see all, I know, but how conscious are we of His omniscience.

The mechanic who takes the day to fix my car says it was a "lucky" one as all goes well; and I know my great luck comes from the blood of Christ. (Oh where I would be without it!) And I hope now to follow the Lord as I approach 40 and look to lay down my life.

Lord, you know everything;
let your light of wisdom penetrate my soul.

(Our Columbian priest encourages me to greater apostleship. And I read of Wisdom's coming to me from the womb in my autobiography, as well as how children relate to the innocence of animals well - though wisdom tells me now that we who have fallen and risen again, we men, are given greater power by God.)

June 10

(Acts 28:16-20,30-31; Ps.11:4-5,7; Jn.21:20-25)

Pentecost is upon us, and John's gospel ends. And I realize as I say the Glorious Mysteries on this Saturday (I began saying only the mystery for the day when my parents were here and have continued - and finally the rosary becomes a salient source of meditation) that Jesus had to ascend to heaven first, and then from thence He sends forth the Holy Spirit. (How rich the rosary is.)

And in Paul's interaction with the Jews, and especially in the line, "I wear these chains solely because I share the hope of Israel," I see how Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise. (And soon the temple would be destroyed and with it the Jewish sacrifices...) I think, too, how Paul does not follow Jesus immediately to death, and that John will live a long life (unlike Peter) - and priest states that we all are called differently.

Lord, your call be upon me now,
and let me follow through...

(I wake thinking, "What do you want?" I am hard-pressed to say much; but after receiving and while cleaning the cup, I know this is what I want - in this sacrament is eternal life. And today I avoid the dogs.)

June 11

(Acts 2:1-11; Ps.104:1,24,29-31,34; Gal.5:16-25;
Jn.15:26-27,16:12-15)

Pentecost Sunday. The climax of this Jubilee year,
and the climactic time of my life. (I will be
forty next week.)

At Mass this morning I must light the candles, and
the priest asks me also to check the air conditioner.
And with strength I proclaim the readings.

Continuing to seek, seek... in pilgrimage, in standing
praying near the river, in looking through the
classifieds, in ministry at nursing home, in ads
for computers... What answer shall I find?

It is hot, scorching hot, today (and yesterday) - but
tonight after prayer meeting the thunder comes and the
storm; and I cry for an hour as the rain pours after
(and while) speaking to my friend on the phone of the
necessity of our separation...

I do not know.

Help me, O Lord.
Pray for me, Mother.
Holy Spirit, come,
and renew the face of the earth.

Lead me forth.

June 12 (1Kgs.17:1-6; Ps.121:1-8; Mt.5:1-12)

A cold and dark, rainy return to Ordinary Time,
and for me a day of mourning.

It is true that the sorrowing are consoled, the hungry
are filled, for our sorrow and our hunger make room
within ourselves for God to come and fill us with
His presence. He heals the broken-hearted; He watches
over us and our needs are known to Him.

O Lord, watch over me,
and may I empty myself out
to find your will working in me.

Let me go where I can do the most good;
let me go where you would lead me.

June 13

(1Kgs.17:7-16; Ps.4:2-5,7-8; Mt.5:13-16)

Trying to let my light shine, writing a cover letter to a Catholic college delineating my strengths... but I have become a little lax in pursuing direction for publication of my artwork now that I have time. Discouragement comes and my jar of oil seems to be running out; any hopes I had diminish. (I must have faith and strength, and discipline.)

I want so and have waited for so long to find the Lord's direction for my life, to find a place, a job, a purpose... and so often I have been confused. And now it seems the time must come, and am I ready?

O Lord, the anxiousness and laziness take from me.
Help me to trust in you,
 though my supplies grow low.

(At supermarket I buy unusually large amount of food, including olive oil (which I rarely purchase). But am I filled spiritually? Anxiety about friend is rather high.)

June 14

(1Kgs.18:20-39; Ps.16:1-2,4-5,8,11; Mt.5:17-19)

The Law is the law. "The Lord is God."
His word is unchanging. His presence is ever near.
Trust in Him.

I hear that the Southern Baptist Church upholds
its condemnation of homosexuality and women priests -
"Not the smallest part of the letter shall be done
away with." And I struggle with clear intent to
avoid sin with my friend.

We must obey the Lord - the law is not in our hands.
Then we will find His love.

(And on the phone I speak with an old brother in the
Lord about the faltering into divorce and remarriage
of our former prayer leader. It may not be easy,
but it is necessary to follow Him.)

O Lord, help us who are so blind,
who are so proud.
Turn our eyes to you and the beauty of your ways.

Our King wears a crown of thorns;
our Lord is the one hanging on the cross.

June 15

(1Kgs.18:41-46; Ps.65:2,10-13; Mt.5:20-26)

Unfortunately, I have to go to early Mass in my parish; our administrator says Mass and (again) curtails the gospel. In a sense, I live out the part he skipped by approaching him privately (after Mass) to see if he might change. But he only gets angry.

I do not hate him. I pray the Spirit upon him and to see him in heaven. But the Lord lets me know that I shall not work as I once did in this parish again. (There must be another place.)

O Lord, cancel all my debts here
and bring your fruitful rain.

(Much rain have we had of late.
And I continue to try to effect a separation from my
friend, despite repeated emergencies with her car...)

June 16

(1Kgs.19:9,11-16; Ps.27:7-9,13-14; Mt.5:27-32)

I ask the Lord to be placed in a crucible today,
to be refined by His fire - to suffer with Him that
I might be purged of the adulterous eye yet in me,
as well as all my many sins.

On this hot and humid day I play golf. Even yesterday
I prepared myself to offer this time to God as a time
of repentance. I knew it would be a difficult day,
and the sharing in the Lord's suffering was compounded
by my carrying my bag - something I have never done,
not even on a par 3 (short) course.

And I suffered the humiliation of my poor play, and,
though not perfectly, kept my mouth shut and endured
it. And by the end of the day I felt as if my head
were on fire. (Pouring a drop of water upon it was
like dropping it into a frying pan.) Running out of
water the last two holes, I thought I might not endure;
I feared for my life, too. But I continued to listen
for the Lord's voice, and pray to Him.

Even at home my head continued aflame. I had to sit
with feet in a bucket, hands in sink, and a soaken
towel upon my head. I pray the concerted effort I
have been making bears fruit.

O Lord, let me hear your voice calling me.
Purge me from my sins,
that I might do your will.

(And in the gentle wind stirring about my room,
the balloon moves directly toward me with its
message - "40" - which I will be in two days.)

June 17

(1Kgs.19:19-21; Ps.16:1-2,5,7-10; Mt.5:33-37)

There is no need to swear;
the truth is simple and needs no explanation.
(If only we could live in its clear light.)

Seeking to make my life "yes" or "no" (and not both)
for so many things. Someone asks if I still see my
friend, and the answer is, I'm afraid, "yes and no" -
though "no" for these few days. And what of work?
And of religious vocation... and art?

(I continue my physical exercise, helping my neighbor
for a couple of hours to dig up the ground (and tree
roots) in preparation for making a driveway.)

O Lord, let me be called,
and clear to hear it
and respond.

June 18

(Dt.4:32-34,39-40; Ps.33:4-6,9,12,18-20,22;
Rm.8:14-17; Mt.28:16-20)

Trinity Sunday, Father's Day, and my 40th birthday...

And it seems quite appropriate that my birthday falls on Father's Day, for one could not be without the other. On this my birthday, my father became a father; and without my father, I would not have been born. (Perhaps this gives us some insight into the integral relationship of Father and Son in the Trinity.)

Reading entries from the beginning of this *Days* process, I see then as now (as for so long) I was seeking direction, seeking to be "led by the Spirit." And still I need to be strengthened by the Lord from doubt. And still I must be ready to suffer with Him.

O Lord, let there be progress made,
in your Name.

(And I see more so how selfish I am;
and try to open myself up to others
and to His will.

And I learn today that the anchor, which I see on three separate occasions, is the symbol of hope.)

June 19

(1Kgs.21:1-16; Ps.5:2-3,5-7; Mt.5:38-42)

It has often been on my mind of late the difference between being an American and being a Christian. This is perhaps best pointed up by today's gospel. How many practice the teaching of Christ to turn the other cheek? How many even think it possible or recognize it as valid? The teaching of this world exemplified by this country is to take (many would find Jezebel's actions entrepreneurial), to provide well for one's comfort and luxury, not to think of the common good, much less of sacrificing one's own necessities.

I struggle with recognizing my own shortcomings with regard to this influence of the world. And I see it clearly in those even in the Church who criticize it for not giving in to the spirit of the age and continuing to say that abortion is wrong, homosexuality is wrong, fornication is wrong, assisted suicide is wrong, etc.

The mind of man is not the mind of God.
Oh that we could come closer to His mind
with our thinking (and acting).

O Lord, in this age when man says nothing is wrong
but to tell others when they are wrong,
give us courage and conviction
to stand against the tide
and impart your Word.

June 20 (1Kgs.21:17-29; Ps.51:3-6,11,16; Mt.5:43-48)

Oh to be so perfect, to love as completely as God,
who grants mercy even to the worst of sinners.
Such love. Such absolute love has the Father.
How shall we find it?

O Jesus, lead us to such perfect love of all.
Let us shine our light forth upon all.
Help us to know the glory you have with the Father.

(Anniversary of sister's death has come again.)

June 21 (2Kgs.2:1,6-14; Ps.31:20-21,24-25; Mt.6:1-6,16-18)

As I read of Elijah's crossing over I think of Lynn's passing over. (I do not actually hear the readings today because I happen upon a Mass in Italian, which is happily followed by a Holy Hour.) And I am reminded again of my own selfishness and lack of stoicism in suffering.

I call my cooperating teacher, finally, for her to give the students I taught a message of love, but it is too late; they are gone. (Yesterday was their last day of class.) I am so unthoughtful. And now I wish I could throw my arms around them...

I am reminded of my sister's death, too, in TV programs which show a boy character relating well to an autistic child (whom others cannot understand), and a young male character dying as his motorcycle goes over a cliff...

And I appreciate a professor's sympathy for my work situation, but I think it points up my self-centeredness. How shall I break out?

We must do things for God, brothers and sisters,
keep our eyes upon Him...

Lord, I thank you for your Presence,
which guides us despite our blindness.
Give me but the power you would have me have,
and let all be done for you.

June 22

(Sir.48:1-14; Ps.97:1-7,12; Mt.6:7-15)

I do not know how it relates to readings pertaining to the greatness of Elijah and the Lord's instruction on praying to the Father (perhaps it has more to do with the two martyrs whose feast is celebrated today), but my thoughts centered around suffering this day. After Mass and in prayer I consider the questioning of those who do not understand why there is suffering in the world. I wonder first if they find no purpose to Christ's suffering as well, and I doubt whether they would spend the same energy questioning pleasure - why is there so much luxury in the world? This, in fact, they seek, evil as it is to the soul, even as they shun suffering, redemptive as it can well be.

And I suffer recognition of my sin more so today; as I push my friend away from me to avoid temptation, I witness the shock of a child...

And I visit the site of my sister's death for the first time in many years (and watch a little league baseball game in the park for the first time in many years...), and must come to my friend's aid again as she has another emergency with her car...

O Lord, into your hands I commend my days.
Your will be done.

June 23

(2Kgs.11:1-4,9-18,20; Ps.132:11-14,17-18;
Mt.6:19-23)

A beautiful, sunny and breezy day -
and for me a day of sorrow.

On this the 20th anniversary of my sister's death, I visit her grave for some two hours, and feel the intensity of her death as if it were today, crying and praying. I did not want to leave there. Did not want to return here. Did not want to have to write this reflection - I wanted to let it be. I wanted to remain with my sister; more importantly, I wanted to be home in heaven. I was not the least suicidal or angry - there was patience and peace, and the tears I cried, though deep and painful, were yet sweet.

I have neglected the memory of my sister and her spirit, and so have moved that far from heaven. I pray again she will be "with me wherever I go."
(And after the tears I can see more clearly.)

Yes, this is a day of sorrow: the statue of Jesus does not smile today. (The only real joy I find is speaking briefly with a brother of the Friars of the Renewal.) But I do leave the grave after I remember to pray for one of the deceased there and find the word that in service of others I may be with Lynn, I may be with Jesus.

O Lord, a child of your light make me.
Vision of a child give me.
With your light fill my eyes.

(And coming to an end is my relationship with my friend; and this morning substantially comes the end of my membership in my parish.)

June 24 (Is.49:1-6; Ps.139:13-18; Lk.1:57-66,80)

All things are in God's hands, from birth to death.

The Birth of John the Baptist (and the anniversary of the first vision at Medugorje), and I happen upon a baptism Mass this morning and pick up my pastor emeritus coming from a funeral in Ireland this evening - from beginning to end, we are in the Lord's hands.

I continue to strive to live this,
to trust in Him, seeking to live His call.
(Shall it yet be to religious life?)

Lord, keep me steady in your hand.

June 25

(Ex.24:3-8; Ps.116:12-13,15-18; Heb.9:11-15;
Mk.14:12-16,22-26)

On this Corpus Christi Sunday when we celebrate the great gift of the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ - Jesus' great sharing of His presence with us always - I journey to our cathedral for Mass, Holy Hour, and procession. And what a blessed day it is.

I receive from the archbishop and flow along with the Body of Christ in procession. (It is remarkable the energy, the strength that comes in the oneness of the people.) The Holy Spirit in the community of the Church is very present. And at the end of Holy Hour I seem to hear the Blessed Mother tell me that now is the time - the time for an end to abortion and the time of fulfillment of my prayers for direction. I wait now to hear from the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, especially if they would accept me five years beyond the cut-off age. (I marvel at the sisters present today.)

The time is come. These special days are at an end. Now there must be decision.

O Lord, help me to find my place in your Body.
(And thank you for the gift of yourself.)

Moments of epiphany today as I realize all follow Jesus (in procession). And after the pomp and ceremony of the Mass, what a marvelous silence as Jesus is left alone upon the altar... He is the reason for everything.

(And there are people of all nations present today.)

June 26

(2Kgs.17:5-8,13-15,18; Ps.60:3-5,7,12-13;
Mt.7:1-5)

I have done wrong to my friend, but I am striving to stand strong and avoid further sin - and I am praying that she will heal and be strong again soon.

O Lord, remove this plank from my eye
that I might avoid being exiled.
Your hand be at work in my life.
(And please be with her.)

June 27

(2Kgs.19:9-11,14-21,31-36; Ps.48:2-4,9-11;
Mt.7:6,12-14)

The narrow gate. I set myself to walk through the narrow gate. Through my life, to the last moment... We must remain with the Lord until death, giving up our lives as He has given His. (In my meditation on the sorrowful mysteries today I see Jesus is faithful until the end, as we all must be.)

And He will protect us; He will not allow us to be destroyed. We must but come to Him and to Him alone. As says the Blessed Mother's message this month: "The one who prays is not afraid of the future." Not afraid to pray for what is good, and not afraid that it might not come.

We must come in faith before the Lord.

O Lord, help me to pray.
Help me to desire you.
Help me not to be afraid.

(He will come. Are you ready?)

June 28

(2Kgs.22:8-13,23:1-3; Ps.119:33-37,40; Mt.7:15-20)

I've been plagued by an outbreak of poison oak or ivy or something, which has in a physical sense caused me to become as a decayed tree. (I picked it up while venturing a visit to the site of my sister's death last week.) But I fast most of the day and again go golfing (par 3) and carry my bag, and again suffer. But after golf there are a few moments of candid conversation on religious topics such as tithing...

Oh how shall I bear fruit truly and completely?
(I continue to apply myself to the following
of the Lord's law.)

Your ways and the keeping of them are indeed blessed;
they are as fruit for us, dear Lord.
I continue to beg you to help me find my way.

June 29

(Acts 12:1-11; Ps.34:2-9; 2Tm.4:6-8,17-18;
Mt.16:13-19)

As with Christ, Peter is arrested at Passover.
Peter says, "You are the Messiah."
Jesus says, "You are *Rock*" (Peter).

Paul is "poured out like a libation";
he fills up what is lacking in the suffering of Christ.

This is the Church. This is we who are one in Christ -
made one through Peter who stands for all and is first
of all, sharing in the sufferings of the Lord.

Temptation is strong today, but the Lord releases me
from its bonds. And I rejoice.

Sts. Peter and Paul, pray for us.
(Set me free, O Lord.)

June 30

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

Sacred Heart: God's love, Jesus' death...
All the same. All one.

Where shall we find your love, O Lord?

(Interviewed at Caldwell College for adjunct writing
position with suggestions of later permanency...
If this were so, the name of the school would be
ironic (and somehow fitting for a man from Webster -
the dictionary - Avenue). Words often literally
reflect my life.

And reading into *Days '97*, my search for a call
is quite evident.)

Jesus is love. Simply.

July 1 (Lam.2:2,10-14,18-19; Ps.74:1-7,19-21; Lk.2:41-51)

Immaculate Heart of Mary and First Saturday.

Saturday is for mourning, and mourning is certainly the theme of the first reading and psalm - in graphic terms we hear of the destruction of Jerusalem, which in Lamentations speaks of starving children and in the psalm the hacking away at the walls of the temple (like the scourging of Christ). And in the gospel the sorrow of Mary's human heart upon separation from her son. She holds this and so much other sorrow there, for her heart, too, is pierced.

But resurrection shall come, for Jesus has been born of Mary; and Mary is even now in the glorious presence of Christ in heaven.

O Lord, may we all hold in our hearts
the lessons you would teach us
in our lives.

July 2

(Ws.1:13-15,2:23-24; Ps.30:2,4-6,11-13;
2Cor.8:7,9,13-15; Mk.5:21-43)

I am reminded of another reading from Wisdom,
the one which is read frequently at funeral Masses:
"To the foolish they seemed dead..."

It is important to remember that as Christians we never
die, that death has no power over us if we take refuge
in Jesus, who has power over even death. We can but
sleep for a time; with the Lord there is no death.

I am afraid, however, that death is upon me in
several ways, as I effect my separation from my friend,
cease to attend Mass at my parish Church, and struggle
to find healing for my skin ailment (poison ivy?).
I am also (too) much alone as I seek the Lord's
direction in my life and work...

But I continue to reach out to Jesus for healing,
and pray He shall raise me from this death I suffer
patiently.

O Lord, may I wake again with you.

July 3

(Eph.2:19-22; Ps.117:1-2,Mk.16:15; Jn.20:24-29)

St. Thomas, and a priest from India says the first Mass in his summer visit to pilgrimage church. He says there are two kinds of doubt, a constructive one which serves to build up one's faith, and a destructive one which tears it down. And I wonder into which category to place all the questioning I have done of late.

Today I visit vocation director for our archdiocese after learning of a sort of half-way house the diocese runs for potential priests, where individuals stay for a year while working...

But I continue lazy and rather distracted -
I think I need a good fast.

Take my sadness, Lord;
take my unbelief.

(Lord, my God, what is my place in your Church?)

July 4 (Amos 3:1-8,4:11-12; Ps.5:4-9; Mt.8:23-27)

It seems appropriate to hear the Lord chastise Israel, His disobedient favored nation, on this the anniversary of America, which has so much sin itself to turn from.

And it seems appropriate for me to hear of the disciples fear of the wind and the waves, as I in my own fear and uncertainty must call on the Lord for help, for guidance...

This evening I happen to listen to a talk by the founder of the order I am to visit, a well-known, very orthodox preacher - I do not get much chance to speak with him, though I have much to say.

Renewal *is* needed.

Give us faith, Lord.

July 5

(Amos 5:14-15,21-24; Ps.50:7-13,16-17,23;
Mt.8:28-34)

The Lord looks for justice, looks for truth;
and Jesus casts out demons.

Nigerian priest here for the summer says Mass this morning at parish church (where I visit for the first time in two weeks); back to work teaching writing (and of words); completed second day of proposed three-day fast (nothing but water yesterday, this evening some bread and melon); and tomorrow evening I am to visit the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

I need you, Jesus.
Don't leave.

July 6

(Amos 7:10-17; Ps.19:8-11; Mt.9:1-8)

Listen to the voice of the Lord.
(All is by His words.)

I continue to seek the voice of the Lord in my life as I come to visit again with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and speak with their vocation director. He thinks I may be more of a monk than a brother, and perhaps I shall have to visit a monastery... though I feel comfortable here.

And I do not know what the Lord speaks to me as I have an accident on the way to church this morning. (Through a stop sign hidden by trees; another, placed on the opposite side, placed on the ground by men working on the sidewalk.) Car may not be repairable... Thank God no one was hurt. Is it to prepare me to give up everything?

And because of my accident and my having to go to work and come here, this is the first day in years I miss daily Mass and the first time since beginning I miss pilgrimage. (Though I say prayers during a Holy Hour here.)

And on this the feast of Maria Goretti, I think, of course, of my sister and hear wind chimes while waiting for the bus across from the house of a sister who died (of AIDS) last year, even as numbers like the date recur...

Speak to me, Lord, your word of truth,
that I might live.

July 7

(Amos 8:4-6, 9-12; Ps. 119:2, 10, 20, 30, 40, 131, Mt. 4:46;
Mt. 9:9-13)

(Two Masses this morning, one with Mother Theresa's Missionaries of Charity, the other with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal - perhaps to make up for missing yesterday.)

It is good to receive Communion this morning; it fills my want for "the word of the Lord" - it gives me spirit, gives me life. It is on this bread man lives. It is this bread which the world seeks so desperately but cannot find. It is this bread which Christ feeds Matthew and all sinners who come to Him recognizing their need.

Lord Jesus, I am a sinner -
may I come to your table and eat.

July 8 (Amos 9:11-15; Ps.85:9,11-14; Mt.9:14-17)

Speaking of fasting, my own completely ends today, though I had had a few meals over the past couple of days. And it seems it may have helped finally rid me of poison ivy (though now a toothache arises).

I am praying to come through all the trials of this time and find the road the Lord is calling me to walk, to come through this chastisement to the wine of the new covenant.

Car, job, health, love, and call still in question -
but the Lord speaks of peace.

Lord, finish your good work in me.

July 9 (Ez.2:2-5; Ps.123:1-4; 2Cor.12:7-10; Mk.6:1-6)

Why is it man is so rebellious?
Why is it he is so stubborn of heart?
Even the Lord's anointed he turns from.

Our eyes should be set upon Him;
our faith should be sure.
See to it that your heart not waiver, brother,
though you be scourged by Satan.

(In my many trials I seek the Lord's hand,
and so mine for joy:
I thank Him for all things,
yes, even these thorns.)

O Lord, work your wonders in my midst.

July 10

(Hos.2:16-18,21-22; Ps.145:2-9; Mt.9:18-26)

Beautiful reading from Hosea: in the desert, where we are alone, where there are no distractions, He speaks to us and calls us home. And, "When the crowd had been put out He entered and took her by the hand, and the little girl got up" - the gospel indicates the same.

In these days without my car - still haven't decided whether to fix it or not (found a reasonable offer, but somehow I would rather not have it) - my pilgrimages become more genuine, as now I walk well over a mile either way to church early morning through some out of the way terrain. (It is not easy to walk from Jersey City to Hoboken; there is no really direct or 'civilized' path.)

Speak to me, Lord,
and take me by the hand.
Lead me to the heart.

July 11 (Hos.8:4-7,11-13; Ps.115:3-10; Mt.9:32-38)

On this the feast of St. Benedict (while continuing to consider monastic life), as I return from my pilgrimage this morning, heading up through Hoboken toward the heights of Jersey City, the steady procession of young professionals flows past me, filtering down toward the tunnels which will take them to the City. (And there will they worship the Golden Calf as they "scratch and claw" their way to the top of the corporate ladder?)

Souls are being wasted. The want of knowledge is desperate. May the laborers be sent forth.

How shall we turn the tide, O Lord?
Where are your healers?

July 12 (Hos.10:1-3,7-8,12; Ps.105:2-7; Mt.10:1-7)

Jesus sends the Twelve out to seek those who must seek Him, who need Him desperately. If they have awaited Him, they shall be found.

May the reign of God approach us all.

O Lord, take the sickness of indecision from me;
let me do all in your Name.

(To sell my car or fix it? - this is a question.
I should like to be free of the anxiety it brings,
but would it be unreasonable? And could I lose
that anxiety by driving better...? Questions I have
many of. For instance, am I called to monastic life?)

July 13

(Hos.11:1,3-4,8-9; Ps.80:2-4,15-16; Mt.10:7-15)

I am realizing to what terrible extent this secular society is bereft of spiritual values, of even spiritual awareness... Perhaps my spiritual sensibilities have been piqued by the viewing of segments of what has been in the past and still seems to be a most powerful film for me, *The Last Wave*, which addresses the sacred beliefs, customs, and objects of an aborigine tribe in Australia, and the dreams and visions of one who seems an ordinary man but is a prophet, a seer. Though the film does not explore Christianity, once one's spiritual senses are piqued, he can orient them to what is the desired faith and truth.

And so as I read of Jesus' sending the disciples out to preach and heal, I realize this reality can only be attained by spiritual beings, not those caught in this world and society. Jesus, His call, His work - His life - are *spiritual* in nature, at their source: they are of the kingdom of heaven, not earth. We must give up this life to find the life. (I believe I shall sell my car.)

We must come closer, brothers and sisters, to the Lord's call. He would hold us in His blessed arms; we must trust His love.

(On my pilgrim journey I recall the inspiration I found <while composing *Children of Light*> from this part of the world where native Americans once chanted to the Great Spirit. And I think of having "YHWH" hanging on a chain around my neck and an order dedicated to God's silent, awesome (Spirit-filled) NAME.)

Lord, I am yours.
Lead me and guide me by your Word.

July 14 (Hos.14:2-10; Ps.51:3-4,8-9,12-14,17; Mt.10:16-23)

"The Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you."

God is our Father; we are His children.
He will not turn against us;
 we must turn back to Him.
We must trust in Him and do His will.

Come, Lord Jesus.
Come now and cleanse us.
Come now and complete your work.

(His cross cleanses us of sin.)

July 15 (Is.6:1-8; Ps.93:1-2,5; Mt.10:24-33)

The call to go forth, in His name.
We are but weak and frail human beings,
but He strengthens us and readies us for all trials -
He is with us.

Tired I wake on this rain-filled day, tired from
resting overmuch yesterday (after going back to work
this week and making daily (walking) pilgrimages).
But I manage to wake and make my pilgrimage, and
accomplish the work I set out for the day - I pray
for and find these blessings. And off I send an
application form for a stay at the Emmaus House,
to discern vocation for a time...

Your presence is glorious, O Lord.
May we trust that it is with us.

July 16

(Amos 7:12-15; Ps.85:8-14; Eph.1:3-14; Mk.6:7-13)

Continuing the theme of being sent by God...
whether to prophesy or heal,
to preach or to teach.

I think I would be most happy and in the grace of God
if I could play the songs from *Children of Light* in the
presence of the Lord, before His Sacrament, each day.

Could this be my call?

O Lord, I continue to wait on your Word.

July 17

(Is.1:10-17; Ps.50:8-9,16-17,21,23; Mt.10:34-11:1)

The Lord brings chastisement to His people;
this chastisement is meant to lead them in the right path -
it is not an easy pill to swallow.

We bristle at the words of the prophet which condemn
our sins - this is not a peaceful undertaking, to turn
from our sins. But we must accept it with open hearts.
We must embrace the prophet. We must not fear division
from the forces of this world if we are to find the
peace that is heaven.

We should thank the Lord for His chastisement.

Lord, you would bring peace,
but man is for division.
Help us to be acceptant of your teaching
despite the heartache we find.

July 18

(Is.7:1-9; Ps.48:2-9; Mt.11:20-24)

The Lord protects the House of David and prophesies the fall of Israel; but Judah too shall go into exile for its lack of faith.

Jesus chides the towns in which His great miracles were performed because they too have lost faith. And I can't help but think of the Lord's warning not to harden our hearts as at Meribah and Massah, where those who had seen the great works of God nevertheless put Him to the test.

We are a faithless lot; but there is one house which the Lord does watch over - the New Jerusalem, the Church, upon which rests His Spirit. Let us appreciate the gifts God gives us, brothers and sisters. He is with us.

O Lord, let us not waste your Bread and Body.
Help us to keep faith.

July 19 (Is.10:5-7,13-16; Ps.94:5-10,14-15; Mt.11:25-27)

Strong contrast. The mighty nation of Assyria thinks it knows God, thinks it is God, but it is those who are humble as children who truly know Him, who truly are one with Him.

Watching *The Last Wave* in sections the past three days, finished today, and it rains... there is something in this. (I recall my vision, too - looking out the window as the rain causes flooding... then sun comes out... Could it be a sign of coming out of darkness into the light, as a child of light?)

I must be as a child of light to understand.

Lord, I love you.
Make my faith pure as a child's.

(And is there a more analogous people, a more current day Assyrian race than the corporate professionals striding sleek and strong (and cold as ice) to their offices in New York City. And my poor and humble students professing God as their Creator provide stark contrast.)

July 20

(Is.26:7-9,12,16-19; Ps.102:13-21; Mt.11:28-30)

I wake weary and feeling burdened, questioning my (walking) pilgrimages. But I pray, and the Lord blessed this morning's journey. There is no strain, and on my return even the professional commuters seem gentler and more at ease as I pray for their souls...

It is a lengthy day of work, which stretches even to this time as I ready for bed, but I do not feel my burden heavy.

In Jesus we must take refuge.

Lord, I give all things to you
and *everything* I do,
morning till night in your way.

July 21 (Is.38:1-8,21-22; Is.38:10-12,16-17; Mt.12:1-8)

All things are in the Lord's hands.
Death and life. Law and mercy.
Kings and prophets. Temples and hours.

Court date today, but there is no court
and no ticket registered...
this too is in His hands.

O Lord, help me to continue to seek
the guidance of your hand.
At all hours may I be yours,
approaching your heavenly kingdom.

July 22 (2Cor.5:14-17; Ps.63:2-6,8-9; Jn.20:1-2,11-18)

Mary Magdalene.

He is ascending; returning to the Father,
He is making of us a new creation.

Mary's become a new creation; no longer the sinner she
once was, she thirsts to see the Lord - and she does.

May we all become such a new creation in Him.

Looking above the altar after Mass and Confession and
while in prayer, noticing the keys in Peter's hands, I
remember hearing the word "key" several times the other
day. And remembering the preface of my autobiography
and its statement that I have no home here, I realize
that this is not so, because the Church is my home.

And now I long to become a full member of the Church
and make a real home there, not just be a visitor...

Take me home, Lord,
to be with you.

July 23

(Jer.23:1-6; Ps.23:1-6; Eph.2:13-18; Mk.6:30-34)

The people suffers for want of knowledge;
how much this generation is as sheep without a shepherd.

And from whence shall our shepherds come?
Where else but the Church?
Where else but from Jesus?

And why do we not speak; why do we not teach?
When will we?

The earth thirsts for the Word of the Lord,
which can but come through this priestly people.

We must speak.
(And not as the priest in my mother's parish,
who seems to advocate women priests -
not in our own ways.)

Lord, may knowledge of you fill the earth.
Shepherd us well.

July 24

(Mic.6:1-4,6-8; Ps.50:5-6,8-9,16-17,21,23;
Mt.12:38-42)

His words should be enough,
but He will die and rise -
this should be sign enough for anyone.

And all He asks is that we walk justly
and humbly with God.

Discussion of abortion in classes today -
most of the students pro-life, none would have
an abortion themselves... perhaps there is reason
for encouragement here.

Draw our sins up before our eyes, Lord.
Let all see their horror.

July 25 (2Cor.4:7-15; Ps.126:1-6; Mt.20:20-28)

On this Tuesday (one of the days set aside for the recitation of The Sorrowful Mysteries) the feast of St. James, the first of the apostles martyred, I look to carry about in my body "the dying of Jesus" with St. Paul, as I endure walking pilgrimage though very tired and with a rather severe toothache, praying the Crucifixion of Jesus as I clutch the crucifix of my rosary to the palm of my hand on my return journey - and the Lord strengthens me and removes my pain.

The cross brings resurrection. We must endure the suffering to find His glory; we must drink His cup to find our "home in Heaven" (of which Mary speaks in today's message).

And I continue to confront the end of my relationship with my friend...

Lord, may we who sow in tears,
reap the joy of your kingdom forever.

July 26

(Sir.44:1,10-15; Ps.132:11,13-14,17-18,Lk.1:32;
Mt.13:16-17)

Sts. Joachim and Ann.

Today we reflect on the human lineage of the Son of David. And in class we debate abortion. (Ordinary first reading from Jeremiah, called from the womb, would have been appropriate as well.)

There must be respect (and honor) for human life.
We participate in the work of God.
We as Christians should see this most clearly,
for God has been made incarnate in our midst.

O Lord, open our eyes to the life
of which you are the source.

July 27

(Jer.2:1-3,7-8,12-13; Ps.36:6-11; Mt.13:10-17)

Yesterday's gospel present again, as is my prayer...

And I do see today, at least in glimpses, at least
as if through a glass darkly, that Jesus has come,
that He is the source of life and alive in all.
His heart beats in us and all that is truly seen.

Come to live with us, Lord.
Dwell ever here.

July 28

(Jer.3:14-17; Jer.31:10-13; Mt.13:18-23)

What do you hear?

This morning I have a rather volatile phone confrontation with the man who fixed my car (at a low cost) when I think he is trying to add a charge after having assured me there would be none. It turned out that I had not heard him right - the car is O.K. as is but could use additional repair. Such anger and upset (and need for Confession) over a misunderstanding.

I do not listen well, I realize. Still I do not listen well. Too preoccupied with my own thoughts and ideas, I fail to open myself to others' voices. I suppose it is the danger of being a writer, a reflective person, one who can realize even these faults in this writing but must in a sense isolate himself from others to perceive and express them. But it is not necessary for me to be a poor listener when with others, and it makes me question how well I really listen to God and not just my own thoughts.

O Lord, teach me to listen to others
that I might hear your voice more clearly.
Take all selfishness, all egoism, from me.

(It must be so if I am to come into your promised presence -
shepherd me well that I might hear and know your voice.)

July 29 (Jer.7:1-11; Ps.84:2-6,8,11; Lk.10:38-42)

In what temple do you worship?
Are you weeds or are you wheat?
Be clear and live as temples of the Lord.

St. Martha's feast day and labor is a theme.
Been communicating with a Benedictine <Trappist>
monastery whose way is, of course, prayer and labor.
(Priest mentions at Mass this morning how Mary and
Martha exemplify these two sides of Christian life.)
Latest letter questions appropriateness of this life
for me, who have been clerical so long. I understand
this, but begin to think too of my walking pilgrimage
of late, moving furniture for three or four hours last
night, golfing today... and childhood friend's father
says he would not be so healthy today if he had been
a pencil pusher and not a furniture mover. Is there
something of this life natural to all, and should
I turn to it? Or is it not my mode? (And might
priestly life be more appropriate?)

Lord, lead me to the work
which will show my love for you
and bring me to your eternal temple.

(And this morning there is an egg with two yolks.)

July 30

(2Kgs.4:42-44; Ps.145:10-11,15-18; Eph.4:1-6;
Jn.6:1-15)

He performs the signs for all eyes to see.
Elisha, who received a double portion of Elijah's
spirit, fed one hundred with twenty barley loaves;
with five the Lord feeds five thousand - how much
greater is this sign?

He will give you whatever sign you need, brothers and
sisters. What you require will be yours, for He cares
for you and desires to feed you. But do not be overly
desirous of such signs, which have earthly matters as
their substance. Come rather to the Body that is
Christ and be fed in His Spirit.

Lord, I pray the feast of heaven awaits us all.
(Your Jubilee graces pour forth upon this earth now.)

July 31 (Jer.13:1-11; Dt.32:18-21; Mt.13:31-35)

The seed of Israel had become corrupt,
but Christ has come as the seed of heaven -
from Him the kingdom grows.

Hold Jesus in your hearts, brothers and sisters.

I continue to seek direction, speaking to director
of an archdiocesan house for discernment. And
various offers for teaching assignments arise...
Some things must be decided soon.

O Lord, how should this loaf rise?
Lead the way.

August 1 (Jer.14:17-22; Ps.79:8-9,11,13; Mt.13:36-43)

Let us not be cast into the oven.
The fires of hell may we escape.
(And the fires of purgatory.)

This life is difficult, and the road to heaven
often seems occluded. Yet through it all the Lord
will bring us. (I wish to be a child of God.)

My prayers continue for the souls in purgatory, and my
own, in my daily pilgrimage. The Lord grants grace and
strength; however, yet do we need to find our way home.

O angels, come;
 leave us not alone.
O that we might shine.

(Such darkness upon the land for more than a week...)

August 2

(Jer.15:10,16-21; Ps.59:2-4,10-11,17-18;
Mt.13:44-46)

God is our strength. We really need not fear.
If we walk upright with the Lord, He will protect
us; He will make us "a solid wall of brass".

I notice that in my teaching this summer I do not have
difficult moments; the students do not get under my
skin and I do not lose control. I realize it is
because of the purity I have found. Like a pearl
it is worth everything, for in it I find refuge
in the Lord which cannot be overcome.

The chinks in the armor are closing up.
(And further into religious vocation I continue to look.)

Let all the vile be cast from us, Lord,
that we might serve you in strength.

(A couple of students relate their own thoughts
of priesthood to me.)

August 3 (Jer.18:1-6; Ps.146:1-6; Mt.13:47-53)

If we are not molded by the hand of God,
we will be cast off, good for nothing.

The Lord will continue to offer to remake us,
continue to seek the lost,
but the day will come...
("Have you understood all this?")

I watch now the Republican National Convention and hear
from the presidential nominee promise of remaking this
country in compassion - there are tears. All know the
need. God help us.

O my Lord, my Potter,
reach down and mold me according to your will.
(And take this country and this world.)

August 4

(Jer.26:1-9; Ps.69:5,8-10,14; Mt.13:54-58)

How hard it is for the people to listen.
How hard it is for them to change their ways.
And so they prefer to shoot the prophet
in a vain attempt to kill his message.

And perhaps we should erect the cross of Christ
in Times Square, bringing Jesus to the people,
as visiting priest whom I take to the City (on
the feast of St. John Vianney) suggests. Or should
I rather enter into the quiet heart of the Church,
taking up the prayer of the monk?

(I begin to think - and with no sense of pride, but
rather in a seeking for truth - that I am some kind
of genius, that with the Lord I could accomplish
whatever I set my mind to. And so, how do I decide
on a particular vocation?)

O Lord, let the people hear your voice.
(And let me know your call, deep in my soul.)

August 5

(Jer.26:11-16,24; Ps.69:14-16,30-31,33-34;
Mt.14:1-12)

The prophet is persecuted,
but his truth pierces the soul.

Today I read at pilgrimage church - first time I have lectored in quite a while, having left my parish church well over a month ago... And the question of my talents and how they might be best utilized continues.

Lord, make me not afraid to do your will.

("Do one thing well" a sign says.)

August 6

(Dn.7:9-10,13-14; Ps.97:1-2,5-6,9; 2Pt.1:16-19;
Mk.9:2-10)

On this the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, we contemplate the glorious majesty of our Lord, to which we are all called, and of which we get a foretaste on this earth.

There is a special glow, a certain light, about this day - this is a special feast. At Mass, at nursing home, at prayer meeting - coursing throughout all is God's glorious presence. And it is conveyed greatly by visiting priests - one whose homily at morning Mass condemns the selfishness of American society; the other who is such a genuine apostle of Jesus, working constantly for the spreading of the word. (I have not seen his like.)

Love is the principal message - self-sacrificial love. This will bring us to glory.

O Lord, help us to die to self
that we might come to that glorious light
beyond our imagining.

August 7

(Jer.28:1-17; Ps.119:29,43,68,79-80,95,102;
Mt.14:13-21)

Truth. What can be done by Truth.

Our ways must be true; we cannot conjure truth -
we cannot presume upon it. Only God has truth.

Seeking truth in teaching students; the detective
on TV searches for truth regarding crime.
Jeremiah has truth, certainly, as does Jesus...

And it seems today it has been decided I shall
not be staying at archdiocesan discernment house.
May all this be in truth done.

We need but a mustard seed to make a tree (or a
few loaves to feed thousands) if we have but truth -
and love.

There must be a way, dear Lord.

(Is it for the cat or for the truth
that I cannot go?

And I pray that now that politicians (presidential)
are coming to a recognition of real values, that it
shall be true.)

August 8

(Jer.30:1-2,12-15,18-22; Ps.102:16-23,29;
Mt.14:22-36)

O to be "fully restored to health."

Jeremiah recounts the sin, the incurable wound, of the people of Israel, then prophesies their restoration. The psalm promises that Zion will be rebuilt. The men of Gennesaret are healed as they reach out to touch "the tassel of His cloak". Jesus rescues Peter immediately after the sinking apostle cries out...

And, of course, the Lord's whole ministry is to redeem our fallen race.

Lord, I cry out to you now -
 fully restore me to health.
Let no semblance of sin cling to me;
 let me move on in my ministry.

August 9 (Jer.31:1-7; Jer.31:10-13; Mt.15:21-28)

He who comes to fulfill the prophecy of Jeremiah (and all the prophets), He who has come to restore and shepherd the lost of Israel, has also come for you and me, my brothers and sisters. He is salvation to all the nations... "They shall come streaming to the Lord's blessings."

Get on your knees and beg His mercy.
He cannot but show mercy to those of faith.

Lord, help me to continue to seek your graces,
which I know are so generously offered forth.

August 10 (2Cor.9:6-10; Ps.112:1-2,5-9; Jn.12:24-26)

Service and generosity. St. Lawrence the deacon who died for the Lord.

Priest to whom I confess this morning says in his homily that today's gospel is the one proclaimed at his ordination seven years ago. And I understand how the monk lives a "desert" life, as vocation director at monastery has termed it, for there is a lack of water, of blood - of humor, as it were. In its austerity, in its rigor, it sacrifices something very human of life. The monk dies to this world and begins his life, in suffering, in the next...

There is a call in here.

(It appears as if the next few months will remain rather undecided, that the remainder of the year (of Jubilee) and the remainder of this writing will continue to be a time of discernment and attainment of decision. I pray by the completion of this work on the Epiphany, I shall be clear.

Note: no full-time work at least until January.)

Lord, your call surrounds me today,
echoing in my ears...
May its definition be found in your grace.

August 11

(Nah.2:1,3,3:1-3,6-7; Dt.32:35-36,39,41;
Mt.16:24-28)

The Lord deals death and gives life;
all are paid according to their conduct.
And only those who die shall live.

The paradox of Christ is that death brings life.
As Christians we know the deepest sorrow and the most
absolute joy, the darkest night and the brightest day;
only if we humble ourselves to the dust will we know
the exaltation of glory. For this life I pray.

And on this day I make reservation to visit a
monastery, I receive a graduation check from the
uncle whose voice I hear in speaking with the vocation
director. (The check is in the amount I had decided
to give for my stay.)

Your way, O Lord, let us all follow.

August 12 (Hb.1:12-2:4; Ps.9:8-13; Mt.17:14-20)

"How long can I endure you?"

It is not the Lord who "delays"; it is we.
When will we have faith enough to come to Him.

He will not abandon us, brothers and sisters,
but we must seek Him; we must have faith in Him.

He waits for us, and we should thank Him for
His patience; but His day "will surely come",
and we best be ready.

How often the Lord would have destroyed the Israelites
except that Moses interceded and prevailed upon His
patience; how often, Christ tells us, He would have
gathered us under His wings, but we would not come...

Find your faith.

O Lord, come.
Though we know you not -
touch us with your blood,
feed us with your flesh.

August 13

(1Kgs.19:4-8; Ps.34:2-9; Eph.4:30-5:2;

Jn.6:41-51)

Today I eat and sleep, lazy as Elijah may have momentarily been - but I do not rise and walk with his strength and conviction. More of the Bread of Life do I need.

Even as I have been considering monastic life (and begun reading Teresa of Avila's *Way of Perfection*), I have found myself more distracted by earthly matters such as television. I read of Mcluhan's fears regarding media, especially TV, and their power to "discarnate" reality, and on this Bread of Life Sunday I wonder if this hasn't served to divorce us from the reality of Christ and one another - or are they just tools? Either way we must gain an absolute control over them, for they do rule the lives of many and have proven their danger.

We must come to reality and there find Christ,
for He is most real.

O Lord, may we feed always on your Word,
your Body and your Blood.

(Christ is humble, of the earth,
and we must be as He.)

August 14

(Ez.1:2-5; ,24-28; Ps.148:1-2,11-14;
Mt.17:22-27)

He is the Son and glory streams from His throne comparable to the Father's splendor; yet He not only humbles Himself to walk amongst us and abide by the laws which govern this earth, but even suffers humiliation and dies for our sake. How can this be?

The only thing more remarkable than the splendid glory of the Lord is His absolute humility. Here you will find the key to our faith.

O Lord, forgive my walking grandly in this world,
unable to recognize the log in my eye;
may somehow I walk humbly with you
unto glory.

August 15

(Rv.11:19,12:1-6,10; Ps.45:10-12,16;
1Cor.15:20-27; Lk.1:39-56)

I am particularly conscious of my sins this morning as I recall my anger and pride in dealing with a difficult situation. There is much that is unkind, pushy and selfish, in me. And this evening as I consider the gentle good nature of an employer and his son, and the possibility of my call "into the desert" of monastic life, I realize that St. Teresa is not just speaking empty words when she notes the gravity of her sin, and that those set apart for such a life are not necessarily holier people - though they are called to pursue perfection more readily.

But to be aware of our sins (and ready in faith to work on them) is a blessing - as is the two Masses I attend this morning, being asked to lector for second as I leave church some time after first.

And while on the altar, there is light, which I realize truly comes only as a blessing from Christ.
(Any good we do is indeed of Him.)

Dear Mother, may we somehow be prepared
to ascend with thee to heaven
and Christ.

August 16 (Ez.9:1-7,10:18-22; Ps.113:1-6; Mt.18:15-20)

As the angels are appointed to anoint and destroy, so the disciples are appointed to judge - to loose and to bind. The Lord works through His angels in heaven and His disciples here on earth.

I bring my sins to one of His apostles, to the Church, in Confession. The Lord graces me with consciousness of my sin and I repent. And I must laugh as I read of St. Teresa's perfect illustration of my sin. It is true, I complain, "I was in the *right*", and so take liberty to anger and unkindness and judgment, rather than bearing the cross of Christ as I should. Thank God He shows us our faults and gives us hope of reparation.

O mark me, dear Lord, for life.

(Funny, just last night I noticed a young woman on TV with a mark like my own on her forehead.)

August 17 (Ez.12:1-12; Ps.78:7,56-59,61-62; Mt.18:21-9:1)

I had not before noticed that it is to Peter Jesus addresses this teaching on forgiveness; and how appropriate that is. It is Peter primarily to whom Jesus gives the keys, the power to bind and loose - he is the first of priests who all share, through Peter, this power in the sacrament of Penance. And we, too, as priests of Christ, share in this forgiving grace.

I see now that Peter is, and that we all are in turn, the first steward, who was forgiven much but soon forgot the grace shown him. It is a warning to all who call themselves Christians, against the ignorance and grave sin that come with a certain pride. We must forgive. We must always forgive, and never think ourselves better than another.

(Again, St. Teresa is right in calling herself a great sinner - this truth is the only way for us to grow in the Lord.)

Note: Here visiting Trappist monastery. Again no kneeling (no kneelers) during consecration. I find myself kneeling after receiving, Perhaps as a kind of Ezekial-like sign.

Dear Lord, help us to fulfill rightly
your great ministry of forgiveness
toward all.

August 18 (Ez.16:1-15,60,63; Is.12:1-6; Mt.19:3-12)

Marriage and the Church.

I think I am now of marriageable age: will the Lord
Forgive my past sins and now call me to His side?

Conversation with vocation director (and attending the
Hours throughout the day). He clears up reservations
as to variations in format - the Cistercians have their
own rule and are answerable directly to the Holy See.
Liturgical variations are kosher.)

I don't know. There is certainly something strong
of the contemplative monk in me... But it is a big
decision - a lifetime commitment and a strong one
(so thoroughly dying to self). Can I accept this way?

O Lord, let me be wed unto Thee
as thou ordains.

August 19

(Ez.18:1-10,13,30-32; Ps.51:12-15,18-19;
Mt.19:13-15)

The children are free from the sins of the father;
once we are cleansed, we are sinners no more -
our past sins can no longer hurt us.

How the Scriptures are coming together as one, as
Christ, for me, particularly the psalms we chant...
And here in this place I (re)discover the quiet heart,
the silence. I write to the vocation director that
if I return, I shall not be able to leave again: the
growth of the soul is here. (This place is real.)

And the tetragrammaton recurs with three separate
priests: one who speaks on centering prayer; one
who quotes the "I AM" passage and encourages us
to be who we are; and another who in Confession
instructs me to pray in silence (no words) each
day. (This may be who I am.)

Lord, I believe the time is at hand;
here at the end of the ages,
take my life.

August 20

(Prov.9:1-6; Ps.34:2-7,9; Eph.5:15-20;
Jn.6:51-58)

(Attended special Cistercian liturgy in honor of St. Bernard - allowable for the Order - but will reflect still on readings of the Latin rite.)

Here we see that wisdom is as food; and what greater food and what greater wisdom than that which is the Body and Blood of Christ? This is our life. And as we, like the monks, sing psalms back and forth to one another, we share that life. This is heaven.

Yes, this monastery I leave today is who I am, essentially (quintessentially) - I live within these four walls. And I would be bound in this "nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space" (Hamlet) if the Lord would will it so. But does He rather desire that I carry this temple of silence with me and within me wherever I go, through the world (as priest's question during Confession seems to suggest - have I written of carrying this silence on city streets)? And certainly it is so that here resides the quintessence of every man, here at the hub of the wheel, the still point of the turning world... so why should I be different?

Into the Lord's hands with patience and wisdom
I shall place this.

Lord, feed me with your Bread of Life
and let it lead me through each passing day.

August 21 (Ez.24:15-24; Dt.32:18-21; Mt.19:16-22)

Contemplating and reading about the Cistercian way, it is founded, of course, on Jesus' words to the young man in today's gospel: "If you seek perfection, go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor. You will then have treasure in heaven."

Might I finally realize this call I have longed for? Indeed, my day is preoccupied, blessed, by thoughts of the monks and the peace within. The world now seems decidedly vain and I feel a stranger (though not in despair but tender compassion).

Shall I be able to maintain this heart of silence?
Should I enter into this order?

Whatever we possess must be given to God;
we can keep nothing as our own.
(Do all as if you are not doing it.)

Lord, take my thoughts,
and maintain my conviction to love you and neighbor.

August 22

(Ez.28:1-10; Dt.32:26-28,30,35-36,39;

Mt.19:23-30)

Wisdom is not in riches,
but in a poverty
which opens itself to God.

Though I hear this evening of the goodness and glory of the Dominican order at an orientation in a college at which I shall teach a class or two, yet my heart remains with my Trappist brothers. It cannot be denied: here is the place we gaze into the essence of our souls as if into a mirror - in this silence, in this abnegation. (And I do not think it is necessary to share that knowledge with the world; the hub of the wheel is silent.)

O the joy of leaving all things
and finding God.
(This is wisdom.)

Lord, make us truly wise.

(On the day I receive inspection sticker good for two years, a fellow adjunct (named Rich), who drove a Toyota for twenty years and 200,000 miles, tells me my teaching is "God's work".

Wisdom is a subtle thing.)

August 23 (Ez.34:1-11; Ps.23:1-6; Mt.20:1-16)

The Lord is our shepherd,
and a more generous, loving, and kind shepherd
we could not find.
He cares even for the least of the sheep.

My uncle has died, and I pray the Lord shall shepherd
his soul unto heaven. May he be open to the Lord's
call which would lead him home.

Whether we come first or last, Lord,
let us all come unto your eternal presence
and find our reward.

August 24 (Rv.21:9-14; Ps.145:10-13,17-18; Jn.1:45-51)

St. Bartholomew.

These apostles are the foundation of the Church, the foundation of the New Jerusalem; called by Christ they are set in stone, and we His people rise upon them. We shall see clearly the glory of the Church, as has John and all eyes blessed by God. But we must come without guile.

My prayer of late, thanks to a greater concentration on contemplative silence and St. Teresa's instruction, has been closer to God. May it continue to grow in depth and focus, that my will may be joined to His and I might become a stone in the glorious wall of the heavenly Church.

Lord, may it please you
to see me and call me
with such a grateful heart -
that I might see you with eyes made pure.

August 25 (Ez.37:1-14; Ps.107:1-9; Mt.22:34-40)

Uncle's funeral Mass,
and so prayers for his soul -
that the Lord redeem him as He promised Israel,
that he might be seated at the Lord's feast
even as we sit at banquet today.

May we all have clean water sprinkled upon us and be
brought back to our "own land", into the Lord's arms
in the kingdom of God - may we be ready to sit at His
table.

Lord, gather his soul unto you
and watch over us all.

<Because there were special readings for yesterday's
feast of St. Bartholomew, I was a day behind in
my weekday missal and so reflected on the ordinary
readings for yesterday. A shame, because Ezekial's
vision of the dry bones is very appropriate for
this funeral day - and here we also find the Lord's
greatest commandment, upon which my work is set.>

August 26 (Ez.43:1-7; Ps.85:9-14; Mt.23:1-12)

Though the Pharisees themselves be dishonorable vessels, yet they cannot pollute the temple, cannot remove the purity of the Word and the glory of Jerusalem. (It is a lesson needed to be learned.)

Jesus is with us till the end of time
(particularly in the Blessed Sacrament),
and will ever bring to us His glory.

Teach me, Lord, the way to your glorious presence.

(Continuing to read of the contemplative way.)

August 27

(Josh.24:1-2,15-18; Ps.34:2-3,9,16-21;
Eph.5:21-32; Jn.6:60-69)

The choice is given and we must decide.
The question is like that in the wedding ceremony:
"Do you take the Lord to be your husband?"
Will you be obedient to Him? Will you follow Him
and be as He is? Or do you want to leave Him?

Where can we go?
There is no other way.

Lord, you are the Christ.
Feed us with your Body and your Blood,
that we might have life,
that we might be flesh of your flesh.

(There *is* great significance in this marriage of Christ
and His Church. For Him we hunger as for food.
(I'm staring at a pear.))

August 28 (1Jn.4:7-16; Ps.96:1-5; Mt.23:8-12)

As God has loved us first, so must we love others first, not waiting for return. And yes, we must humble ourselves before others for God to exalt us in His kingdom.

On this the feast of St. Augustine, I pray for the blessing of true love and genuine humility, though I am tempted otherwise.

Let us not fall to the call of the world, O Lord,
but let us find your holiness.

August 29

(Jer.1:17-19; Ps.71:1-6,15,17; Mk.6:17-29)

I find this the feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist to be a warning, as today I return to teaching in the colleges for the fall semester. I must be careful lest this potentially hectic and distracting work draw me away from the heart of silence I have been discovering. My heart, indeed, seems to be set on monastic life, but I must make myself ready for such if I am to go. My friend/girlfriend still persists in her expectation of my conversion, and I have faltered somewhat because of it. This and other matters must be resolved, I pray, in this time. (I shall need the strength and perseverance of Jeremiah and the Baptist.)

O Lord, your will be done,
your kingdom come.
Lead me through this time
and take my life.

August 30

(2Thes.3:6-10,16-18; Ps.128:1-2,4-5;
Mt.23:27-32)

We must do the work of the Lord,
not shun it or do it in vain.
There must be no fear;
faith and perseverance will bear us through death.

If in vain we labor, or if out of laziness we do no
work, we shall find no reward - we shall not eat of
the fruit of the kingdom.

I rekindle my search into vocation, calling several houses.
I must persist.

Lord, may I be of your line,
following your tradition.

(Disown those not of the line of Christ.)

August 31 (1Cor.1:1-9; Ps.145:1-7; Mt.24:42-51)

This morning I am awake and watchful in prayer, and the Lord blesses me with His closeness. I would lack no spiritual gift if I remained diligent, but often the world closes in. And I have difficulty assimilating the teaching of Teresa to welcome times of trial.

(I wish now I had not cancelled plans to revisit Trappist monastery this weekend.)

O Lord, strengthen me;
let me take refuge in you
and be your faithful servant.

September 1 (1Cor.1:17-25; Ps.33:1-2,4-5,10-11;
Mt.25:1-13)

Wisdom is the lesson, and not a worldly wisdom of rationality, though a practical wisdom of readiness. Wisdom it is I seek most.

And today I read the introduction to *The Cloud of Unknowing*, a book I have longed to read. Its theme, of course, is that we must empty ourselves of the world and its "wisdom" to find the unimaginable presence of God. (There is something to the fact that I begin it while sitting before the exposed Sacrament.)

I have a definite affinity for such contemplative writing, and cannot but keep returning to "YHWH" as the perfect prayer word.

O Lord, as I struggle to keep in the way that leads to you,
help me to grow ever stronger in your light,
ever more resolute in following you.

("Waiting for the day when all becomes unknown.")

September 2 (1Cor.1:26-31; Ps.33:12-13,18-21; Mt.25:14-30)

Doing the Lord's will; humbling ourselves and following His way. In all matters. At all times. Then we shall be fruitful.

O Lord, please let it be done
in my life
and the lives of all your children of light.

(I must write a letter to a priest who because of worldly wisdom falls short, I believe, of answering the humble question of a lowly sheep, "Is Jonah real?")

September 3 (Dt.4:1-2,6-8; Ps.15:1-5;
Jas.1:17-18,21-22,27; Mk.7:1-8,14-15,21-23)

You are what you speak;
your actions show what is in your heart.

"You shall not add to what I command you
nor subtract from it."

Yes, brothers and sisters, the world adds and subtracts
as it pleases from the perfect law of the Lord, and
it says that it is permissible for you to do so as well.
Adultery is O.K. Premarital sex is fine. Lying and
cheating are expected. But what happens to us when
we practice such things? When will we see how these
alterations in the word of the Lord separate us from
Him and so from true happiness?

The evil within must be rooted out, not allowed to
prosper. Let us turn away from evil - from lying,
stealing, and cheating - and show ourselves to be
light for the world. Should you not do so?

O Lord, much yet needs to be uprooted from me;
I have hope that you shall accomplish all,
that all your children will apply themselves
to salvation.

September 4 (1Cor.2:1-5; Ps.119:97-102; Lk.4:16-30)

Paul preaches Christ crucified,
and Jesus' preaching brings His crucifixion.

We are not here to tell people what they want to hear,
to have ourselves looked upon favorably and held in
honor. We are here to preach with our lives the Son
of God, and to die.

On this Labor Day I continue to seek (and to cry for)
the Lord's desire for my work. I speak with a few
third order individuals about the different callings.
But mostly I am ill.

O Lord, help all those called and ordained
in your Church
to speak the truth in love
with all they are and all they do.

(This day I see that the Lord has become incarnate,
and pray to become incarnate in Him.)

September 5 (1Cor.2:10-16; Ps.145:8-14,17; Lk.4:31-37)

The mind of Christ and the Spirit of God are what I need to put on. Here is true justice. Here is authority. Here we find the Holy One of God.

For three days I again fought illness by worldly means of food and rest. Not until today did I put on "the mind of Christ" and remember what I so often forget - that suffering can be joyful when united to the sufferings of God. And so I fasted and went to work (teaching), willing to follow the Lord joyfully unto death, and strength was provided.

(I am such a wimp sometimes, such a baby, and I'm supposed to be of Christ... I begin to understand how St. Teresa can cherish trials as a warrior cherishes battle. Here we prove our mettle and unite to Christ.)

O Lord, may it be your Spirit which is upon us,
and not that of the world.

Note: I am not saying here that food and medicine and rest have no place in the healing process. I *am* saying that nothing works like fasting and prayer, for the most important thing is to *accept* the suffering and unite it to the suffering of Christ. Nothing has meaning without this.

September 6 (1Cor.3:1-9; Ps.33:12-15,20-21; Lk.4:38-44)

Everyone's got their job to do.
Jesus says of His preaching, "That is why I was sent."
Paul, after accounting for his and Apollos' functions,
states, "Each will receive his wages in proportion to
his toil." We all have work to do and must accomplish
it well.

A brother I haven't spoken with for a while states
how a priest (our administrator) shook his faith.
I am quick to respond that he does not shake my faith
at all. I learned a long time ago that priests are
people, good and bad. And so I see that it is in the
accomplishment of the mission given us that our merit
comes, and not in the position itself.

Yet do I wonder about my own "job", even as I turn
now to teaching, but it is instructional to remember
that only God is of special account - He is what
matters. And we are all just doing our part.

O Lord, let me not be anxious about human matters,
but let me accomplish well all you set out for me
in your name.

September 7 (1Cor.3:18-23; Ps.24:1-6; Lk.5:1-11)

Simple faith. Simply to believe. Simply to be in heaven. This simplicity is on my mind this day, and its importance is evident in the readings. Paul, of course, continues to speak against the "wisdom" of this world. And in the gospel we see the call of the simple fishermen to an apostolic life.

This simplicity is inherent in *The Cloud of Unknowing* as well, which calls us to forget all things of the world, even religious thoughts and images, and simply desire to love and be with God in prayer...

Our faith is not a complicated matter. But believe. Be seated in heaven.

I love you, Lord,
and wish to be close to you.

Another explanatory note:
The author of the above is not denying the benefits of meditation on religious things - he's just leading us to a purer union with God.

September 8 (Mic.5:1-4; Ps.13:6,Is.61:9; Mt.1:18-23)

"The time when she who is to give birth has borne..."

Long did the world wait for the Lord to be born;
generations passed...

But from these generations came a woman who would
give birth to the Savior. "Mary" was her name.
And this Mary would take the bitterness of the apple
from our lips and replace it with the sweetness of
the blood of Christ. She would give birth to Him
who gives us new birth.

And for this we honor her.

Lord, you prepared your Virgin daughter
from all time
to be the one to give birth
to the One who stands at the center of time.

We thank you for your holy will
and her blessed acceptance of it.

September 9 (1Cor.4:9-15; Ps.145:17-21; Lk.6:1-5)

I think it somehow appropriate that on this the feast of St. Peter Claver I return to teaching an ESL class after not having worked with these immigrant students for several months. I find a purpose and a comfort if not a call. (Had been getting used to teaching native students basic writing, but this is what I have been trained for.)

How ready Peter Claver was to face the humiliation of which Paul speaks by becoming the "slave to the negroes."

O Jesus, you who are Lord of the Sabbath,
bring rest and the peace of God
to all living creatures.

September 10

(Is.35:4-7; Ps.146:1,7-10; Jas.2:1-5;
Mk.7:31-37)

"He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."
He fulfills all things written in Scripture;
He comes to bring life.

May all be set free from their prisons
by the power of the Lord.

Priest focuses on James and not making distinctions between peoples. (We certainly do need our ears - and heart - opened to do this.) I had noticed that over the past four months of not teaching ESL, I myself had become rather cold to the plight of the immigrant. I witnessed myself, in coming from my class (of native speakers) and seeing the ESL speakers on the elevator, holding an air of judgment I would not have thought possible to find in myself. We must be on guard.

The Lord has come for us all.

Come, Lord Jesus, and set us free
from all fear and prejudice,
as well as all sin.

Heal us.

September 11 (1Cor.5:1-8; Ps.5:5-7,9,12; Lk.6:6-11)

Wickedness cannot be tolerated,
nor can a stubborn soul.

If we don't rejoice in the work of the Lord, we are
ourselves on the road to wickedness; it is in our
hearts, a sin as evil as any lewd conduct.

O Lord, I rejoice to be well today
and return to a steady schedule.
May I rise with you each day to do your work.

September 12 (1Cor.6:1-11; Ps.149:1-6,9; Lk.6:12-19)

Jesus prays. Jesus appoints His apostles. Jesus cures
- showing the apostles His mission in the world.

The Christian is here to cleanse the world of darkness.
And what darkness do I indeed hear of upon the Church
in this area. And what cleansing it needs, of those
who are to do the curing.

May the Lord bless the anointed
and keep them in the path He sets.

O Lord, take the darkness from the Church;
bring to us your holiness,
your power.

Let all be in prayer before you.

September 13

(1Cor.7:25-31; Ps.45:11-12,14-17;
Lk.6:20-26)

Today is made for mourning, for we are separated from our God; but rejoicing there shall be when He leads us into the bridal chamber and we are made one with Him.

Yes, we are ultimately to wed our God, and so marriage here can distract us from the love we should have for our Lord. It would be better to suffer alone for now, and this I would do, but yet do I struggle to be apart from my friend, who cannot accept our separation. May the Lord bring us both peace in the resolution of this distracting situation.

O Lord, as Christians we are made to suffer with you.
May your Church accept its call joyfully,
 knowing the blessings you bring us
 as we leave this world behind.

September 14

(Nm.21:4-9; Ps.78:1-2,7,34-38; Phil.2:6-11;
Jn.3:13-17)

The Triumph of the Cross.

Twice today I read and hear of the "Hebraic" nature of this country and its war with its "Hellenic", individualistic character. It is only right the cross be lifted up and the people be drawn to their religious roots, and their salvation. The cross, this sign of defeat, of humiliation, shall triumph, and the king of the Jews upon it shall reign. Yes, the humbled shall be exalted.

And having to go to court in Hoboken for stop sign violation (I contest), I sense the corruption of this world and how the rich buy justice while the poor must wait... (My hearing is put off again.)

Lord, I know we shall triumph in you
despite the trials and tribulations
we find in this society.

September 15

(Heb.5:7-9; Ps.31:2-6,15-17,20; Jn.19:25-27)

Our Lady of Sorrows.

And my own sorrows continue with regard to my relationship with my friend - how shall it end? These days I come upon marks she made in my Liturgy of the Hours about a year ago, scratching out references to the Blessed Mother over several feast days. Oh what sorrow has this world! (How could it be that you, dear Mother, are in the midst of it? And how it must pain you, for the sword which pierces Jesus' body, pierces your own.)

O Lord, may all sorrow we bear be joined to your own, that it may bear the fruit of redemption.

September 16

(1Cor.10:14-22; Ps.116:12-13,17-18;
Lk.6:43-49)

"Put into practice what I teach you..."

How necessary to put into practice the word of the Lord. How necessary, and how blessed are those who do. For they share, literally, in the life of Christ. They are as Christ. And who is more blessed than Christ? And how could such a foundation be shaken?

We take up His bread and body each day. We praise His name. And we must do His will - put it into practice.

Oh how I wish I could; it would be as a breath of fresh air and as the strength of concrete - it would be an unshakable foundation. (For the Lord cannot be shaken. How could He who shakes the world shake Himself?)

I speak of Jesus' self-sacrificial love, of His loving those who crucify Him, of how there could be no greater love - and my class is silent.

O Lord, let us join in your love.

September 17

(Is.50:5-9; Ps.116:1-6,8-9; Jas.2:14-18;
Mk.8:27-35)

They shall lose their lives as well, His apostles, both in death and in the giving of themselves to His ministry. And if we are His disciples we must lose our lives, too, not shielding our faces from buffets and spitting, but turning the other cheek, losing our pride and our lives for His love.

I notice how Jesus answers Peter's rebuke: He looks at His disciples as He speaks to Peter (for the same thought is in their hearts); then He looks to the crowd (whom they will be serving and dying for) as He speaks to His disciples.

Does He speak to you, my brother?

O Lord, let us answer your call
to lay down our lives
and find your love.

Give us this day our daily bread of life.

(I seem to converse with the Blessed Mother about my friend - I have informed her pastor of my fears for her emotional health. She tells me if she wants help, she will receive it (quickly).)

September 18

(1Cor.11:17-26,33; Ps.40:7-10,17,1Cor.11:26;
Lk.7:1-10)

Here we find both Paul's explication of the Communion sacrifice and the centurion's humble words, said before Communion: "I am not worthy to receive you..." How can we make ourselves worthy to receive the Lord? We must have faith and come humbly.

Say the word, O Lord, that the world might be redeemed.

(The power of the word considered for a class essay today.)

September 19

(1Cor.12:12-14,27-31; Ps.100:1-5; Lk.7:11-17)

We are many members with many functions, and yet we are one in Christ - for Jesus is and does all these things.

Here in this short gospel passage, three of the gifts stated by Paul are present: Jesus performs the miracle of healing and is proclaimed a great prophet. And, of course, Jesus teaches, Jesus ministers, and He is sent by the Father. In reality, it is Jesus who does all these works we perform, though He performs them through us.

O Lord, raise us from death
to perform your works on earth.

September 20

(1Cor.12:31-13:13; Ps.33:2-5,12,22;
Lk.7:31-35)

We must put aside our childish ways; we must not be spoiled and selfish, demanding of the Lord and one another what is *our* will. Yet, we must be as children, for there is where true love lies, in purity and innocence.

I know not where my relationship with my friend does lead. I shall not dance to the tune of her church; does she at all consider approaching mine? May the Lord (and His Mother) intercede in this matter, as He sees fit.

O Lord, let your will be done in love
and holy wisdom.

September 21 (Eph.4:1-7,11-13; Ps.19:2-5; Mt.9:9-13)

Thank God Jesus desires mercy, for mercy it is we need most. It is most important to remember that we are all sinners, for then Jesus' power may come to fulfillment in us and His purpose of salvation be complete.
(It is the sinner who thirsts for such redeeming grace.)

The priest speaks, in accord with first reading and the feast of the evangelist and apostle Matthew, of utilizing the gifts we are all given by God. I take out my guitar, much-neglected over recent years. I have thought to play again (especially *Children of Light*), and finally do more than think tonight.
(And we have the Olympics on TV these days.)

I need you, Lord;
 thank you for being there to save us.

Continue your work in my life.

September 22 (1Cor.15:12-20; Ps.17:1,6-8,15; Lk.8:1-3)

When the evil spirits go out of us, we are resurrected from a kind of death; and when Jesus appears in full glory, we shall rise with Him to eternal life in heaven. (Indeed, if Christ is not risen, if we do not rise with Him, our faith is worthless.)

Today I read the rule of a nearby eremitic community and find it particularly consonant with my own spirituality. I note the founder's consistent use of the Shema (heart, mind, soul, and strength), upon which my own spiritual writings are based. It should be worth a visit...

And I contribute a little out of my means to our Nigerian priest, whose Mass of leaving is tonight. God bless Him on His way. (He whose voice is powerful enough to wake the dead.)

O Lord, lead me on your path,
which leads to heaven.

September 23 (1Cor.15:35-37,42-49; Ps.56:10-14; Lk.8:4-15)

In heaven we shall have our spiritual bodies
(though while on earth we groan).
This seed we pray shall fall to the earth
and grow into spiritual form.

Even now let us grow, O Lord.
Even now let us progress toward your heavenly nature,
here as we struggle and cry unto you.

Give us the confidence that we shall walk with you
in the land of the living,
that we shall persevere through all trials.

(Tired I am and anxious about my friend,
whose pastor may speak with her tomorrow...)

September 24

(Ws.2:12,17-20; Ps.54:3-8; Jas.3:16-4:3;
Mk.9:30-37)

At Mass this morning I could see Jesus setting this child in the midst of the apostles (standing about) and telling them to be like him. I've always loved the passage, but never had it been so real - and never had I felt what the apostles must have felt while gazing upon, and perhaps touching, this child before them... "Be like him." This quiet child, looking up at those standing around him.

And so Jesus would be before His persecutors.

Give me weakness, Lord,
such meekness and mildness -
such trust in you.

(This prayer in accord with priest's suggestion to pray for weakness, not strength.)

And the player who bore the brunt of an opponent's mockery all week catches a winning touchdown pass (from a halfback) in the waning seconds, while the haughty man catches but one (shovel) pass for one yard.

And I speak with the founder of the Bethlehem Hermitage about making a visit.)

September 25

(Prv.3:27-34; Ps.15:1-5; Lk.8:16-18)

"Shine your light." At all times. That you might ever grow in righteousness. Do not hide. (Here is a calling.)

I seek to go to Confession with a priest, at a moment's notice. He hesitates, but complies. (Bless him.)

My friend is angry at my having spoken to her pastor. Is this not a bringing things into the light?

And the Blessed Mother encourages participation in a prayer group, sharing the light with others. (How shall I heed this request? - Yesterday in pilgrim church they spoke of the formation of such groups.)

Lord, let me not lose what it seems you've given me;
let me ever grow as I come into the light.

September 26

(Prv.21:1-6,10-13; Ps.119:1,27,30,34-35,44;
Lk.8:19-21)

One line pearls of wisdom like clouds of light passing radiantly overhead and shining clearly upon our earth are present in Proverbs, through the psalm, and into the gospel: "My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and act upon it."

We must do His will, obey His commands, walk in His light.

Rather poignant discussion of euthanasia in classes today. After listening to a number of moving stories and seeking the compassion that sees life, I relate the story of my sister's wide-eyed and smiling response to my crass question of how she could play with a deaf, dumb, and blind little boy: "He can roll over!"

Life is.

O Lord, let us be your mother and brothers,
seeing and living the life you give us.

(One student states: "Every day is a blessing.")

September 27

(Prv.30:5-9; Ps.119:29,72,89,101,104-105,163;
Lk.9:1-6)

The readings and gospel seemed so appropriate,
I thought they might be those proper to this feast
of St. Vincent de Paul: "Give me neither poverty
nor riches" and "Take nothing for the journey."

Today indeed I remember my days with the soup kitchen
and begin to miss this service to the poor (which
the priest this morning calls that work most Catholic).

I must soon find some outlet for sharing the Lord;
I cannot go much longer alone as I have been.

Where will you send me, Lord?

(Tonight my friend speaks with her pastor -
may something good come of it.)

September 28

(Eccl.1:2-11; Ps.90:1,3-6,12-14,17;
Lk.9:7-9)

This is not John or Elijah or anyone or anything that has been - He is new. And all is new under the Son. The river is filled with song. The wind blows where it will. And all our eyes and ears are filled with the radiance of the Lord.

My work is vitalized today as I orchestrate debates in back-to-back classes (both of which are extended fifteen minutes). And as I look at things closely, they all do indeed seem new. (And a song is in my heart - and in one of my students singing in the parking lot.)

Praise you, Lord, for the life you bring us.

September 29

(Rv.12:7-12; Ps.138:1-5; Jn.1:47-51)

I would the angels of God would heal my brother of his nightmares. I would they could bring him into the fold of the Church. (He is here visiting for a few days.)

Christ the Lord it is who is our bridge to heaven.
Let us walk upon Him guided by the angels' wings.

Lord, send forth your angels
to renew your Church
and the face of the earth.

May our hearts be set upon you.

September 30

(Ecc1.11:9-12:8; Ps.90:1,3-6,12-14,17;
Lk.9:43-45)

Death must come. But life will follow.

This month must end, this year -
this day must end for a new one to come.

Death we fear, for we do not wish to be delivered
into its hands. But we have sinned, this world
has been tainted, and it must come to a close -
destroy this temple and in three days He will
rebuild it.

Today my work is accomplished
and the timing is precise (and favorable) -
so let it be until its end.

Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.

(I finish *The Cloud of Unknowing* today.)

October 1

(Nm.11:25-29; Ps.19:8-10,12-14; Jas.5:1-6;
Mk.9:38-43,45,47-48)

Do not be jealous for those who are gifted by God;
we should wish with Moses that all were prophets.

But there are, nonetheless, those chosen by the
Lord as were the seventy-two, as are the apostles.
Priests are provided particular powers, I try to
convey to my brother (encouraging him to Mass).
But I can understand him and others like him who become
discouraged with the Church and do not follow the Word
of God, because even the priests have lost faith in the
Church and find it a hindrance to follow its precepts.

On this Respect Life Sunday, though the preacher
mentions the importance of taking care of the elderly
and the poor and all creation, he cannot mention the
word "abortion" nor recognize its central significance
in the culture of death, in fact, downplaying it by
stating life is more than "one issue" and the need to
focus on the "living". (His hypocrisy, however, is
evident in his mockery of an elderly parishioner after
Mass.)

And so a rare opportunity to make a point is foregone.
I fear for this culture, and this archdiocese.

Bring us prophets, Lord.
We have few.

October 2 (Ex.23:20-23; Ps.91:1-6,10-11; Mt.18:1-5,10)

Guardian Angels.

Do you believe God loves you so much that He has provided you with a guardian angel? Are you aware of your angel's presence? It is most reassuring to be so aware.

The Lord continues to watch over me, blessing my hours, blessing my days. Though the innocence and trust of a child is not yet fulfilled in me, I strain forward, struggling to reach this goal.

Guardian angel, please watch over;
guard and guide me.

(Brother returns to Florida.)

October 3 (Job 3:1-3,11-17,20-23; Ps.88:2-8; Lk.9:51-56)

Death is not the answer to suffering.
Killing is not the solution to sin.
Jesus is the answer.

There He hangs upon the cross,
 suffering as no other -
 and He does not yearn for death;
 He does not condemn His persecutors.
He loves.

Love is the answer. Life is the answer,
in all situations. For God is. Ultimately,
God is life, God is love - God is. Always.

There is nothing the devil can conjure
 which the Lord cannot conquer
 with love.

I love you, Lord.
Keep me alive in your presence.

October 4 (Job 9:1-12,14-16; Ps.88:3,10-15; Lk.9:57-62)

The reading and psalm question that God listens to man; they show doubt that man can approach the majesty of God. In the gospel it is clear that it is we who are not prepared to come to the Lord - He is ready.

Francis became ready. He found himself prepared to approach God. And God spoke to him. And God blessed him. And God has made him fruitful to this day.
(The schoolchildren file into the church this morning for a special Mass for St. Francis.)

Lord, take us from the darkness
and make us committed to you
and, so, fruitful in your name.

October 5 (Job 19:21-27; Ps.27:7-9,13-14; Lk.10:1-12)

I should hope to see the Lord with my own eyes,
to see His good things in the land of the living -
but I turn my face away from His light.

He seems to come closer; He seems to offer Himself
more to me - but I am not firm: I lack resolve.
And the wolves about me mock me, but I am not as
a lamb; if I were, I would resist their derogation.

I am lazy. I do not go out to proclaim His word,
and so the world can take His word from me.

O Lord, may I yet hope to see you.
May I yet hope to proclaim you in strength.
May I awake from sleep and stand ever in your light.

October 6

(Job 38:1,12-21,40:3-5; Ps.139:1-3,7-10,13-14,24;
Lk.10:13-16)

I need to "put my hand over my mouth" and stop my foolish tongue, for it is the source of my sin and the darkness which besets me this gloomy day. (Tears are near me throughout). Silent should I be before the glory of the Lord, for He knows my heart.

May He accept my sackcloth and ashes this First Friday.

Lord, let us be silent before your majesty.

October 7 (Gal.4:4-7; Lk.1:46-55; Lk.1:26-38)

Mass for Our Lady of the Rosary at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church on this Saturday in October.

I notice in the gospel today how the angel Gabriel speaks to Mary, seeking her understanding and compliance. He greets her and speaks to her of her Son in terms she, a devout Jewish woman, will understand, focusing on His being the Son of David. After she asks how this can be (confirming to me that she has taken a vow of virginity), he speaks more openly of the power of the Holy Spirit upon her. He reassures her of God's power - and perhaps His answering her prayer, as I have mentioned previously regarding Elizabeth - then leaves immediately upon gaining her consent, his mission accomplished (stressing again the importance of Mary's compliance).

God speaks to us
and we have His Word in us.
Let us listen and obey.

Father, your Spirit remain with us
till we come to you in heaven.

October 8

(Gn.2:18-24; Ps.128:1-6; Heb.2:9-11; Mk.10:2-16)

A blessed Lord's Day.

How shall I begin? I've been wandering to various churches, questioning in which one I might find community. (This since leaving my parish a few months ago.) I have been disappointed and seen and heard of things which left me wondering seriously about the state of the Church. But I must find a place. This week one neighboring parish stood out in my mind, and I decided to attend Mass there today.

I immediately felt as if I'd found a new home and as if my prayers were directly answered. I felt comfortable with the warm, and multicultural, people. It was a humble place (as my parish had been). The opening song was "Faith Of Our Fathers", and upon hearing the readings on marriage, I looked immediately upon the statue of the Blessed Mother and related these words to the Church. Here I was renewing my vows.

In his homily the pastor spoke candidly about difficult issues of life, going through them one by one as I sat in amazement of how the Lord was answering my disappointment of last Sunday. "Come Back To Me" was the communion song, and I am back. I spoke with the pastor afterward about sitting down with him and registering.

Then at nursing home each patient visit was a holy adventure, as I was really called upon to minister. Finally, I met a priest there (visiting his father) who grew up in the same house as the aforementioned pastor...

(And the Mets won to move on in the playoffs, though a loss to St. Louis, their next opponent, might be appropriate this Jubilee year.)

Praise you, Lord, for seeing our needs
and answering our prayers.
May we come to you as children
and be open to giving birth to children
according to your Word.

(And on way to church said hello to a young woman - whom I hadn't seen in years - who introduced me to a young lady about whom I'd thought I'd once heard my voice say upon seeing, "Here is flesh of my flesh.")

October 9 (Gal.1:6-12; Ps.111:1-2,5,7-10; Lk.10:25-37)

(First weekday of what I expect to be regular attendance at new church.)

"Moved to pity."

The words stand out to me. This is what we must be. Our hearts must stir with concern for others or we are not Christians, or we are not alive.

O Lord, help me to love you
and the neighbors I neglect
more perfectly,
that I might be alive with compassion
forever.

(I think today that as I have learned that not every monastic community is orthodox, so not every parish is orthodox. We must find the true ones. I pray I have.)

October 10

(Gal.1:13-24; Ps.139:1-3,13-15,24; Lk.10:38-42)

Martha and Mary seem a clear dichotomy of body and soul. Martha is concerned with the physical, feeding the body; while Mary is concerned with the spiritual, feeding the soul.

I see that Martha feeds others while Mary feeds herself. And considering this I realize that it is true that one does best for others through one's own contemplation of God, for after leaving the Lord's feet (at least physically), Mary will be well able to feed others, both by her presence and by her prayers. (She will become leaven for the world.)

The Lord makes us in His image and leads us in our walk with Him, if we sit at His feet and listen to His words.

Lord, may it always be so
that the Spirit rule our bodies.

(Find separation from friend today -
a certain spiritual freedom. I must love Jesus.)

October 11

(Gal.2:1-2,7-14; Ps.117:1-2,Mk.16:15;
Lk.11:1-4)

"The favor bestowed on me."

Clearly Paul was much loved and much directed by Jesus and the Spirit of God. Just as He teaches His apostles how to pray, He leads Paul in his preaching, in his mission. He is an apostle, too.

And we all are children of the one Father. We all may call out to Him, "Daddy", and He will listen and answer our needs. Though culture and custom may seem to separate us at times, we know that we are children of the one Father; we all share in the Bread that is the Son.

The Jews had been favored, but now all are called through Jesus to the kingdom. May the Word go forth to all nations and peoples. (Thinking of my Muslim and Hindu friends and acquaintances today.)

We love you, Lord.
Come and direct our days.

October 12 (Gal.3:1-5; Lk.1:68-75; Lk.11:5-13)

Of late I have been asking. Of late I have been seeking. And that search has brought me here to the Bethlehem Hermitage. It has brought me to a most sacred place in the heart of the Church.

I came upon a funeral Mass as I made my pilgrimage this morning; it seemed somehow for me. This afternoon every one of my students seemed terribly tired and somehow sad, though very attentive, during my lecture.

In an hour or so in the hermitage chapel this evening (alone), I find myself overwhelmed by the Spirit, by its holiness. I cry, speak and sing in tongues, and pray. I spend eternity there. (The central blessing of the silence brought me beyond words.) These hermits each have a chapel in their dwellings. I am overwhelmed to consider such a state.

Lord, lead me in your way.
Thank you for your blessings today.

(When I was a child I'd sit in a corner for hours
with a toy or a book.)

October 13 (Gal.3:7-14; Ps.111:1-6; Lk.11:15-26)

No forgiveness for the proud. This is the rather clear explanation of today's final gospel parable from a Bible commentary. And it seems to resolve question I had. If we are too proud and too particular about the law (both of which I can tend to be), forgiveness will escape us. Faith is what is necessary, and it is dependent neither on us nor our scruples. Accept God's grace and Word. (This is perhaps the bottom line, particularly for a contemplative. This is the way to His presence.)

I have much to learn.

(Home again. Read a good bit about centering prayer...
It leaves me wondering how much I practice it.)

Lord, please continue to guide me.
Let me be serious in my search for you
and accept your Word.

October 14 (Gal.3:22-29; Ps.105:2-8; Lk.11:27-28)

Again, no one hears or keeps the Word of God better than Mary. How anyone familiar with the Bible can overlook this fact is a mystery to me.

And I see in the gospel today, too, particularly in juxtaposition to Paul's preaching to the Galatians of the preeminence of faith over law, that "the womb that bore you" refers also to the Israelites and that "those who hear the word of God and keep it" are the Christians. (Mary is both.)

Dear Mother of God, please help me
to keep the word of God
as you do.
Let it be done to me according to His will.

October 15

(Ws.7:7-11; Ps.90:12-17; Heb.4:12-13;
Mk.10:17-30)

The word of God, the word of the Lord, sharper than any two-edged sword... this sword of wisdom would separate the kingdom from mammon and have us dwell in holiness. Wisdom "never yields to sleep," and with the Lord and His word at our side, we shall not be overcome but overcome evil with good and find our way to His kingdom. We shall not die.

O Lord, may I not be attached to anything
of me
or of this world,
but may you separate me from all unholy desires
and have me follow you.

Strengthen me in battle,
ready for any attack.

October 16

(Gal.4:22-24,26-27,31-5:1; Ps.113:1-7;
Lk.11:29-32)

The Jews are children of the promise,
the Arabs (Muslims) are children of the slave girl.
(And even these days do they fight in the Middle East.)

But, as Jesus makes clear, this is not enough. The
Ninevites, enemies of Israel, repented of their sins
and knew of God's grace. It doesn't matter who your
father is; if you do not repent at the presence of
Jesus and reform your ways, you will be lost.

O Lord, may the promise be ours.
May we follow you free of sin.

(Our struggle day to day is with sin
and not any race.)

October 17

(Phil.3:17-4:1; Ps.119:41,43-45,47-48;
Jn.12:24-26)

Truly Ignatius of Antioch lost his life for the Lord, happy to do so, and so this fallen grain of wheat is a blessed saint in heaven.

We are citizens of heaven, brothers and sisters, and we must live so. And that means giving up our lives in this world.

This morning I rest patiently, taking to heart that I must wait on the Lord, not vainly attempt to devise matters with my own hands. In this patience is a trust in God, an acceptance of His will as I lay aside my own. And in this patience I am purged of anxiety as I think only of today.

Into your hands, O Lord,
may I truly be delivered.

October 18 (2Tm.4:9-17; Ps.145:10-13,17-18; Lk.10:1-9)

St. Luke, evangelist.

It is indeed so that we are all called to evangelize with our lives, for we are all a part of the Church, and the Church is indeed to go forth and witness to Christ. All must know "the reign of God is at hand."

How do you witness? Is the light of Christ in your life, and does it shine forth for others to see? There are many ways to evangelize. Whatever you do and in whatever station you are, remember you are of the Church, and do all with Him in mind.

O Lord, bless your preachers especially,
but bless also all your children of light:
may all heed their call.

October 19 (Eph.1:1-10; Ps.98:1-6; Lk.11:47-54)

On the feast of the North American martyrs, it seems appropriate to hear of the shedding of the prophets' blood; we also hear from Paul of Christ's blood, which redeems us. In fact, it is all the same blood; it is all of Christ. "All things in the heavens and on earth" are brought "into one under Christ's headship," in His blood.

Just let me bleed for you, dear Lord.

(I have an observation about the difference between being under the law and under the faith that comes through the blood of Christ: I was observed today by my supervisor (in a college class - first time that's happened). Until this point, the class had gone, I think, very well: students working, myself organized and in control. However, being put under a watchful eye caused me to begin to dissemble. I am a self-disciplined person. My sense of responsibility comes from within myself. I do not need the law which is meant to keep sinners in line and is imposed from without.

God is master of a Christian's heart. With Him we can succeed. But no one can fulfill the measures of the law.)

October 20 (Eph.1:11-14; Ps.33:1-2,4-5,12-13; Lk.12:1-7)

The yeast of the Pharisees is the hidden motives of power and greed, the concealed mockery of the weak, the plotting of a darkened heart. Such as these are not chosen.

I speak to the Lord at Holy Hour, promising to stay with Him always, though I knew that soon I would likely rise and walk through the church door... But someday.

Let us not fear this world, Lord.
Let us trust in you.
(Thank you for hearing my prayers.)

October 21 (Eph.1:15-23; Ps.8:2-7; Lk.12:8-12)

"The Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment all that should be said."

How indeed I need to trust more and desire more the Holy Spirit and His guidance and presence. (This I confess this morning.) In two instances this week the Lord saved me from what seemed hopeless situations, because I prayed.

How well Paul speaks of the Ephesians; that such could be said of us, brothers and sisters...

I must relate an unusual incident. While waiting to go to Confession this morning, an elderly woman, on her way out after Mass, asked me if I have visions. I had never met her before (this was at Polish pilgrimage church), and was a bit speechless. We spoke briefly and her friend suggested that in prayer groups such subjects may be more easily discussed. I confessed that I am looking for a prayer group (according to Blessed Mother's message from Medugorje), and she suggested a couple.

I do need community - to be as the Ephesians. I have been attending Mass regularly (except Saturday) at new parish, and have realized that Mass is greatest prayer, and so perhaps greatest prayer group. But still I think more ought to be done. We shall see.

O Lord, make me as your faithful one.

(Also, received complimentary video about hermitage I visited.)

October 22

(Is.53:10-11; Ps.33:4-5,18-20,22;
Heb.4:14-16; Mk.10:35-45)

Jesus is the Servant king,
and we must follow in His way.
But so hard it seems to our selfish minds,
even though glorious we know it is.

I continue reading Benedict's rule (and rereading
Plan of Life of hermitage), and not how humble the
monk especially must be. So obedient and so low
in all he does - it seems to me too much of a burden.
How can we find the life of God in such desert
experience? (But it is there, I know.)

The Lord provides "timely help" for me today as
I continue to seek His will and His Spirit upon me.
And I gaze upon His crucifix, and desire myself to
be seated with Him and His saints...

Lord, help us to find the low way of love
in your Name.

October 23

(Eph.2:1-10; Ps.100:2-5; Lk.12:13-21)

All is in God's hands. We all live by the grace of God. To accept His gift, we must align ourselves with His will - then all will be ours.

Thinking today how all is of God, how we must see everything so. Even the most minute details - the shadow on the wall, the paper on the floor... are there by God's will. And as I walk home from church this morning, the light in my eyes, I begin to see all things, and the illusion of all things.

The Lord has allowed me to see the illusion of greed this world is become by the prince of the air in a specific incident. The Yankees and Mets (baseball teams) are playing in the World Series, a subway series, at this time. This had seemed a kind of gift to me, being something of a baseball fan. Yet I seemed to be called to sacrifice watching it, though I was unable to commit to that - until last night, when the gift of seeing its illusion and greed became clear. A pitcher threw a broken bat at another player and was not punished. This threw a pall over the game (and not just for me). It is a single point which illustrates what is wrong with society and the world. (I won't go into detail here about the money and power behind the game.)

Lord, we belong to you and not this world;
help us to see this.
May we possess our souls at every moment.

October 24 (Eph.2:12-22; Ps.85:9-14; Lk.12:35-38)

All are now called,
and all must now be always ready...

Christ has come and shed His redeeming blood for all mankind. There is no longer Jew or Gentile; there is but one race: Christian. But to find that life-giving blood, we must be prepared at all times to shed our own. (What promise Jesus makes to those who do remain awake - and He means it.)

Let all the world proclaim your holy name, dear Lord,
and raise all unto your throne -
one step closer each day...

(Let us all pray the Lord bless His Church.)

October 25 (Eph.3:2-12; Is.12:2-6; Lk.12:39-48)

I watch video on Bethlehem Hermitage today. I cannot think that the Lord would entrust me with so much - to live at the heart of the Church...

And as I enter my classroom (immediately after viewing), the writing students arranged like flowers around the room and the sunlight through the windows make a heavenly scene. I just stop and smile in wonder.

The whole day and its itinerary seemed somehow blessed. I accomplished much and felt the glorious presence and order of the Lord with me.

Thank you for your light and your purity, O Lord.
May they grow in me.

(Our roots must reach down deep into the earth
and our limbs reach out and up to the sky.)

October 26

(Eph.3:14-21; Ps.33:1-2,4-5,11-12,18-19;
Lk.12:49-53)

"The holy ones" I think of when hearing of "the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love" are His contemplatives, who touch His very heart and fully know His presence. And Jesus' quote, "I have come to light a fire on the earth," is the final words of the hermitage video I viewed yesterday - speaking of the monk becoming as fire.

And having come from continued rereading of their plan, I see in these hermits' life a fullness of Christ's love.

O Lord, can we become consumed by your fire
and so shine as children of light?
Let the peace of which the Blessed Mother speaks
become real.

October 27 (Eph.4:1-6; Ps.24:1-6; Lk.12:54-59)

I have been overwhelmed by anger this evening (in confrontation with friend) and desperately need to settle with the magistrate, the priest in Confession. (Must wait till morning.) The humility and patience of which Paul speaks so eloquently fled me. In prayer earlier (especially at Holy Hour) I seemed to approach Mary and heaven. Now I need forgiveness and healing.

Help me, O Lord, to find the balance,
the pure gifts which are of you.
May I find oneness with you, O Lord.

October 28 (Eph.2:19-22; Ps.19:2-5; Lk.6:12-16)

On this the darkest morning of the year, I set out early on my pilgrimage for Mass and Confession. In Confession the Lord's apostle - from whom "power came forth" for healing (for some reason, gospel was read through verse 19) - instructs me to offer thanksgiving to God for His mercy, for two days. But my attempts only bring tears of sorrow...

In patience I must discern the Lord's vocation for my life.

Help me, O Lord, for I am yet afraid.
Please let me be built into your House.

(One of my (adult) students witnesses a terrible car accident directly in front of him on his way to school this morning. Do we know the ramification of our sins, or how the Lord protects us? Note: it was in car I became angry last night.)

October 29

(Jer.31:7-9; Ps.126:1-6; Heb.5:1-6;
Mk.10:46-52)

Like the blind man Bartimaeus, I pray to receive my sight.

I began to find thanksgiving to the Lord in prayer of the Holy Spirit after antiphon to the Blessed Mother last night, and that spirit continued into today. Indeed, the Lord gives me grace to praise Him in song and even to play an entire album of *Songs for Children of Light* (the one in which blind Bartimaeus is spoken of).

I do not watch the football games today, and haven't watched any sports all this past week (after seeing through their vain illusion), which gives me opportunity to praise the Lord. (And is this ridding myself of another addiction preparing me for religious life?) Perhaps He will better be able to speak to me now.

Lord, I need to see...

Thank you for your grace which calls to us in our need.
Thank you.

October 30

(Eph.4:32-5:8; Ps.1:1-4,6,Eph.5:1; Lk.13:10-17)

Paul states clearly the life of holiness which the Christian is called to, that righteous life so well delineated and differentiated from the wicked life in the first psalm. And in the gospel we see that it is Jesus who makes us righteous, who heals our infirmities and returns us to the dignity God intended.

Temptation, darkness, sin, and sadness are with me today, threatening the very life within me. I hear that to which I am called, see how I fall short, and am tempted to despair, or at least into despondency. And so the struggle continues...

Lord, teach me the way from darkness into your light.

(I wonder how many of the questions Jesus poses in His ministry to the Pharisees He might have posited to them in the temple as a child.)

October 31 (Eph.5:21-33; Ps.128:1-5; Lk.13:18-21)

Hearing of the love and sacrifice needed between husbands and wives, and praying the sorrowful mysteries, proved to be balm for my soul this morning. I also woke early to pray, and the Mass itself, and Communion, were particularly prayerful and healing...

Lord, help me to join to your cross
all and any troubles.
May I have strength and persistence to endure the struggle.

November 1

(Rv.7:2-4,9-14; Ps.24:1-6; 1Jn.3:1-3;
Mt.5:1-12)

Blessed are those who have washed their robes
in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

Both my soul and my clothes find a cleansing today;
Jesus knows what we need.

Evening Mass in auditorium of new parish (church
floor being replaced) somehow gives me the spirit of
Christmas, particularly as the people pour out of this
humble setting (quite in contrast to exalted atmosphere
of Polish pilgrim church I visited with friend
today...).

O Lord, may we ever humble ourselves before you,
that exaltation we may find in you.

November 2

(Ws.3:1-9; Ps.27:1,7-9,13-14; Rm.14:7-12;
Jn.6:37-40)

"Everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day."

and

"Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."

First, all may come to Him.

Second, all are alive to Him.

The first quote covers the way of salvation - seeing and believing in Jesus. How and when this might occur, we cannot always say. But we know that all will be presented with His presence.

The second quote points to the communion of saints, celebrated today especially with regard to all the faithful departed. Whether the souls are in heaven (which we celebrated yesterday), in purgatory, or on earth, all are one for all are in Him.

O Lord, let us, let all Christians,
know of our oneness with you
and with each other.

I pray for the souls being purified.

(This evening I (finally) appear before the judge regarding stop sign violation, and am exonerated. I am "free to go." Note: Police officer speaks on my behalf.)

November 3 (Phil.1:1-11; Ps.111:1-6; Lk.14:1-6)

The Pharisees could not answer because they did not have a heart for God; they could not understand the divine law of love.

I wonder about myself today; I question whether what Paul says to the Philippians is true of me: "He who has begun the good work in you will carry it through to completion, right up to the day of Christ Jesus." Will I persevere? I find myself weak and yet unclear... May the Lord rescue me from the pit.

May our hearts be truly for you and of you, O Lord.
And may we do your will in all things
until you come.

November 4 (Phil.1:18-26; Ps.42:2-3,5; Lk.14:1,7-11)

Jesus is our host; He brings each of us to our proper place. Let us be obedient to our call.

And I say with Paul that whatever the Lord have in store for me, whether to lead my friend to the faith and wed ("living", as it were) or to enter monastic or eremitic life (joining with Jesus in death), either shall be gain. I thirst for His presence, but let it be done to me according to His will. Humbly may I accept His call.

(There is irony this morning at Mass: as priest with averted eyes humbly speaks his homily, a woman clad in gaudy clothes and hat makes her way to the front pew, directly in front of him... And I am blessed to hear as I exit the confessional (next Mass going on), "He who humbles himself shall be exalted.")

O Lord, make our humility genuine,
that there might be room at your table for us all.

November 5

(Dt.6:2-6; Ps.18:2-4,47,51; Heb.7:23-28;
Mk.12:28-34)

Love the Lord your God...

As I go through my intentions this morning, I pray that each person go to Mass today and praise God. Rather miraculously, my mother tells me that two of my aunts who have not gone to Mass in years have started to over the past couple of weeks. And even my father, who is not Catholic, wanted to go in today (but he couldn't find parking). May the Lord bless these inclinations and devotions, and may they be indication that the new "spring" in the Church, of which the Blessed Mother speaks, is upon us.

O Lord, may all worship you in spirit and in truth;
may your Church now be fully blessed.

(I even find a priest about whose faith I have some question sitting for some time before the tabernacle... Also, it seems the Lord blesses my fast from watching sports as I win four straight games of solitaire.)

November 6 (Phil.2:1-4; Ps.131:1-3; Lk.14:12-14)

Priest gives a fine sermon this morning, repeatedly and urgently asking the question, "When will this be" that we care for the poor, that we dine with the poor and share their problems? (I can't help but think we had a measure of this with the soup kitchen.) It would be heavenly.

The time for change is upon us.
Now it must be.

Lord, we join with the Blessed Mother
in asking for a renewed Church.
Let us be one.

November 7 (Phil.2:5-11; Ps.22:26-32; Lk.14:15-24)

We must come when we are called, even laying down our lives in humility as Jesus has, and not make excuses.

I speak of rationalization and excuse-making presenting and discussing abortion in two classes. The justifications for such recognized evil are yet remarkable...

And on this election day we wait to see if we might get a president who would be willing to end such sin upon the land. (I pray for forgiveness for this country this morning.)

(Also, founder of hermitage expresses interest in my joining, calling me, as it were, to the banquet.)

O Lord, let us eat bread in the kingdom of God;
may our Eucharistic feast here
indeed lead us to your eternity.

November 8 (Phil.2:12-18; Ps.27:1,4,13-14; Lk.14:25-33)

I sense a strong conviction within myself, a "straightforward" following of the Lord, placing Him first, before all other things. It seems to be connected to the current national election, which the more pro-life candidate seems to have won, but which is so close that it has required a recount of votes in one state (my parents'). I liken this scenario of coming so gradually and reluctantly to the winner of this election to the country's unwillingness to come out of its moral malaise (a sense I see in myself, too). God may be drawing it inextricably away from its sins, but it is doing its best to hold on to the bitter end.

And this evening I speak with my childhood friend about my thoughts and possibilities for religious life... We must go where the Lord leads us now (even, as with Paul, unto death).

Save us, O Lord, I pray.

November 9

(Ez.47:1-2,4-7; 1Chr.29:10-12;
1Cor.3:9-13,16-17; Jn.2:13-22)

Hearing the readings for this the feast of the Dedication of St. John Lateran, and even reading of the rededication of the temple in Maccabees this morning (in Office for the Ordinary day), I cannot but apply the theme to the situation in this country. We continue to wait to know the outcome of our election, one which could bring change, could bring a new spirit to this place. But, again, it is not easily accepted.

Let your cleansing come upon this country, Lord,
and this world.

(Occasionally a voice of reason manages a word amongst the din of the liberal, amoral, secular media, and it says those who voted for the apparent president-elect are looking for "honesty", a moral change.)

November 10 (Phil.3:17-4:1; Ps.122:1-5; Lk.16:1-8)

We have our citizenship in heaven, not on earth;
our god is not our belly - it is the Spirit of Truth.
Yet we must do all we can in this world to bring this
world to God. Thus, Paul encourages us to pray for
politicians, and thus we pray for the rightful outcome
of this election (despite any devious workings of the
opposition) and the return to righteousness of this
nation.

Ourselves, too, of course, we must keep strong in
the faith, and to this end the Lord brings my friend
with me to Holy Hour today (though she persists in
disbelief) and maintains us in proper relationship.

Lord, may our shame never be our glory,
but may you and your love prevail.

November 11 (Phil.4:10-19; Ps.112:1-2,5-6,8-9; Lk.16:9-15)

Use this world's goods well by being generous with them. If we are not generous with our goods, we are giving ourselves to money, whereas if we give freely, we are serving God through such use. May God rule us in these as in all things.

Let us be ready to give even our lives for God,
to serve Him with all He gives us.

(Time, talent, treasure is a program current in our local parishes - certainly, if we are not giving of ourselves to the Church, we are not really part of the Church.)

Bless us, O Lord, and all we offer.
Take my work and my prayers this day,
and may your love be in all.

November 12

(1Kgs.17:10-16; Ps.146:1,7-10; Heb.9:24-28;
Mk.12:38-44)

We must contribute all we have. We must give
all our lives, sacrificing ourselves as has
Christ, and we shall be provided for.

The Lord calls us to join in His sacrifice.
In it is all we need.
In it is love.

Let us join with you, O Lord,
 who are all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving.
Let us give ourselves,
 becoming one with you in your sacrifice,
 that we might come into your kingdom.

(This election is certainly not a one-time thing, as
votes are counted and recounted (and counted again) -
a process spurred, I believe, by the manipulation
of the god of the media.)

November 13 (Ti.1:1-9; Ps.24:1-6; Lk.17:1-6)

If we have not faith, we cannot serve the Lord our God.

The priests who forgive in the name of the Lord and who teach the authentic message must have faith, for it is by faith we live and by faith they find the powers God gives.

I think of the administrator of my former parish, and speak of his falling far short of such call, hearing of others departing the parish - this is scandal. There is a special report on our shortage of priests on TV tonight...

But I hear too of good priests who serve well their Lord and ours. And I know there is hope.

O Lord, bless us with holy priests
to serve you well
and build up our Church.

November 14

(Ti.2:1-8,11-14; Ps.37:3-4,18,23,27,29,39;
Lk.17:7-10)

We must do what is right, and humbly.

Whatever we do in life, in our vocation, there must be a certain mundaneness, a certain ordinariness, about it. We cannot think to ourselves that we are performing exceptional acts, but in doing exceptional acts we must think nothing of it. All must be, in a sense, natural: all must be in God's hands, and we must be His instruments. We might take notice of the wonderful gifts and blessings God allows us to experience, but we can never think it is of ourselves.

I consider whether religious life, specifically in hermitage, could be *real* for me. (And it appears reason and right action will yet prevail in our election, despite the media-orchestrated uproar.)

O Lord, let us know the blessing of simply doing your will.

November 15 (Ti.3:1-7; Ps.23:1-6; Lk.17:11-19)

The Lord has saved us; let us praise Him!

Remember what you once were. Remember from what the Lord has brought you. Praise His name for His loving kindness each day, lest you fall back into sin.

In prayer this morning I find comfort and refuge in trust of the Lord and in entrusting myself to His will. Clearer am I and closer to this blessing do I come. May it be fulfilled.

O Lord, I could only but praise you
if I could fully find myself in your hands.

November 16 (Phlm.7-20; Ps.146:5,7-10; Lk.17:20-25)

The reign of God comes whenever a prisoner is set free, whenever any man, once blind, finds the Lord's presence in his life. And His final coming (which we hear of today, yet a couple of weeks from the end of the Church year) will be unmistakable to all.

(How subtly, wisely, and lovingly Paul draws Philemon to forgive his wayward servant and become "useful" himself to Paul by such loving kindness. Thus he engenders the coming of the kingdom.)

Lord, help me to find your presence in my life,
to be set free from any prison,
any sin.

(A certain thirst for silent prayer I find this morning.)

November 17 (2Jn.4-9; Ps.119:1-2,10-11,17-18; Lk.17:26-37)

We must find our full reward; we must persevere to the end and, firmly rooted in the law of the Lord, leave the body and its sin behind.

This morning I thought of the world and how there is not a good man upon the earth, how all fall short of the glory of God. And if we in the Church are not holy, what hope is there for anyone? I spend the morning in fasting and prayer for the Church, and find solace in such sacrifice. But at noon I eat, and soon find myself led astray from the right path, a slave to the body and its passions.

The Lord's way is so good.
How shall it be fulfilled in us?

O Lord, abandon not your people, despite our weakness.
Strengthen us for the new springtime,
and for your coming.

(Hold on to nothing on that day, brothers and sisters -
go with Him!)

November 18 (Acts 28:11-16,30-31; Ps.98:1-6; Mt.14:22-33)

Dedication of the Churches of Peter and Paul.

Sts. Peter and Paul, foundations of the Church, responsible for its growth, for maintaining the clear word of God... Paul sails the waters spreading the gospel of Christ; Peter walks on the waters of the Sea of Galilee.

This is the Ark; here is our Church. This home of ours nourishes us well and prepares us for the kingdom.

In pilgrimage church today I say my prayers, confess my sin, and receive the Lord.

Lord, let your name be praised
to the ends of the earth
and in the heart of your Church.

November 19

(Dn.12:1-3; Ps.16:5,8-11; Heb.10:11-14,18;
Mk.13:24-32)

The end will come. Be assured. The end will come, and is already here. And we are judged as we shall be judged.

In these last days of the Church year, we hear of end times and the final judgment, and our need to be ready. In these days I have had a dream/nightmare wherein I was with several dead relatives and acquaintances. There was nothing particularly frightening about the dream - nothing exceptional at all - but I saw it as purgatorial. And I was not aware of any problem until I realized I was not with the Lord in heaven. This is the pain, the suffering. And even now we should fear for the ways in which we are not with the Lord.

(Priest asks pointed question to confirmees and all of us, speaking of stewardship - Do we spend more time with God or watching television? What is our God?)

O Lord, please prepare me for your coming.
I want to be with you.

November 20

(Rv.1:1-4,2:1-5; Ps.1:1-4,6,Rv.1:7;
Lk.18:35-43)

Follow not the way of the wicked, but call out to Him from where you sit in sin, and He shall hear you, and He shall heal you; then rise and follow Him.

I seek to rediscover anything I have lost, to regain my "early love"; and on this a blessed, protected day, I believe I may come to know the Lord more deeply and attain to new heights.

(Early in the day my vision became somewhat blurred by colored lines and patches, but upon going outside, it immediately cleared up.)

O Lord, thank you for the pity you have on my soul
and maintaining me in your grace this day.
May I indeed follow you.

November 21

(Rv.3:1-6,14-22; Ps.15:2-5,Rv.3:21;
Lk.2:27-35)

(For Presentation of Mary we have a special gospel.)

We must be earnest in our search if we hope to be victorious and enter heaven. The Lord chastises those whom He loves and challenges them to make ready for Him. Even as Simeon was made to wait so many years and was rewarded in the end for his perseverance, so must we be. We cannot slacken in our seeking God and our own perfection.

I pray for preparation for this coming weekend's visit to Bethlehem Hermitage. The end of this Jubilee year also nears and I seek readiness to follow where the Lord may lead. In this vein, I consider Christmas pilgrimage to Medugorje.

O Lord, may you lead me on to victory,
which is in you.

November 22 (Rv.4:1-11; Ps.150:1-6,Rv.4:8; Lk.19:11-28)

Jesus has gone. He is in heaven, in the great glory of God. He has left us here, entrusted with His spiritual goods to yield an increase on this earth. If we use well these gifts, it will bring us to see and know His glorious presence in heaven - He will return to take us there. If not, we shall be cast out.

Let us praise the Lord with all our hearts and souls, joining in the blessed song of all the saints and angels, which we celebrate at each Mass, and which we hope to join entirely, crowned in His glory one day.

New pastor says Mass on this the anniversary of his ordination; we must all bear such fruit unto heaven. (Soon this writing will cease. What then of my art? How can I share my talents?)

O Lord, grant us vision of your kingdom
and let us work each day to enter there.

(St. Cecilia, pray for me.)

November 23

(Sir.50:22-24; Ps.113:1-8; 1Cor.1:3-9;
Lk.17:11-19)

Thanksgiving Day.

It *is* God to whom we must give thanks for all things (as priest points out this morning). It is He who takes us through difficult times (as priest also witnesses), and who gives us joy.

Though the situation is difficult at my aunt's house on this the first holiday since my uncle's death, yet in family and especially the children, I find joy, and pray that my relatives may, too. It *is* in these times we need faith most, and I thank the Lord my aunt has returned to Mass.

Glory to you, O Lord!
Watch over us and bless us
and keep us in your care.

November 24

(Rv.10:8-11; Ps.119:14,24,72,103,111,131;
Lk.19:45-48)

On what is known as "Black Friday", the busiest shopping day of the year, I turn from the materialism of the world and come again to visit the Bethlehem Hermitage. And here I play and sing an album (*Loving Spirit*) from the scroll the Lord gave me some time ago to eat.

Here is a place of prayer,
and here I feel at home.

Come, Holy Spirit, voice and breath of Truth;
speak to me
and inspire me
in holy prayer
this day.

November 25 (Rv.11:4-12; Ps.144:1-2,9-10; Lk.20:27-40)

The fire of truth comes from the Lord's mouth and devours the lie which is His enemy. With love He speaks, and darkness cannot answer.

I was not ready to rise from my bed this morning to say my Office before sunrise, as is the custom of this place; despite repeated dreams of morning light, I gave in to the darkness my opened eyes saw and returned to slumber. So perhaps I have fallen short of attempting this life. But after a morning of hard labor, I lay my aching body on the bed, and the Lord inspired me with a final lesson for my classes, on life as suffering and our need to accept it and transcend it with our souls (uniting it to Christ), not fear it and take the easy way out (re abortion, euthanasia, learning, growing...) So, a kind of resurrection comes to me later in the day.

(Note: may not know Mother's message from Medugorje for a couple of days...)

Lord, help us each day to rise with you
and dwell in your word,
living in your light.

November 26

(Dn.7:13-14; Ps.93:1-2,5; Rv.1:5-8;
Jn.18:33-37)

His kingship, if that is your word for it, lasts forever. It is eternal, from beginning to end of time, and is not bound to this world. It transcends all and yet is in all, for all came to be through it. As Truth cannot be bound, neither can He, though the chains on his wrists may say otherwise.

And though His kingdom is not of this world, we are still in this world and must pray always for this world (as do the hermits, whom I leave today, in a special way). So it is well that on this Christ the King Sunday, the election results are officially confirmed (though they shall be disputed in court) in favor of the more pro-life candidate.

We continue to hold out hope in this dark world.

Glory to you, O Lord!
Glory and praise forever
to Him who was, who is, and who is to come.

Reign over us always.

November 27 (Rv.14:1-5; Ps.24:1-6; Lk.21:1-4)

How holy I feel today. How much the Bethlehem hermits are with me. How ready I am to seek the Lord, to follow Him, to give every penny.

Such perfection seems within reach as I sense the effect of this place on my soul.

(Then would I avoid purgatory?)

The Blessed Mother speaks of touching heaven in her message...

Lord, if this is my path to you,
please help to pave the way.

November 28 (Rv.14:14-19; Ps.96:10-13; Lk.21:5-11)

In God's time the world will end. And who can know God's time but God; for His time is not our own, is not time as we know it: the thin veil which separates us from Him is indeed of monumental significance. And at any moment the Father might break in. (He will be what He will be and do what He will do.) And every moment is all but one moment in His eyes. We would do well not to attempt to measure what is immeasurable nor to size ourselves up before His immensity.

Into His hands we must commend all things,
all our lives and all of time.

Lord, help us to trust all things, life and death,
to you.

(The darkness of this cloudy day makes the end seem near,
but it does not come immediately.)

November 29

(Rv.15:1-4; Ps.98:1-3,7-9,Rv.15:3;
Lk.21:12-19)

The end comes, along with the suffering with Christ that is necessary - but the glorious day of the Lord quickly follows.

Let us ever sing His praise,
even in trials and afflictions.

A blessed day of fasting culminates in an early evening Holy Hour. And the Lord continues to deepen my prayer and patience, and my thirst for His presence.

Praise you, Lord!
Lead us through this world of tribulation,
conquering through suffering in your name.

November 30 (Rm.10:9-18; Ps.19:2-5; Mt.4:18-22)

St. Andrew.

Their words go out to the ends of the earth;
the message resounds in everyone's ear and heart.

We have heard, brothers and sisters. We know. Their voice has touched us, and we have heard with our ears and seen with our eyes that Jesus Christ is Lord. We must now proclaim it. It must take root in us and we must declare it to all through all we do and speak.

O Lord, let your word be firmly rooted in me,
that I might be ready to leave all
to follow you.

(I find reassurance that the Lord will prepare
the path for the way He would have me walk.
I must trust in Him.)

December 1

(Rv.20:1-4,11-21:2; Ps.84:3-6,8,Rv.21:3;
Lk.21:29-33)

As the heavens and the earth pass away,
I pray we will not be found wanting,
but reigning with the Lord forever.

That Day shall come -
draw near to Him.

(In all of Jesus and His life - in His birth, in
His death, in His resurrection - we take refuge.
Union with Him is our desire.)

In all things, O Lord, let us be one with you.
Let us die with you that we might rise with you
who are and will be.

December 2 (Rv.22:1-7; Ps.95:1-7,Rv.21:20; Lk.21:34-36)

We are on the eve of Advent and so must prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord into this dusty world of ours. How alive He is, and how dead are we.

And, of course, most important to remember is His second coming - for this we must be ready despite the trials of earth. For then we shall eat of the tree of life; then we shall be one with Him; then we shall dwell in the everlasting light of His presence.

Soon, my brothers, soon. Remember.

Come, Lord Jesus!

(I shall continue this year of *Days* through Advent and to the Epiphany. Upon the close of this Jubilee year, I believe this entire series of writings shall come to an end.)

December 3

(Jer.33:14-16; Ps.25:1,4-5,8-10,14;
1Thes.3:12-4:2; Lk.21:25-28,34-36)

He is coming, the promised one -
 we must be ready,
 we must "increase and abound in love",
we must be pure as He is pure,
holy as He is holy...
 Now is the time.

Advent begins, and signals the coming end of this Jubilee year. I pray to be ready. I pray not to waste this blessed time. May this month be filled with His grace!

O Lord, come.
Please guide me through these final days.
Strengthen my resolve to follow you -
 let your will be done.

(A special Confession this morning
to brace me for the coming days.)

December 4 (Is.2:1-5; Ps.122:1-9; Mt.8:5-11)

We are not worthy to have Jesus under our roofs,
but He shall gather us all under His roof.

Call all the nations. Tell them to come.
Jesus is passing this way.

I speak with priest about his doubts regarding
historical nature of the Bible. How is it some
can believe in the virgin birth, but not birth
by ninety-year-olds (Abraham and Sarah)? How is
it one can believe in living eternally in heaven,
but not for hundreds of years in the early days
of earthly existence? It makes one wonder if
they do believe the former, if they have faith
or understand prophecy at all.

The people of Ninevah will rise on the last day...
and judge those who lack faith in our own day.

O Lord, let us come from the dark belly of the whale
to your holy house.

December 5 (Is.11:1-10; Ps.72:1,7-8,12-13,17; Lk.10:21-24)

Childlike innocence is throughout today's readings;
it is the key to heaven.

May the Child Jesus lead us to profound peace.
He is true wisdom and understanding;
He opens our eyes to the vision of perfection.

O Lord, may the lamb lie down with the lion,
and we mere animals
be raised to divinity with you
who were laid in a manger.

December 6 (1Cor.4:1-5; Ps.23:1-6; Mt.28:16-20)

Feast day of the patron saint of my new parish church.

Let us serve Christ and receive our praise only from Him. He is with us always, the Truth, strengthening us in doing His work here on earth. He watches over us, seeing and knowing all we are and do as no other can, so set your hearts upon Him alone. (I cannot help but think, in reference to first reading, of a line from a popular song about Santa Claus: "He knows if you've been bad or good...")

I pray He blesses my decision to go to Medugorje for Christmas.

Let us know the joy of serving you, O Lord.

December 7

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

The words that the Lord calls me to put into practice, and about which I have been remiss, is to be in silence before Him. This is His special gift to me, and this is the rock upon which faith is built. I *must* put it into *regular* practice. (I speak this afternoon with supervisor, a Dominican nun, whose dissertation was on the significance of silence, and share with her my understanding of "YHWH".)

Also, I am joyful today upon sharing my final lesson, re life as accepting suffering, with classes. I am even more joyful to see the truth of its redemptive quality in my own life. Yesterday my anger was piqued by students' cheating and my soul was burdened by negligence in the way of perfection... But I prayed this morning - as we always should - and the Lord heard my cry and enacted blessed resolutions to all difficulties, down to the organization of the food I eat (aided by a bit of fasting).

He is faithful. Do not fail to take refuge in Him.

O Lord, after the cross comes resurrection
so long as we believe in you.

Let me take time to sit with you, my Rock,
each morning and each evening.
Your silence gives me strength.

(Note: I get a further idea for a possible doctoral dissertation after speaking to nun of philosophers' ideas that language is to transcend language - may be easily related to "YHWH".)

December 8

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

Lk.1:26-38)

We must say yes to the Lord as has Mary. We must listen for His voice, for the prompting of the angel in our lives, and follow where He leads. Then we too will be "holy and blameless in His sight."

I prostrate myself before the tabernacle this morning, and I seem to hear the Lord's voice accepting the offering of my life, and providing an anointing.

Unlike Mary, every day we sin and every day we must be redeemed and grow closer to the Son of God. May the Lord continue to bless my search for purity, and for His will to be done in my life.

Make me pure, make me holy, O Lord.

(It seems to me that wholeness cannot well exist in a day divided into rational segments of activity - it seems the Lord leads me to wholeness of prayer and life in the hermitage, where time can be thoroughly given, and His voice heeded.

If it is so the Father blesses my vocation today, yet it must be confirmed by the authority of the Church, for the Mother, too, must be obeyed.)

December 9

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

The Lord wounds, and He heals. Both actions are blessed. For wounding us He reveals our sins, and healing us He accepts our contrition and makes us new.

In Advent of the Jubilee year we sit. Until this time I had feared the end of this blessed year, but upon the arrival of Advent, I found comfort. I am expectant of His healing graces. Even as He shows me my sins, I have faith that they will be overcome. I believe I shall be able to follow His voice where it leads.

Even as we wait,
 He draws closer.
Even as we pray,
 He is upon us.

Come, Lord Jesus.

(I have maintained the practice of praying the Office during the night since my last trip to the hermitage, am developing the habit of silent prayer, and hope to return to regular playing of music.)

December 10

(Bar.5:1-9; Ps.126:1-6; Phil.1:4-6,8-11;
Lk.3:1-6)

Make straight the way of the Lord,
for He comes to take us home.

Each of our hearts must be prepared, and we must be prepared as a people of God. The Lord enters through our hearts and through our Church, and both must be ready for His coming.

(The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the unborn, approaches, as does the final decision regarding our election.)

O Lord, fulfill the good work you have begun in us;
may we remain faithful till the end.

December 11 (Is.35:1-10; Ps.85:9-14,Is.35:4; Lk.5:17-26)

The time has come; He is the time.
We see the lame walk, the dumb speak,
and the blind see -
the hour of God is at hand
in Jesus the Son.

Do not fear. Do not trouble yourselves.
Do not harbor such thoughts.
Come, walk along the holy way -
you have a journey to make.

He saves us.
Come to Him who saves, letting nothing prevent you,
and you shall rejoice.

(Pleasant dinner this evening with sisters from former
parish and priest friend.)

Let us see your wonders, Lord.

December 12 (Rv.11:19,12:1-6; Lk.1:46-55; Lk.1:39-47)

The winds of change blow fiercely this day. The Supreme Court rules, and it appears we shall have a more pro-life president. The opponents of life could not go beyond this date: the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas and patroness of the unborn.

Here winds hit 60 m.p.h. - a tree branch lies on the ground before my house. In the Midwest, blizzards come. In Texas, snow... And it finally comes to an end. It is remarkable that the deadline for naming the electorate tolls the end of this election. Our Mother has watched over us, though we deserve not her protection. May God bring true change.

O Lord, bring life and true love back to these shores. Mother, thank you for your protection.

(The Child has been snatched away from the devil ready to devour Him; may we go to heaven with our Lord.)

December 13 (Is.40:25-31; Ps.103:1-4,8,10; Mt.11:28-30)

It is said that George Washington in the midst of a crucial battle knelt in the woods and prayed for the intercession of the Blessed Mother. It seems our next president, too, has benefited from her prayers. It is now time for us to remain in prayer, that he and the nation will recognize the help and the strength that come from God.

I am weary today, as I imagine many might be after having gone through such an ordeal. But we must not faint. We must indeed come to the Lord and entrust our hopes entirely to Him, to find a nation united under God.

(And after the battle, I am filled with compassion for the wounded opponent.)

Dear Lord, let your kingdom come;
let your light work now in this nation.
Bring us from the precipice of exhaustion, of despair,
to following you.

(Here are my prayers for the leaders of government
St. Paul requires of us.)

December 14 (Is.41:13-20; Ps.145:1,8-13; Mt.11:11-15)

A way is made in the wilderness -
there are springs of water for baptism;
there the strong cedar sprouts forth.

The way has been made.
We must walk in the mercy of our God.

Lord, with strength let your name be proclaimed.

(John of the Cross, pray especially for those
who walk the desert path to God.)

December 15 (Is.48:17-19; Ps.1:1-4,6,Jn.8:12; Mt.11:16-19)

It cannot but be so that if we come to the Lord,
if we follow in His ways, that He will bless us.
He cannot do otherwise, and the mere equation
itself makes it self-evident.

First, the Lord will not be outdone in generosity,
in love. As with Solomon, who asked for wisdom and
was granted riches as well, and as with those who seek
the kingdom of God and are given all they need, so it
is with anyone who thinks of God first - He thinks of
them and even more greatly. Second, the way of the
Lord is blessed. Jesus is holy and has the world at
His command. If we walk as He does, what can we be
but be blessed? If you walk a blessed path, you will
be blessed.

But if we refuse to accept His ways, if we reject
the goodness He offers and follow our own hearts...
we cannot but be doomed.

Lord, through the difficulties of these human days
guard and guide us,
and draw us unto you.

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

Elijah has come in power as fire to prepare the way of the Lord. Elijah has come and is coming; and the Lord has come and is coming. The power of God is upon us.

And we shall be treated as He.
(But joy will fill our hearts.)

Come, Lord Jesus.

(Every year I watch *It's A Wonderful Life*
and every year I cry.)

December 17

(Zep.3:14-18; Is.12:2-6; Phil.4:4-7;
Lk.3:10-18)

The good news is that the Lord is near;
for this we must rejoice
and show His love to one another
in all we do.

Then we shall not be as the chaff
but as the wheat gathered into His barn.

Let us find it in our hearts each day to rejoice.

Indeed this morning as I woke I remembered the
importance of trusting all things to God and thanking
Him for each day. And I look forward to the events
of this day.

Praise you, O Lord,
for coming near to us
each day
(though we deserve not such grace).

December 18 (Jer.23:5-8; Ps.72:1,7,12-13,18-19;
Mt.1:18-24)

The righteous shoot is raised of Joseph, descendant of David, but truly He is the Son of Man, the Son of us all - all nations shall stream to His teaching and to His peace, for He is the Son of God.

My prayer is that the Church, wed to Christ and His teaching, will be a strong and solid force, a bulwark of truth and love, which the nations shall hear, and come to feed at its table.

May the new springtime come, dear Mother.
May God truly be with us.

(How all else but the Church lacks of wisdom and truth,
and real love.)

December 19

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

From the womb the Holy Spirit comes upon John, and Samson, too, is "consecrated to God from the womb." From birth till death, from conception to expiration, our lives must be given to God. It must be our whole lives for us to be holy. And though we may not be chosen to such roles as John and Samson and Samuel - and Jesus whose incarnation we celebrate in this time - yet all of us is chosen to be God's own, to say "yes" and give our lives to Him. He is our life, and only in Him do we find our lives.

I continue to seek to find my life, my call. And as this Jubilee year draws to a close and I prepare for a pilgrimage to Medugorje in a few days, I believe that though long have I looked and long have I waited (through the length of this work, at least), yet will I find my way.

Take my whole life, O Lord, unto you.

December 20 (Is.7:10-14; Ps.24:1-6; Lk.1:26-38)

God is with us; even when He seems far away,
He is near.

A rather sad, tearful day in this Advent season,
particularly due to the wake of a son of a woman
from church, who had previously lost two other sons...
A monumental cross it seems to me, but she appears
to be strong.

I am weaker in hearing of my students' poor performance
on an important final essay - I am not the teacher I
think I am. And praying during Holy Hour in silence,
in silent WORD, I become most sad to realize how I
neglect this great gift, as I feel the light piercing
the darkness of my mind and purging it gradually.

We must make ourselves ready to receive Him.

Strengthen us, O Lord, in your Word.
There is so much darkness in this world;
bring your light.

December 21

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

What love! What joy!
The Lord calls to us, whispers our name,
and we can but leap for joy,
for He is love
and He brings light.

O Mother Mary, the Lord has loved you
above all creatures;
He has called you first and most especially
into His bridal chamber
and filled you with His love -
and you have borne Him to us.

Chosen of the Father,
Spouse of the Spirit,
Fruitful Mother of the Son -
pray for us;
bring to us our dear Lord.

(I prepare for departure to Medugorje tomorrow night.
And the possibility of not teaching next semester
is there; the door is open for a change.)

December 22 (1Sm.1:24-28; 1Sm.2:1,4-8; Lk.1:46-56)

Hannah and Mary rejoiced in the Lord, praising God for His gift of their sons - one a great prophet, the other the only Son of God. So again we hear the echoes of the new testament in the old. And in both songs of joy the lowly are raised up.

As I write this I am about to go to the airport for a night flight to Medugorje. I, too, rejoice in the Lord for His benefits and pray that I shall remember everyone in prayer, and that I might find some sense of fulfillment to my own life.

Lord, let us come humbly before you to find our way.
May we rejoice with the Blessed Mother
and with all Christians.

December 23

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

The hand of the Lord was upon John, certainly -
he brings forth the refining fire of Elijah,
preparing the way of the Lord.

And in some exhausting, trying, suffering and yet
joyous way, the Lord's hand is upon me, making a way
through great difficulties to His will and blessings
(and answering my prayers), though I fall short of
fully realizing and living it.

I sit here in a Rome airport motel after missing a
connection toward Medugorje due to a late plane and
a winding path of figuring out a remedy. But it looks
as though we will pick up the tour tomorrow evening,
and a sincere desire appears ready to be fulfilled
through this great adventure - I should have a sufficient
part of the day tomorrow to visit the city of Rome and
the great basilica for pilgrimage indulgence.

The pilgrimage has begun.

O Lord, your hand be upon me each day,
leading me in your way.

(A couple accompanies me today through this maze.)

December 24

(Mic.5:1-4; Ps.80:2-4,15-16,18-19;
Heb.10:5-10; Lk.1:39-45)

Blessed is she,
and blessed is He!

He is peace and brings that peace in His own flesh
to all the nations.

Where do I begin? Mass in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome
this morning, passing through the Holy Year Door and
saying prayers for indulgence to culminate my daily
pilgrimage at the end of this Jubilee year; and midnight
Mass in Medugorje, where the nations gather in peace
to praise Him. (I could not have imagined such a day.)

And looking upon Michelangelo's Pieta I cannot but cry.
The face of Mary is as an angel's; the lifeless body
of Jesus held up with one arm (His head hanging back),
she offers Him to us with the other... And that face.

All goes so well today, as in faith (which I lacked
in my anxious yesterday) I knew it would.

Also, another special grace is confirmed today. I find
that I am able to lose reliance on ear plugs to protect
my pained ears in flight (which has been a problem for
years) by relying on Jesus and speaking the Holy NAME
of God, which opens the throat.

Lord, I would rather stand at your threshold
as I do this night at St. James
than lie in the comfort of the world.

Continue to bless me, I pray.

December 25

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

In the fullness of time, the fullness of truth has come - Christ the Lord. Not just a prophet, not just a portion or shadow of the truth - the whole Truth He is.

And on this Christmas Day in Medugorje I continue to piece together the truth I seek, and see too clearly the things which keep me from being whole. I keep missing opportunities which the Lord (continually) puts before me to serve Him. And still there are judgmental thoughts, selfish movements - by a soul who sees himself better than others, does not see the beauty in others. How can I expect to find the Lord's will for my life if I am so preoccupied with my own will and concerned with fulfilling my own expectations, my own beliefs on what should be? I do make efforts to do good and amend my ways, but it is the fullness I need.

I am very tired; perhaps this is beginning to dull my senses. (Eleven hours sleep in three days.) I know I have not well expressed in previous entries the gifts God has given me, or been aware of many of them... I must sleep now.

Lord, bring me your fullness, your Truth.
(Sretan Bozic.)

I walk Podbrdo alone, in the rain.
Jesus sits teaching the scribes and the priests.

December 26

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

Feast of St. Stephen, first martyr of the Church.

Last night I had a terrible headache, and again this morning it was with me. And first thing this morning we go to see Vicka (the visionary) speak, standing about her porch with a hundred or so other people in the pouring rain. Three years ago I could not look long at her face for all the pain I saw in her eyes (despite the wide smile on her face); now I learn she has been sick - the doctor has said she should not be speaking. She has lost much weight, and is suffering with the sick for whom she intercedes. I have great concern for her martyrdom, feeling some personal tie to her. I express my concern for her pain to our guide. I suppose the question is: Can one suffer too much, and if so, is she suffering too much? I am concerned, but I shouldn't want to see fewer souls in heaven, and I think of the Fatima children Jacinta and Francisco, who thirsted after sacrifices for souls. Perhaps it is my own reluctance to suffer which causes me such thoughts... But yet, such pain is in her eyes.

Finally I get to adoration of exposed Sacrament this afternoon (which I missed our first night), and upon leaving the chapel, the sun is shining brightly upon this beautiful land.

Lord, make all suffering redemptive.
Let us not waste our sacrifices.
In your blood may the Church ever grow.

(And I think again of my meditation on plane to overcome pain in ears. We must be focused utterly on Christ, unto death. And Blessed Mother's message speaks of those who've said "yes" to God completely this year in vocation. This is what I seek.)

December 27 (1Jn.1:1-4; Ps.97:1-2,5-6,11-12; Jn.20:2-8)

May the joy of heaven be complete as all souls come running unto Him.

And I have faith and hope this night as I kneel on the floor before the altar with a number of young people from around the world during a beautiful hour of adoration. And again, as I come from Holy Hour the sky is clear (the stars shining this time) after another full day of rain.

I climb Mt. Krizevic this morning, alone and in the rain. I enter the tomb of Franciscan martyrs burned by the Communist regime (at another parish in this area). I pray there with a seminarian and two young women, after sunset (and after having been slain in the Spirit).

May we all follow Peter the pope and John the evangelist to the tomb of Christ, and find life.

Lord, come with your Spirit
and fill the hearts of the faithful with your love.

(Two young ladies give me holy kisses on the cheek after I do kind favors for them.)

December 28 (1Jn.1:5-2:2; Ps.124:2-5,7-8; Mt.2:13-18)

We escape the hunter's net, we are freed from our sins, by the blood of Jesus, who Himself escaped the net spread out for Him by Herod.

Sin leads to darkness and darkness becomes such acts as Herod's, such acts as the scourge of abortion. We must escape from sin and darkness; we must find light.

For the third time, though not so completely today, clear skies follow adoration. Though it poured upon my umbrella as I sat near the bas-relief of the fifth joyful mystery (The Finding of Jesus in the Temple) on Podbrdo Hill - to which I'd been drawn the other day and again today, to the teaching of Jesus - saying my rosary... it had stopped by the time I walked away. I soon walked through the fields to adoration chapel, and upon leaving and walking toward my lodging, a bright sun pierced the clouds for a moment and poured directly upon me.

The Lord seems to be calling me to adoration, a principal facet of the hermit's (of Bethlehem) life. And another Holy Hour in church tonight touches heaven. (I can imagine nothing more beautiful.) But what of teaching and this place?

The Lord forgives my sins throughout the day and draws me closer to Him.

Lord, help me to open my heart and be led by you,
to go as Joseph when you call;
let the slaughter of the innocents be avoided.

December 29 (Jn.2:3-11; Ps.96:1-3,5-6,11; Lk.2:22-35)

To the eyes of the aged prophet comes light;
when we walk with Him, we are never blind.

"The darkness is over and the real light begins to shine."

In darkness and rain I climb Mt. Krizevic early this morning with a 67-year-old man and a woman my age. I carry his coat - and my pack - rolled in a ball when it becomes too heavy for him. We struggle, but as we reach the top, the rain stops and the sun rises. We go forth in sorrow, but return full of joy...

And Vicka's eyes. As she suddenly rushes past me up to her house to speak (we returned there this morning), my own face lights up with a smile as I notice her. Our guide conveys to her my prayer that she not suffer too much, and he tells me she almost cried. Later, I place my left hand upon hers as she prays over someone - and I pray to take some of her pain. (My left arm has ached since.)

I also see (and hear) Marija today, she who receives the messages I read. Another pair of eyes which have seen the Blessed Mother (though not in as great pain - these others have families). And we stand just outside threshold of chapel in which she has vision this evening. The Mother blesses us. At time of vision it begins to rain, but I do not feel the water upon my head until a couple of minutes later. The Mother will protect me from the rains of this world.

So much to say. (Thinking of writing a short book on experiences this week.) English Mass celebrated in honor of Thomas Becket, he whose martyrdom was responsible for the pilgrimage fame of Canterbury.

Lord, open my eyes to your truth.

(Still the vision of Jesus in adoration
of the Sacrament takes precedence.)

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

The world is passing away;
He has come.

Miss Mass today due to twenty-eight hours of travel. Three-hour bus ride (beginning 2:30 a.m.), two one-hour flights, a nine-and-a-half-hour flight; deep snow in NYC area, so four-and-a-half-hour bus ride from Washington, car ride from airport... then had to shovel parking spot at 2:30 a.m. EST. The suffering and the waiting continue to the end of my pilgrimage, and beyond.

I do receive a word today (on initial bus ride): "take nothing with you for your journey" applies to my mode of writing - trusting in the Spirit, not making provisions for the work but simply putting my hand to the plow and writing, never looking back or making corrections. This I believe is my call, and I shall prove it I think in the composition of a work about my pilgrimage: *Christmas in Medugorje*.

Again, too many things to recount - will save them for above book.

Lord, may the evil one now be conquered in me.
May my patient waiting be rewarded with your presence,
and may I speak of it to others.

(I speak in depth - and hopefully truth and love -
to a young woman professing to be a lesbian,
as well as to a young Protestant man.)

December 31 (Sir.3:2-6,12-14; Ps.128:1-5; Col.3:12-21;
Lk.2:41-52)

Holy Family.

We must work as one, love as one, one holy family,
to find the blessings of the Lord, who is whole
and loves us all.

The (religious) family of a young lady to whom the
Lord seemed to be drawing me (perhaps as a sister)
waits in back of church for her to come down from choir
loft after Mass. I wait, too, apart, to ask a question
- thought she might be the person to care for my cat,
but she is moving overseas in two months.

The question of what to do now remains with me as
I spend the day in complete exhaustion - dehydrated,
unable to speak for the soreness of my throat, I eat
fruit, drink liquids, and try to rest in bed...

Lord, shall the Bethlehem hermits be my family?

January 1, 2001

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

Mary, Mother of God.

Praise God! For by the birth of His Son by the Virgin Mary, we are made sons and daughters of God the Father.

I manage to get to Mass and to pilgrimage church today, despite sickness and having to wait all day for lost baggage to be delivered. (Maybe tonight...?)
The pilgrimage is not at an end.

And the Holy Year is not yet over; still there are graces to be gained, and yet shall we see those graces come to light, become incarnate in Christ.

Father, make us your own.
Mother, pray for us.

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

His anointing teaches us all things, for it is in the fire of the Holy Spirit, who contains all Truth and brings all wisdom.

Trying to remain in His Truth and under His anointing, I begin this evening to compose *Christmas in Medugorje*, according to the clarification of my call as a writer I so recently received. May His Spirit be with me. (Hermits of Bethlehem cannot guarantee I will be allowed to practice writing to any degree.)

The deceptions of the tour company I utilized for my pilgrimage and their seeming unconcern for our travails, which resulted because of them, teach me of the lie that may be found anywhere.

O Lord, take all lies from our tongues.
May we give absolute statements to all matters.

January 3

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

It is He who is the Lamb of God, He upon whom the dove descends - He is pure. He is blessed by the Spirit, chosen by the Father, one with God. And He takes away our sins to make us so.

At Mass today upon hearing the readings, I think how yet sin persists in my life - straying thoughts, a continuing impatience driving in the car... But a sorrow for these and any of my sins provides a means to purification. And in a state of grace, after receiving Communion and kneeling before the exposed Sacrament, how close the Holy Spirit is to me when I speak the NAME of God (YHWH). Indeed, in these final days of the Jubilee year, His NAME has been a sure refuge for me. As it was on the plane preventing pain from earaches, so it removes me from sickness now when I turn to Him, and indeed is ever a facile tool to finding the Holy Spirit's presence. But I must remain in a state of grace and not neglect to turn to Him.

O Lord, help me not to sin.
Help me to hear your voice as it calls me,
as it would lead me in all situations.

May my heart not be closed to you,
but may I dwell in your WORD.

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

It is clear by His holiness that Jesus is indeed the Lamb of God. He is begotten of God, and by Him are we all made sons of the Living One.

And it is evident too, to Jesus, that Simon is "Peter", the Rock of the Church. And in all of us it should be evident who we are - we must radiate God's love.

I am excited to be founding firmly the purity I have sought for so long, and by it I believe I can come to be who I am in Christ.

Tomorrow is final day of local pilgrimage. The following will see the close of the Holy Year Door at St. Peter's Basilica. Our Epiphany celebration follows on Sunday, and Monday is the Baptism of the Lord. The end of this very special year (and this extended writing) is near. There is sadness, but unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth, it cannot bear fruit. I pray the graces poured forth this Holy Year bear one hundred fold.

Lord, may it be seen that I am your child.
Take all sin away,
and let me follow you.

(Medugorje writing - one quite different for me in its realistic detail - and music playing continue, as does search for religious order...
And I consider not teaching this semester.)

January 5 (1Jn.3:11-21; Ps.100:1-5; Jn.1:43-51)

It is love which leads Philip to call Nathaniel to the Lord, as it had Andrew to Peter. And Nathaniel is without guile, true, as all Christians should be, with consciences clear and free of deceit.

I find a certain similarity to Nathaniel's response to Jesus saying He'd seen him under the fig tree and Mary's response to Gabriel telling her of Elizabeth. Nathaniel must have been praying for a sign.

I find my understanding of Scripture deepening in a blessed manner these past five years of composing *Days* and of praying the Liturgy of the Hours. I find myself developing an intuitive sense of them as they become quite real. In particular, I seem of late to be able to step into the early Christians' shoes. What this window into Scripture will lead to I cannot say.

Last pilgrimage today. Nearly two hours in Polish church.

O Lord, let your love live in us.
Let us see and know your holiness.

(Again today Holy Hour is a refuge of love.)

January 6 (1Jn.5:5-13; Ps.147:12-15,19-20; Mk.1:7-11)

The Holy Year Door closes. The pilgrimage ends.
The Year of Grace comes to a conclusion. Now it
is time to put into practice what we have been given.

For the Pope today is the Epiphany, but in the States
we celebrate the star and the coming of the Magi
tomorrow. Today we hear of the three witnesses to
Christ - the water, the blood, and the Spirit.
Confusion about this reading is cleared up by a
beautiful parallel gospel in which Jesus is baptized
with water and the Spirit descends upon Him, even as
God's testimony on His Son's behalf is stated from the
heavens. (And the blood He will shed upon the cross.)
The priest reminds us of the catechism teaching of
three types of baptism: water, blood, and Spirit.

Now may the Church be baptized anew
and show itself to the world.
And now may decision be upon my own life,
to walk with God.

O Lord, your testimony is true.
May we live in it this day
Thank you for this holy year,
and bless me as I complete this writing.

January 7

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

Mt.2:1-12)

The Epiphany.

The light comes, and fills the nations with its brilliance.
The peoples come and lay their treasures at His feet;
our lives are His own.

This brilliant light which we follow, this brilliant
light which draws us forth, this Lord we shall call
our own makes us one in His holy kingdom.

Priest asks us to stand and turn toward middle of the
church during his homily, that we might see all the
kinds of people (and there are a varied number in this
parish) who call the Church their home - Jesus comes
for everyone. (The Church is universal/catholic.)

It is the day after the end of the Jubilee. I will
continue till the end of the Christmas season tomorrow.
I will be sad to see this work end, but am finding
courage that there is other fruit to be gleaned.
And I believe I will not teach this semester to lay
my whole self and the treasure of my writing and other
artwork at the feet of the Lord.

O Lord, accept my offering and make it whole.

(How the star rises in my heart as I wake this morning,
and I hold love for all people.

January 8

(Is.42:1-4,6-7; Ps.29:1-4,9-11; Lk.3:15-16,21-22)

Here is the beloved Son, blessed and ready to go forth in the Holy Spirit to bring forth true justice and set people free from their dark prisons. He is the Holy One, baptized this day by the hand of John in the waters of this world, but blessing and making sacred all hands and all waters.

I pray I may be able to follow in His steps, to heed His call - to be baptized myself for service unto Him and His people. As I ready now for my journey to the Bethlehem hermits to stay with them several days, I wonder if the time has finally come.

I began this writing nearly five years ago. Throughout it I have searched for purity and searched for direction. Now at the end of the Christmas season of this closing Jubilee year, I seem to have found both. Exactly where I shall be led I cannot say, but I pray to remain in His Word.

Thank you, Lord, for this year and these years,
this time to turn to you.
May my conversion be complete,
and may I walk with you now.

And let the new spring come upon your Church.

Amen.

Epilogue

It is Inauguration Day in the U.S. as I pen this epilogue, and much has been in the past less-than two weeks. I am halfway through reflections on my pilgrimage to Medugorje and plan a second autobiographical work on my time at Bethlehem Hermitage (*Five Days in the Desert*). It does not look as if I will be staying there - am looking at Little Portion Hermitage and Catholic Association of Musicians now - but from it I have learned and am learning much.

The Blessed Mother is with me very closely now. I am in virtual continual conversation with her, and she is guiding my days of prayer and writing and music. I died to myself upon returning from desert experience, and now live for Christ. He comes to make His home with me in silence every morning and encourages me to remain in His NAME.

The Lord And His Mother Love You.

Peace Always,

James H. Kurt

The way is hard but leads to heaven.