

In Conversation with the Lord

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James H. Kurt

After completing reading of the gospel in which Jesus tells the disciples to discern a prophet by his deeds – “You can tell a tree by its fruit” – I ask what fruit I have to show.

“This writing is your fruit, James,” the Lord assures me. “Do not continue to doubt it. This is your call.”

It does me no good to question this gift as I do. What is to be done must simply be done.

And on this day when the Lord calms the fear of Abraham and reassures him his descendants shall be numerous as the stars, the Lord speaks to this old man as well, letting him know that his work shall yet bear fruit in heaven.

And so, why should we be anxious?

“In your writing you have to let go more so, James. If you do not trust in this way, the writing will still be blessed, but you will not know the grace of this blessing.”

It is He who writes. I must give all to Him.

As I lie face down on the floor this very early Friday morning, thinking of that I must do on Sunday instead of offering my prayer, my life, to the Lord... He instructs me: “You have two days before then.”

The trouble of the day is indeed sufficient thereof. Why are we so anxious for tomorrow?

And still I hesitate so in giving myself over to Him in writing.

While rapt before the Blessed Sacrament:

“James?”

“Yes, Lord?”

“Speak my words.”

“How shall I, Lord?”

“Open your mouth and I will fill it.”

O Lord, let my speech not be empty.

“James, do you think it is right for you to look upon another man’s wife?”

“No, Lord.”

“Then know that there is no woman you should look upon, for you have no wife in this world.”

“Yes, Lord. Have I a wife in heaven, then?”

“Heaven is your spouse; the Spirit and my Mother are with you, and I come to you with the Father. To heaven itself are you wed.”

And as I pick up the Bible and begin to read from Sirach, I hear – “My son, hast thou sinned? do so no more... Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent: for if thou comest near them, they will take hold of thee” (21:1,2).

And I know He speaks of this world of sin, the Babylon in which we find ourselves.

Having had difficulty dealing first with my teaching at the college and then with the servicing of my computer, I grew anxious and began to question if I were on the right path, after all, or if I shouldn't simply give up all these things of the world and enter into a monastery. But the Lord spoke to me yesterday in the night (after Office and writing) and again this early morning. “This is your call, to rise above the things that are of this world.”

He does not wish for me to separate myself from the world but to transcend it even as I walk in it and amongst the things that are of it.

May I be obedient, O Lord.

(Thank you for answering my prayers with your light.)

I ask the Blessed Mother if she will speak to me, and she replies, "Yes, James, He will." So, on my knees before the Blessed Sacrament I prepare my soul for conversation with the Lord.

I ask if I should prostrate myself before Him, despite the several women gathered in this small chapel, and He replies that it would be wise. Lying there with face to ground, I inquire if it is time for Him to speak with me, and He says, "Yes, James."

I think to rise and pick up my pen and book but remain there prostrate all the same. As the seconds pass He draws closer to me, His light filling my darkened eyes and mind, His peace calming my tired soul... and I realize He has begun to speak to me.

And I see, too, that indeed it is in His presence that He speaks most clearly, most effectively to our souls. In this conversation without words, in this holy silence, the communication is most direct; here indeed we hear His healing voice communing with our spirits. It is in this conversation, this vision of His face – this being in His presence – we shall one day dwell eternally.

Part of my penance this day is to do a kind deed for another. Instead of a more overt action, I think to offer a prayer for someone, then

specifically to offer the imminent Mass. I ask the Lord for whom I should offer it, and He says for Himself. I think of prayer for the wounds He suffers by sin.

Then He says I should also offer it for my brother, a thought of my own, as well as for the several indigent individuals, the homeless drug addicts and alcoholics, I observed this day. And I discern a lesson from the Lord about the Body of Christ and my own deficiencies in living as part of it: He is known in our brothers, and all men should be as brothers to us; but I to too great a degree see only Jesus and me, failing miserably to put others before myself and missing therefore the great blessing of love found in care and prayer for the welfare of others.

I pray my heart may be open to love my neighbor in all places and circumstances, even as I look kindly upon my brothers and sisters at Mass this day, beginning to realize the blessing they are.

In the tears I cry while playing the songs
the Lord gave me so long ago, He lets me know
– I am not too old to enter this order.

So much work has the Lord set before me,
so much fruit to bear... Yesterday was
Sunday and I thought to take a slight break
for rest. But the rest is shown to me to have
been laziness by the fruit it has borne.

And at Mass this morning, where the
readings speak of the oppressive work the
Israelites had to endure as they grew and
became numerous – and of the cross we all
must bear – Jesus says to me, “See the work I
have set for you. Do not fear it, but take
refuge in it. I am with you to strengthen you.”

And it is so that in this work I am blessed;
in bearing the cross I am made stronger, not
weaker. The weakness comes in its avoidance.

O Lord, make me ready and able to serve
you, and so to know your grace and power.

O Lord, if you should stand before me in
all your glory, the Son of Him who created the
universe, He who holds power over all the
earth in His hands, how should I stand before
you –
how should my eyes look upon your light? For
the darkness that is in them would only be
overwhelmed by your brightness; I fear I would
be struck blind and die.

And I realize it is so, that I must die; only
by giving up my life completely, dying as you
did on the cross for me, will I be able to see
with the new eyes necessary to behold your
glory.

“Yes, James, this death must come. But fear it not, for it does indeed lead to life, and by it my light shall fill your eyes.”

Heavenly vision approaches me as I sit with head bowed, eyes closed, Jesus inside me now, and before me on the altar –

“Jesus?”

“Yes, James?”

“I haven’t anything to say, but I am filled with a longing to speak with you.”

“Yes, James, I know.”

“The silence is beyond my words, and yet in words I am inclined to approach you.”

“You may speak.”

“Thank you, Lord, for my soul. Let your hand of love be always upon me.”

“This is my desire.”

“May I meet you, Lord, in the air.”

“O Lord, your sweetness is with me now;
your presence is upon me and I am giving all
to you – my will is yours. In such blessed
prayer
I long to stay, though it is painful to find your
breath, your Spirit, at work cleansing my mind
and heart from darkness. I fear losing
remembrance of you as I stand and begin this
day.”

“Fear not, dear James, it is well that you
desire to remain with me always and that you
see the measure to which you fall short of my
eternal presence. I shall prepare your heart to
receive me entirely – each day I shall draw you
closer
to me.”

“Thank you, my Lord, my God.”

“O Lord, as I sit here before your Blessed Sacrament, will you converse with me awhile?”

“I am speaking to you now and speak to you always, if only you would keep your ears open to my voice.”

“I hear it now, Lord, but it is true, I am too prone to forget or ignore your presence as I pass through my every day.”

“Can you not remember my Name then, James?”

“I would remember it always, but only by your grace, I know, it will be so. For by my own power, I cannot find it.”

“As you know me now and as you hear my presence close to you, so I am with you always. Have faith that I am near.”

“Yes, Lord. Please do always be here. I love you.”

“It is your love that will save you, James. Nothing else will bring you to this place. By no other means will you remember my NAME.”

“Help my weakness, Lord. Cleanse my failures to love and let me never judge, but always approach you and all others in wisdom only, tempered by your grace.”

“Yes, James. It is well.”

“Thank you, Lord.”

“Shall I write something in conversation with you, dear Lord?”

“Yes, James, you shall.”

“What shall I write?”

“You shall write how much you love me, and you shall ask for the discipline you need to maintain my presence in your life each day.”

O Lord, grant me the wisdom and patience, the humility and strength, peace and unity with you – forgive my sins and help me

forgive others, for I love you and desire to be your child of light guarded by the Spirit of Truth. Thank you.

Jesus, how wonderful it is to find your discipline; how much freedom there is in its firm establishment. For as the body comes under control, the soul breathes quite freely, apart from the burden of sin. Your discipline is indeed the road to liberty. (And it shall be fulfilled in heaven.)

“James, this is great wisdom granted you. Hold fast to it, and to my presence.”

“Yes, Lord. I pray my discipline shall always be founded in your love.”

“Jesus, how gentle is your presence; how sweetly it comes to me in your Holy Word. Your Scripture is indeed like the finest bread to my taste and nourishes me so well that I rest in peace with this food within me.”

“Continue to eat, my son, for you have not yet had your fill. There is much nourishment you lack and only by this Word shall you come to it. Make my Word your own.”

“Within me let it ever grow, as the yeast of heaven, Lord.”

“It does ever grow. And in it you shall find my peace.”

“Jesus, why is it the world is such an insane place? How can it be that your children have turned so to idols and the vanity of their imaginations? Why is there such violence and hatred?”

“The world as I created it exists yet somewhere deep in the heart of each of my creatures. That they choose to turn from my call to their souls, that my prophets refuse to go forth and awaken this Word, is indeed a sign of their foolishness. But I give them time yet to turn back to me, and I continue to send prophets to them. Some will hear my voice and yet turn; others will simply choose to stay apart from me.

“James, do not judge the hearts of those you see going astray today. Do not be quick to condemn them. What you can do to bring them to me must be your concern as you go through your day. Always there is opportunity for a soul to come to me.”

“Help me, Lord, in my blindness, in my judgment of others. And give me the strength and wisdom and patience to call to those I can reach with your word. Let me never lead them away from, but toward you.”

“O Lord, let me listen to you; let my heart be open to you. Let it not be my own words and ideas which preoccupy my prayer, but you pray through me and speak to me of your overwhelming love. I come with words instead of silence too often. Let my conversation with you always be two-way.”

“James, you do well to seek my Word and my speaking to you. Fear not. I will not allow you to forget my Name or become deaf to my presence.”

“But, Lord, will you increase, too, my awareness of you and the effectiveness of my prayer?”

“Yes, James, as long as you remain open to hear of your sins, I will bless you with this favor.”

“Help me, Lord, to soften my heart always to your loving chastisement, and teach me always your way.”

“Shouldn’t you at least remember my NAME here at Mass, James?”

“Yes, Lord.”

“And in your personal prayer?”

“Yes, Lord.”

“Then you will remember my NAME throughout your day.”

And as I consume His Body, waiting on line to receive His Blood, He says, “You see how real my Word can be?”

“Yes, Lord.”

May I remember His NAME.

Gazing upon His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, the Word comes to me: "Shall we have conversation, Lord?"

"Yes, James."

And so I put my Bible down and pick up my notebook.

"James?"

"Yes, Lord?"

"Are you well?"

"Yes, Lord. I have aches and pains and questions, but you are near and the Blessed Mother is always close at hand, and so I find myself growing and being rooted in your Spirit. Is it not so?"

"Yes, James, you do make progress in my Name, but would you not like to grow more so?"

"All is in your hands, Lord. I would be with you in eternity if you would say the Word, if it were your hand that assured my place."

“This is spoken well, James, and I do see your willingness to come to me. But come to me; do not hesitate or doubt or look to turn around.”

“Yes, Lord, I know I do not always hold fast to my prayers or my conviction to love you above all things, and for these moments I am sorry. By your grace strengthen me. (May I say that even now I feel you have brought me a blessing of faith that I am not entirely aware of – that you seem to be telling me, with the Blessed Mother, that a certain purity has been rooted in my soul.)”

“Do not hesitate to accept this grace and look neither left nor right. I am before you now, and I shall be your light and your guide for all eternity.”

“I love you, Lord. And I know that as I love you I give myself to you in abandonment of all else. Perfect my love of thee that I might be one with thee, now and evermore.”

“Your love I accept, James, and will bring to perfection. Do come to me unhesitatingly.”

“Yes, Lord.”

“O Lord, how I have faltered since we last spoke. You indeed call me to a greater love of you and grant me a special closeness to you, but I am not obedient to your prompting; I do not heed the voice which is so present to me. Though I thank you for being so near and for revealing to me my going astray in lack of faith and trust in you, yet I desire and need to learn to better hear and follow your call.”

“It is true, James, you have faltered, you have too often set aside my call to your heart. But yet I am with you and continue to call you. Pick yourself up now and go forward with greater resolve and I will bless you and be with you as I have shown; I will fulfill the promise you hear speaking in your heart. I will be with you.”

“Yes, Lord. But let me be with you.”

“It shall be so.”

“O Lord, your love is so fulfilling. How I wish to love you always.”

“Then would you be with me always, for I am love.”

“Yes, Lord, and oneness with you in love I thank you for showing me. May it be complete.”

“Lord, is there a oneness among all your children?”

“Yes, James, there is even oneness among all my creatures and all creation, for everywhere I am they are in me.”

“But, Lord, what of the division in your Church?”

“The division is made by the hardness of men’s hearts.”

“Should we not be one?”

“All are one, James, and all will come to that oneness who heed my call.”

“May I hear your call, Lord?”

“You do, James, you do. But you must not forget me and that I am in all creatures.”

“Help me to remember, and to call others to you.”

“Yes, James.”

This morning I am troubled, but speaking the Lord's NAME (YHWH) I immediately come close to Him and His comfort.

“You see how near I am to you,” He says. And He reminds me that I should be speaking His NAME more frequently.

“Before prayer, Lord, at all times?”

“Yes, James.”

“Before waking and sleeping and doing anything?”

“Yes, James.”

How I have forgotten the gift the Lord provides me; how negligent I have been. And the Lord leads me in my questioning to realize that it is indeed always I should be speaking His NAME. But before all prayer and reading and writing and eating and working I must begin.

How fearful it is to come into your presence, O Lord. How awesome and overwhelming to find oneself surrounded by your light. For now that I enter into your Word, now that I begin to remember your NAME (finally), I find your Hand so close to me, I discover your presence

in all I see, and I begin to rise unto your Kingdom, becoming, really, another man... and it seems more than I can bear.

How can we live always in your presence, when entering there even for a few seconds, even for several moments during the day, becomes so astounding...? How shall we stand in your light eternally?

I open my mouth now. I remember His NAME. I open my mouth and my tongue is silenced and the light of His presence fills my brain as His Spirit descends upon me and upon Him I look (though gazing only upon the ceiling). Yes, I begin to remember this gift, and encourage all who read these lines to do the same. For He is near, ever here, waiting in silence, in the moment, for us to take up the weight of a silent tongue, to turn away from the distractions of this confused world, and touch Him.

Lord, I beg you to bring me in your time into your presence. I do wish never to forget you and always to draw closer to you... but bring me there only according to your will, in your time, in your way.

“James, I am here, and you shall be with me.”

“Little by little,” the Mother encourages us to come to holiness, until it fills all our speech and action, in all our thoughts and in all situations...

“Lord, is this how you would have me come to you?”

“Yes, James. Find me in patience in all your day. Even where you are now in this laundromat, you should find me present, and there you should show my holiness.”

“How shall I show your holiness, Lord?”

“James,” if you are present to me, you will be present for others and your holiness will shine forth.”

“So, again, I must remember your NAME, be in your presence, and all will follow from this?”

“Yes.”

“Help me, I pray.”

“Yes, James, I shall.”

Reading Jeremiah’s prophecy against the wickedness of Judah and Israel, I think of the country in which I dwell and wonder about its fate:

“What of this country, Lord; shall judgment come upon it?”

“Judgment comes upon all who sin, James.”

“But shall there be such utter destruction?”

“The destruction I hold for the last day is worse than any land of Sodom and Gomorrah

has ever known. This judgment I hold now, and it shall be terrible.”

“What shall I do, Lord?”

“Be strong as Jeremiah and stand against all sin. Fear not the power of this earth, for it is passing away.”

“And you will last, Lord?”

“I and my Word will last, James.”

“Let me be with you, then.”

“Remain with me always.”

Walking in the park, again, I see that I am not moving. My legs move, yes, but my head is still. And traversing any distance is but an illusion...

“What shall become of the light in me when I die, Lord?” (The light of God is in us all.)

“Nothing,” He answers, “the light does not die. It remains.”

“Lord?”

“Yes, James?”

“Should I be afraid of death?”

“Certainly you should not fear death; but you should be prepared for life. If you are not prepared for life, then you have much to fear.”

“Am I becoming prepared for life?”

“My Word is at work within you, but you must be ever vigilant to see it grow to maturity.”

“Lord?”

“Yes, James?”

“Is death a painful thing?”

“Death is painful only if you are unwilling to leave this life. If you long for me, I will see that death brings you to life, and there shall be no pain but only rejoicing.”

“I’m sorry, Lord, if I seem a coward... I suppose it is for fear of the unknown or for the torture of the body.”

“Draw closer to me and you shall know me, James, and the body will not be your concern.”

Conversation in silence must not be neglected, the Lord reminds me as I seek a word from Him before the Blessed Sacrament. Words are fine and serve to encourage our souls, but nothing can substitute for silence.

And I must say to those who would read these pages that any nourishment you find in these passages is well and good, but do not forget to converse with the Lord yourselves, in words and in silence. The relationship another has with the Lord cannot substitute for your own.

As I look upon Jesus on the cross, I say, "I wish to be holy as you, O Lord," for so often and in so many situations I do fall short of holiness.

But in this Corpus, in this Body splayed upon the cross, is holiness. Let us join you, O Lord.

"You do well to notice the holiness of my sacrifice, and would do better to live it each day."

"O Lord, how it escapes me. But flesh of your flesh I would be; let me be wed unto thee."

"My flesh is yours – you have but to take up my cross."

"O help me, O Lord! For it seems such a weight to bear, and so far from my strength."

"It is I who give strength to all who pick up and carry my cross."

"Yes, Lord, let me trust in you, and not be afraid."

"Take steps toward me this day."

“Lord, I find myself about to burst with... life... joy... excitement... I want to cast myself down on the floor before you. I want to be ground up into dust with love of you. I want to die in sacrifice... I want to live. I want to live!

“What is this which overtakes me as I come from work, from toil in the vineyard and driving through the streets on this a day of fast, and enter this church where you are exposed in the Blessed Sacrament? I am overwhelmed. I can count all my bones and I am filled with a joy, for you are close and I desire to lay down my life in truth...

“I could shout. I could die. Or I could write.”

“James, you are overwhelmed by my closeness to you in your laying down of your life in your work. You are overcome by the sweet

exhaustion which is the blessing of those who spend themselves for me.”

“O Lord, I pray it shall never leave, but always grow in me and through me and with me.”

“You pray well. Again, now do.”

“How sweet is your love, Lord. How sweet is your love. Sweet is your blood, Lord. Sweet is your blood. And I desire to swim in its eternity. (My ardor indeed overwhelms me.)”

“Turn not from its pools, James. Turn not from its pools. And you shall be washed in the cleansing power of my love.”

“Thank you, Jesus, for your grace, for your mercy which knows no bounds, which cannot be contained by the walls of earthly life. Make this pot in accord with your sweet design. I love you.”

This I would inscribe in stone, even as “the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, with the point of a diamond.” (So Jeremiah tells us, as I turn to Scripture this thought on my mind). This I would carve into the hearts of men by angelic tongue – Jesus is Lord! Forget Him not.

“And Jeremiah speaks, too, of the potter I have just mentioned, Lord. And so you bless my thoughts, my toil, with your approval. So you lead my ardent desire forth in your Name.”

“James, my love for you is strong and its power I would impart to you...”

“Only let me hold it by your hands, O Lord, for left to myself, it would break.”

“Your wisdom does grow with me, James. I come close with my Spirit, and would make you my own.”

“Praise you, my Lord, my God, my all.”

It is the morning after terrorist attacks killed thousands of people here in the Northeast United States, most in the utter destruction of two hundred-story buildings by the crashing of two suicide high-jacked airplanes... this just across the Hudson River from where I live. (I see yet the smoke rising from my kitchen window.)

“What does it mean, O Lord?”

“James, you are not to have your heart disturbed by this horror of man’s sin. Your soul must remain free from anger and from hatred. Through even this you must remain with me and love.

“I am only of love, James. I have nothing to do with hatred, nothing to do with the violence that pervades men’s perverse hearts.”

“How shall it end, Lord?”

“It shall not end until man turns to me, until he truly seeks an end, seeks the peace that comes only in my presence.”

“What of all those who have died, my Lord?”

“Their souls will be well with me. I am beyond this carnage that man does reap by his sin. All those who take refuge in me I protect from man’s violent hands.”

“What shall we do now, Lord?”

“You know you must pray, James. You know you must bring love and truth to bear upon this as all situations.”

“Lord, this has affected me deeply. Tears are set here in my eyes.”

“I know your heart is broken by the wickedness of which man is capable, and it is right that you should mourn; but you shall hear the laughter of children in my kingdom. Be assured of this.”

“O Lord, has this country done some wrong?”

“James, you know there is much that is wrong with this country in which you dwell. You know well of its lack of love for life, for the weakest of people and the littlest of children. You have seen the greed and the lust and the lies. This country struggles now to find the soul it has long ago discarded. That it will find it again, I cannot say, but it is certain it must awake and come into my presence.”

“Have you thus punished this country, Lord?”

“It is not in my mind to perform such as you have witnessed. This is not my way. This is the way of the world and the result of the sin in which it drowns. Life has nothing to do with death, and I am only life.”

Let us find your life, O Lord.

“Come. Come unto me, James, and stay.
Remain in my presence forever. Never leave or
turn your face away. And I shall ever love you.”

“Yes, Lord. Let it be so.”

It is Jeremiah I read in these days, and the
Lord’s condemnation of the wickedness of
Judah. He brings destruction upon them and
sends them into exile. Certainly the same fate
awaits all who refuse to hear the Lord’s
commands.

“Yes, James, all sinners must be chastised.
But all my chosen will enter my grace.”

“Love your enemy,” you tell us in our gospel
today, Lord. We know we must do this. We know
we must never hate. We know we must not give in

to anger or fear. But tell us more, Lord, as to what we do in such dire circumstances, in the face of such evil acts.”

“James, you have already said what you must do. You must not hate. You must not fear. You must love. Love must always be your guide, for then I shall be with you and lead you to the peace all true hearts seek. Nothing can overcome my love.”

“Yes, Lord, help us to be obedient. And I pray for the hearts of all, that they might listen more so to you now than to the call of anger and revenge.”

“I will act, James. When called upon, I will act.”

“O Lord, let it be your will that is done. Visit us now, my God.”

“Hearts must turn to me, James.”

“Do they not call upon you in prayer, many so much better than I?”

“Yes, James, many keep me in their hearts and trust in my way; but there are many more who need yet to turn.”

“O Lord, I pray with all my heart that they shall, that you shall call to them, and they shall hear your voice in the depths of their soul – that they shall long to be with you.”

“You pray well, James.”

“I believe it can be so, Lord. I believe you can act in the conversion of souls.”

“It may be, James. It may be.”

“O let it be, Lord! Let it be.”

My tongue is silent this day, O Lord. My tongue is silent. I wait in patience for the triumph of the cross.

I pray for the conversion of the terrorist who orchestrated the attack upon this country, this destruction of humanity. I ask the Lord that he might come forth recognizing his wrong and handing himself over to justice, and become a voice against the hatred and judgment that are terror.

There is a light about me. I ask the Lord if He would actually answer this prayer. He replies: "All prayers are answered by me, James. And this one, too, shall be."

"Lord, shall there be redemption? Shall there be forgiveness? Will there be a light to come from this darkness, a light that will last?"

"James, I am the light."

"And will we as a country come to know that light and live that light, Lord? There is much here that is far from your light – will we turn to your light?"

“Yes, James, some will. Many will rediscover the light they have long shunned or covered over in their ignorance. But, James, you must remember your homeland is here in heaven with me, despite anything that occurs on this earth.

It is good for you to be concerned for your fellow man, but you live here with me.”

“Yes, Lord. And it has not been difficult to remember till now. If the world should become a better place, I might tend to forget, you are right. Help me to keep you always in mind, and your kingdom foremost.”

“It is a week now, Lord, and the smoke still rises. Shall it come to an end?”

“Yes, James, it shall clear away. The smoke will dissipate, but the memory will remain. That memory will be difficult for some... but it shall not be without its fruits. Remember me, James.”

“You begin to frighten me, Lord, with your love. Hear me now as I beg – let me always stay with you.”

The smoke does finally dissipate; the sky begins to clear. And there seems to be a change below it. People seem more patient, more focused on what matters in life. Not in every case, but on the whole, the vanity seems to have fallen away. How long will it last? Will it last? Will we return to what matters? In a word: will we return to God?

“Will we return to you, Jesus?”

“It may be so, James. The world may be blessed with a time of true peace, peace in me. But again I say, you are with me in heaven.”

The priest this morning speaks of the time (after the final persecution, of Diocletian) when the Church became the state religion of the Roman Empire under Constantine, and the subsequent power, temporal power, it maintained after the fall of the empire. He makes clear there were good and bad results of this authority on earth.

“Lord, what power would you have the Church attain to? You have said we should pray for those in power, but should we *become* those with earthly power, or avoid such status, as you have done? What place have we in the workings of the world?”

“James, all the world is mine, but heaven in my kingdom where all my subjects must live and reign. My kingdom may come to earth and certainly it is a welcome event that my will be done in all things, in all places – but my kingdom is not of this earth and so cannot be made by or limited to this earth. The earth is my footstool; heaven is my home.”

“So, should we be politicians and kings, becoming rulers of this earth?”

“If this is that to which one is called; but you are not called to this, James, and this cannot be the final goal.”

“Lord, I think you will touch the world.”

“James, if I touch the world or not should not preoccupy you. You must be concerned with doing my will, whatever the circumstances.”

“Yes, Lord, I understand. I must simply die to self.”

“Yes, James, you must.”

The cross is the call of us all.

Today, the Feast of St. Matthew, I received from my local jeweler the scapular I had envisioned and carved from silver the parts of, his having connected them with an appropriate chain.

In the front is the LORD's NAME – “YHWH”; in the back the inscription above the cross – “INRI”; and it is connected either side with doves in flight – representing the Holy Spirit, to be placed at the shoulders.

“Shall I now start an apostolate, Lord? To this do you call me?”

“Yes, James, you must bring understanding of my NAME which I have imparted to you forth for others to see and know.”

“Will I be alone in this apostolate, Lord?”

“No, James, others will join you and you will organize well the message of my WORD.”

“How shall I begin, Lord?”

“Wearing this scapular will be your beginning and it shall serve to lead you to more work for this call.”

“Shall my writings tie in to this apostolate as well?”

“Yes, James, this will be the frame from which you work.”

“Will it take much time to begin?”

“You begin today, James.”

“And to develop?”

“Development will come with each passing day.”

“So I should not be anxious for growth of the ministry?”

“No, James. Patience will bring you all I offer forth.”

“And so, you will watch over always?”

“Yes, James, I shall.”

“Thank you, Lord. Into your hands I commend whatever I must do.”

I have gotten a priest, whose name I do not know, to bless my scapular. What fear and wonder possessed my soul as I approached the rectory after Holy Hour at the church I visit each Friday. And how quietly understanding the

priest was, recognizing “God’s Name” immediately.

“Lord, it is with some trepidation but with a great excitement I go forth. May your holy fear never leave me; please bless each step I take.”

“James, I will bless you now, and draw you into my kingdom with my apostles and disciples.”

“This would be an awesome gift, and more I could not ask or imagine. Security in you is all I seek.”

“This is all that is to be sought. And it is what I offer.”

“James?”

“Yes, Lord?”

“Have you nothing else to ask me?”

“I don’t know, Lord. I suppose now I must just wait and see what you bring to me.”

“Yes, James, this is right. You now understand well my call for your life.”

“So, shall I end this volume now, Lord, though there be a few pages left?”

“Yes, James. We will leave those pages to be filled with your life.”

“Thank you, Lord, for the gift of your voice.”

“You are welcome in my light.”