


JANUARY 2022

Tambuli

A PUBLICATION OF THE FAMILY OF FAITH
COMMUNITY (NJ USA)

Theme for 2022

Be courageous. Expand your tent
and your descendants will possess
nations.

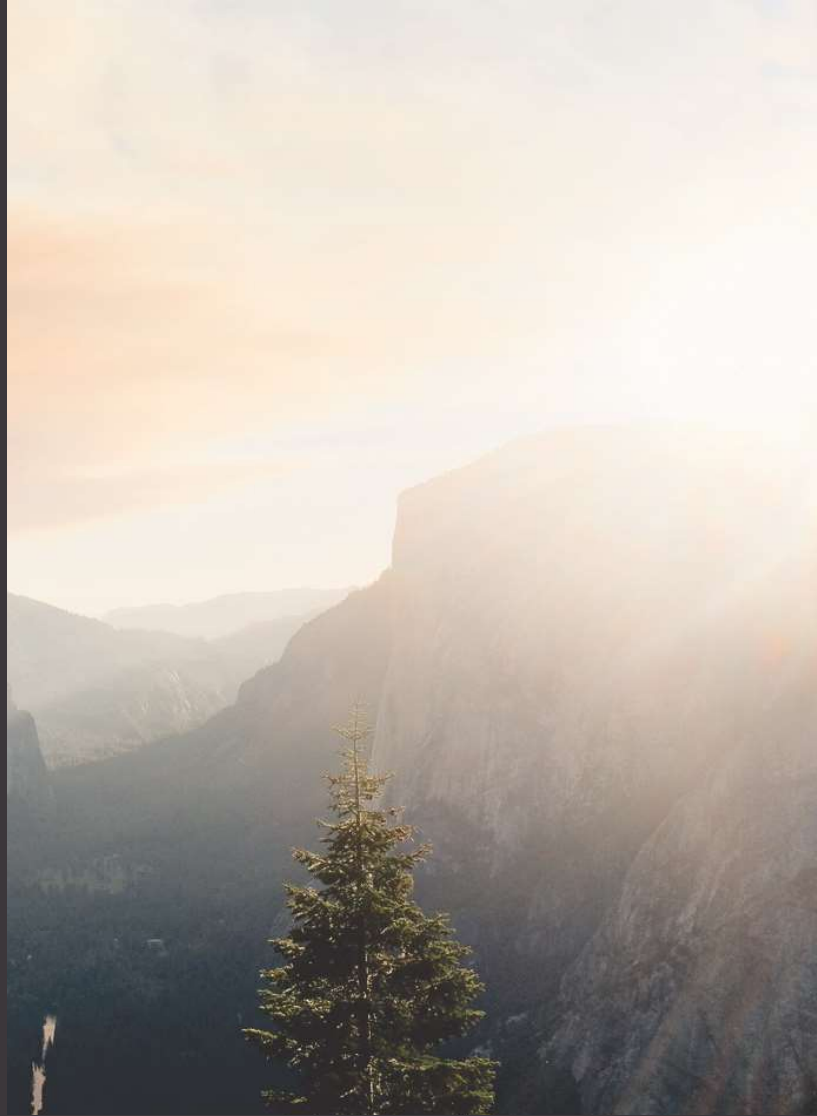


**In the year 2021, our theme was
"Persevere and rejoice in suffering
as My glory is further revealed."**

**As we look forward to the Lord
further revealing His glory to us,
we should have hope and expectant
faith.**

**As we continue to respond to the
Lord's call for us and as we
respond to the mission, we heard
these words from the Lord which
will be our theme for 2022.**

***Be courageous.
Expand your tent and your
descendants will possess nations.***



**As we face a new year, a new season to
pursue Him, everyone is encouraged
to spend time to reflect on this word.**

- **How can I be courageous so I can be part of the cloud of witnesses, paving the way of the Lord?**
- **How can I participate in the expansion of our tent as a community?**
- **How can I be of service so our children will possess nations and be beacons of light to others ?**

**"WE SAW THE STAR IN THE EAST, AND WE CAME TO
WORSHIP HIM."**

MATTHEW 2:2

**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2022
18TH TO 25TH OF JANUARY, 2022**



The theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2022 was selected by the Middle East Council of Churches and originates from the churches in Lebanon. Present times in Lebanon are extremely difficult and economically disastrous. All this combined with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have made the situation quite stressful. The power of prayer in solidarity with those who suffer is a demonstration of Christian unity and a sign of communion.

The theme, taken from the second chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, is the Epiphany. Each year in January, the Church recalls the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem, highlighting God's invitation to all of humanity to a new covenant in the Incarnation of Christ. In the Eastern Churches, Epiphany is joined to the mystery of the Baptism of Christ, a baptism all Christians hold in common as testimony to their faith in the Son of God.

(from the website of the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute)

DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS

- Day 1, Raise us up and draw us to your perfect light. “We observed his star in the East.”
(Matthew 2:2)

Reading:

This grace... has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7-10

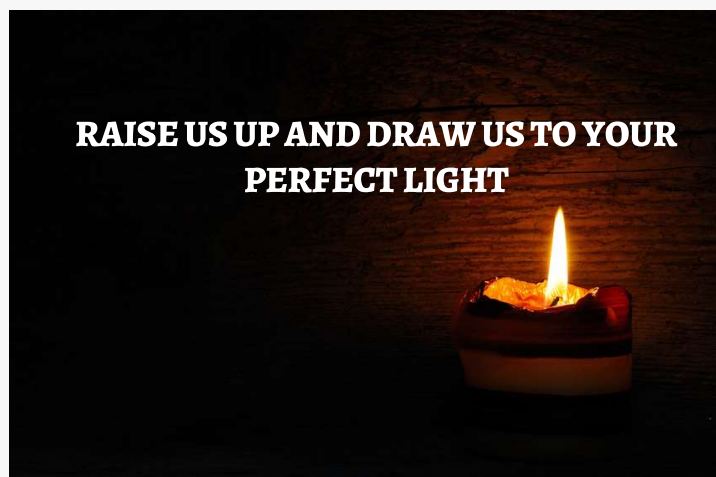
Reflection from Bheng de Jesus

As I read and reflect on today's prayer, the first day of the week of Prayer for Christian Unity, I'm reminded of this line from our Lord's Day prayer - "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."

Imagine the power of even just one small flicker of light in a dark room, it will illuminate the room and the darkness cannot even hide it. God had sent a star to guide the three Kings to see and meet His only Son. And we still have that bright light shining on us, we have Jesus Christ with us every second of our every day.

In our world today, we are surrounded with so much darkness with the ongoing pandemic there's unemployment, death, hopelessness, people hurting other people and so on. It's hard sometimes to see the light through all these. But God is reminding us "This grace... has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus." God gave us Jesus. Through Him, we are blessed with His innumerable grace to shine His light in this dark world. If we Christians all unite in shining Christ's light to others, we will surely overcome this world's darkness. Let's not dwell on our differences but focus more on the one and only God we know and we behold, Jesus Christ, our life and light.

In our littleness and simple ways, let's brighten this world with our kindness, undying hope and immense joy. May we be faithful in praying for one another especially for our Christian brethren who are being persecuted. Let's keep on shining for Christ, the one and only Son of God!



DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS

- Day 2, Humble leadership breaks down walls and builds up with love: “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?” (Matthew 2:2)

Reading:

The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve.

MATTHEW 20:20-28

Reflection from Rhea Almirante

Humble leadership breaks down walls and builds up with love.

When I reflect on the servant-kingship of Jesus my mind takes me back to the scene where Jesus was washing the feet of His disciples at the last supper.

In the act of washing their feet, Jesus shows that we (as His disciples) are equal in dignity and united amidst diversity.

Real Christian leaders understand that they are each servant leaders serving alongside other servant leaders.

Real Christian leaders should have a mindset that no one is above the other.

Real Christian leaders don't follow their own ambitions or desires but identify with the will of God.

When you choose to wash others' feet, you choose to serve from a point of appreciation of the value and dignity of the other person.

When you choose to wash others' feet, the starting reason might have been for sympathy or pity but then it moves toward empathy and solidarity.

When you choose to wash others' feet, JUDGEMENT fades.

When you choose to wash others' feet, LOVE emerges.

As the saying goes: "United we stand, divided we fall."

As part of today's Sword of the Spirit's reflection they have stressed that "Leaders, both in the world and in the Church, have responsibility to bring together rather than to scatter or divide the people of God.

The more faithfully we, as Christians, emulate the servant leadership of Christ, the more division in both the world and the Church will be overcome."

Let us pray brothers and sisters for the leaders of countries, leaders of Churches and civic leaders that God will grant them the COURAGE to lead the people, HUMILITY to be loving servants, GENEROSITY in their time and sacrifices and OPENNESS OF HEART to the will of God as they truly serve the people and lead them in unity.

DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS

- Day 3, The presence of Christ, turning the world upside down: “When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.” (Matthew 2:3)

Reading: So we labored ... from break of dawn until the stars came out. NEHEMIAH 4:18-21

Reflection from Cheng Cabangon

Too much of good life destroys us. God allows things to happen to us not in spite of His love for us but precisely because of it.

As Christians, we cannot remain in darkness thinking that we are free to do what we want. True freedom comes in doing what we ought to do - in the Name of Jesus, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, for the Glory of God the Father.

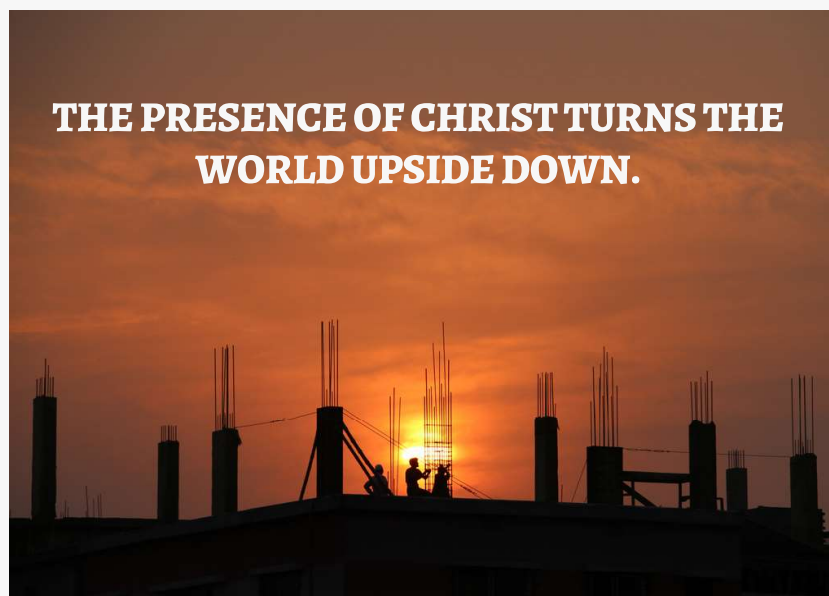
The enemy seeks to divide, to destroy us. We are soldiers of Christ - called to protect the Church and defend the Faith.

When we let our guards down, more often than not in times of comfort, is when he attacks. That is when Jesus rocks the boat.

If we are in tune with God, we can recognize the warnings and turn to Him who can, and will defend us.

The day's reading reminded me of this quote from St. Teresa of Avila - “The demons have no power except against cowardly souls who surrender their weapons.”

As we work together to make His love known, let us be vigilant and put our armor in spiritual warfare - Faith, Hope, Love, Truthfulness, Readiness to evangelize, and Humility.



DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS

- Day 4, Though small and suffering, we lack nothing: “And you, Bethlehem... are by no means least” (Matthew 2:6)

Reading:

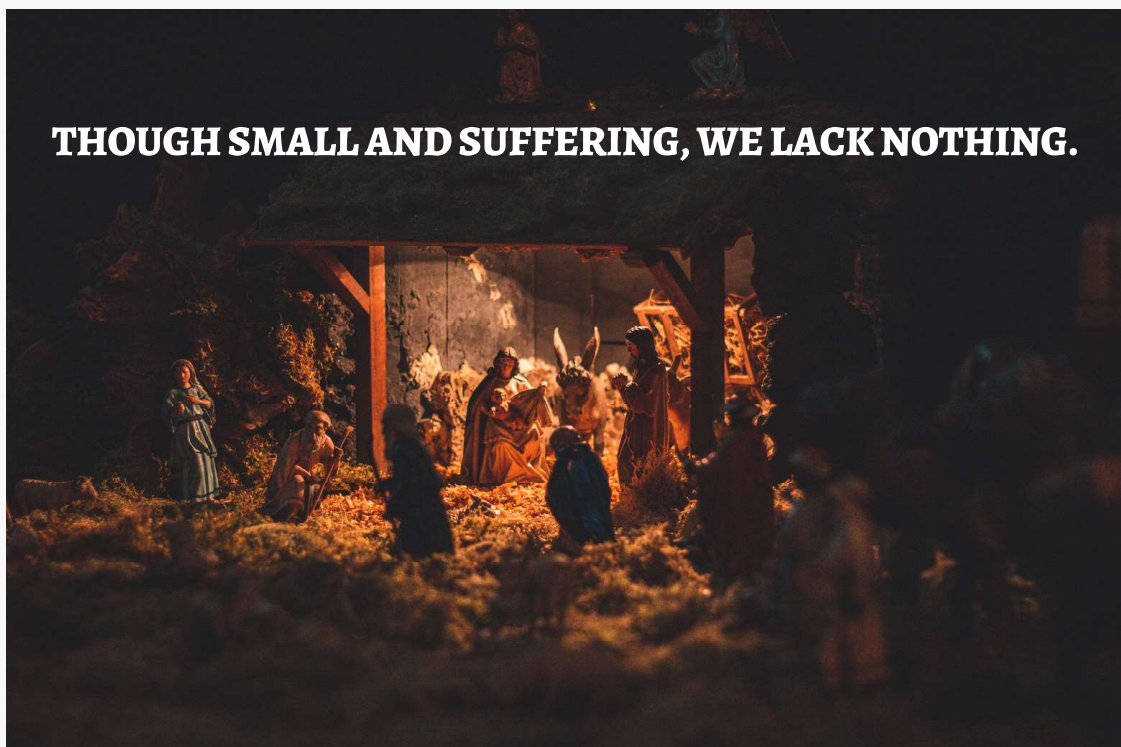
From you shall come forth...one who is to rule in Israel.

MICAH 5:2-5A, 7-8

Reflection from Myrla de Guzman

Indeed, “God’s ways are not our ways” and His thoughts are unfathomable. He chose the little town of Bethlehem for the humble birth of the Messiah who could have come in great grandeur. Throughout the Bible, God has chosen the small, the unsure, the imperfect to play a big part in salvation history.

In a sense, God is telling us that we do not have to be great, smart and perfect for Him to use us because it is in our weaknesses that His power is more evident. A famous quote from Mother Theresa says “Not everyone can be great. But we can do small things with great love”. And a good way to start is in our own family, in our workplace and in our community. Our little acts of love can truly create a ripple effect to attain the unity that God has always desired for His people.



DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS

- Day 5, Guided by the One Lord: “Ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising.” (Matthew 2:9) Guided by the one Lord

Reading:

The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of Cloud.

EXODUS 13:17-14:4

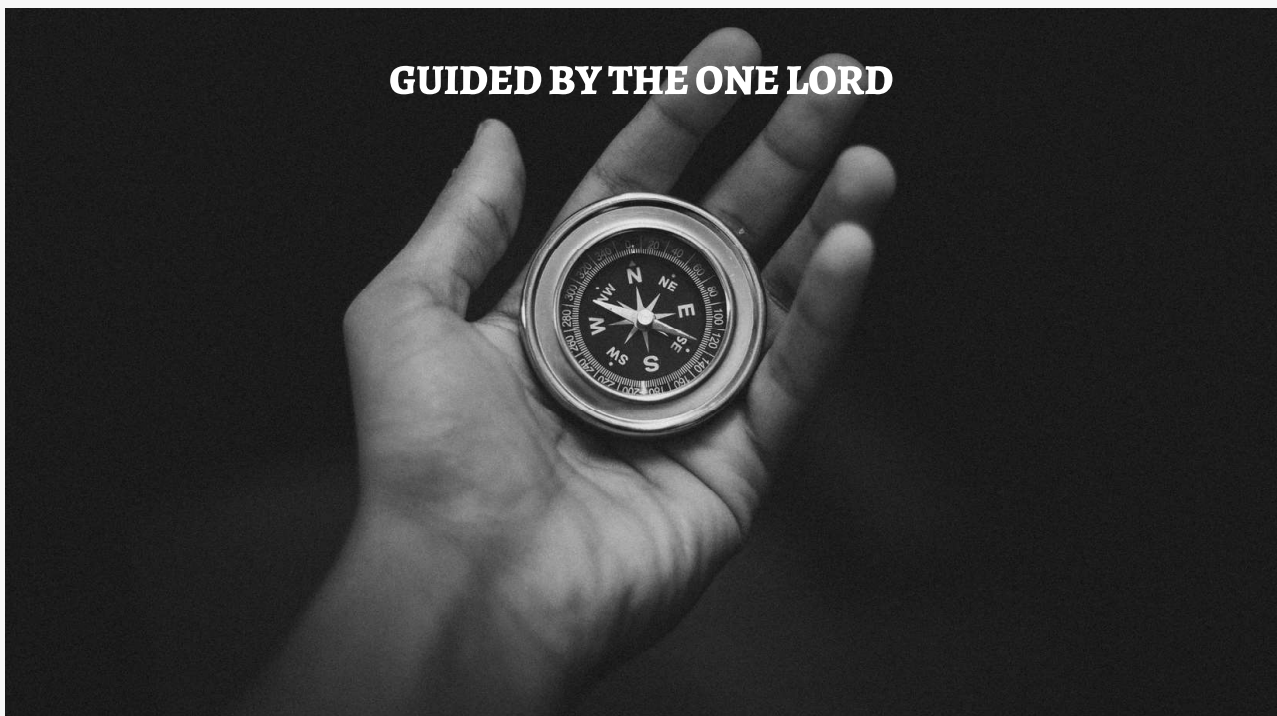
Reflection from Marita Joson

The reading this day reminds me about fixing our eyes on Jesus. Jesus is our true north and just like a compass no matter where we are in our lives, God as our guiding light will lead us to the right direction. We may be prone to various distractions in this world, we are always tempted to conform to the standards of this world but we must constantly look at our compass, our true north to keep us moving in the right direction. Life as we know it today has changed but Jesus is constant and will always be the same yesterday, today and forever. We need to rely on Him to direct us and make our paths plain and straight. When we lock our eyes unto His, we allow Him to be in control. In these uncertain times, may we trust in Him to guide and protect us.

I'll end with a verse from Proverbs 3:5-6

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

6 in all your ways submit to Him, and he will make your paths straight.



GUIDED BY THE ONE LORD

DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS

- Day 6, Gathered in worship around the One Lord: “They saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage.” (Matthew 2:11)

Reflection from Christina Poyaoan:

Do we see? Are we amazed? Are we truly worshipping? How many times do we see without perceiving, our eyes remaining blind to God’s presence?

My initial thought on reading this was the Faith of the magi. They had been traveling for many many months with only a star to guide them, and now they finally reached their destination and it’s a broken down stable! Filled with the noises and smells of the animals. I think my first response would be is that, we made a mistake! But they trusted that the real King is here; they were able to see with their spiritual eyes past the physical distractions that might have otherwise misled them or allowed them to miss the important event taking place- Jesus’ birth! May we like the Magi allow the Christ to guide us.

May we allow God to use us as the star, to be that guiding light to lead others to Christ and His love.

May God give us the grace so that like the Magi we may remain steadfast and committed to following God despite the unknown, and the difficulty of the journey.

May we be open to God and what He is teaching us, where He is leading us.

(While we don’t know for sure, I’m pretty certain the wise men left changed men after their encounter with Jesus) May our relationship with Christ, change us and allow us to grow more like Him.

May God grant us spiritual eyes so that we do not miss the opportunities to encounter Him camouflaged by everyday distractions!

May we remember to pray for our fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord, those in our community, those in our parishes and churches and those in the larger body of Christ, around the world.

As Chloe has been singing this afternoon (from a hymn at Mass today) “we are many parts, we are All ONE Body and the gifts we have we are given to share”

May we remember and pray that one day we all might be united as one family of God.

- Day 7, The gifts of communion: “Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:11)
- Day 8, Beyond the familiar routes of separation to God’s new paths: “They left for their own country by another road.” (Matthew 2:12)



Kairos Youth Worker Training

WRITTEN BY JOHANN YOROBE

This past November, I was blessed to attend a Kairos Youth Workers Training in Wisconsin with other youth workers in the Sword of the Spirit. There were about 20 other youth workers from communities in Michigan, Minnesota, LA, San Francisco, People of Hope and others. This event happens every year to equip and educate youth workers in the Sword of the Spirit to deal with pressing issues that the youth are facing in society. This year's topic was about sexuality and gender identity, a topic that is not talked about enough as it is a very sensitive and personal topic to many. As it is becoming more prevalent and visible in society, it may seem as if people are scared to address it as it is a contentious topic. But the nature of it being a contentious topic is all the more reason to talk about it in order to straighten out any confusion and to really understand what the Church teaches. That was the aim of this conference/training. The experience was quite unique as they intended the event to be more of a workshop than a retreat. One of the ways this manifested itself was that there were less talks and more time for discussion and figuring out questions together. In these questions that they gave us, the aim was less of apologetics and catechetical education (both of which are important), but it was more of how to accept people with same sex attraction and gender identity into our youth groups and into community. There was a lot of practical advice and helpful viewpoints, but in the end, it all comes down to love. Love as Jesus would love the person in front of you. In many instances, the only thing you can do to help someone experiencing these things is making them feel seen, heard, and supported.

Being Ready

EXCERPT FROM DAN FARRALES TALK
LAST JANUARY COMMUNITY GATHERING

**"You are where you are because that is
where you are meant to be."**

The theme for the gathering was from Isaiah 60: 1 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you."

Here are a few reflection points as we hear His message for us:

1. ARE WE READY TO FOLLOW?

The Gospel reading on January 15 from Mark 2:13-17 was about Levi (a.k.a. Matthew) the tax collector who was sitting at the customs post. Jesus came by and called out to him and said, 'Come follow me.'

Jesus passes through and He exclaims, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you."

What will you do?

2. "DO WHAT HE TELLS YOU."

Where were these words spoken and by whom? The Gospel reading on January 16 from John 2:1-11 was the Wedding at Cana. Those words were spoken by our Blessed Mother.

That short exhortation from Mary calls us to two things:

- 1) To discern what Jesus wants of us and,
- 2) To freely embrace that which we discern.

Are you ready to listen to God's will? Are you ready to do His will, no matter what it is? If you are ready for this, you are on the path toward holiness.

What did Mama Mary say? Enough said.



*Know that He wants to
pour an abundance of
grace into your life if you
are willing to let yourself
be first created anew.*

3. BE CREATED NEW.

The Gospel on January 17 from Mark 2:21 talked about how new wine cannot be stored in old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins are ruined. Rather, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins.

Every morning we need to pray for a clean heart and a new spirit. That we may be more pleasing to Him today than yesterday.

4. JESUS IS LORD.

In the Gospel of Mark for January 18, the Pharisees get mad at Jesus for allowing his followers to pick and eat heads of grain as they walk across a field of grain on a Sabbath day.

Jesus is Lord not only of the Sabbath. Jesus is Lord of All.

Being Ready

EXCERPT FROM DAN FARRALES TALK LAST JANUARY COMMUNITY GATHERING

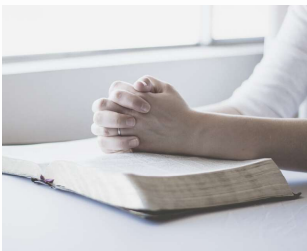
5. REMEMBER GOD'S FAITHFULNESS.

The first reading on January 19 is a familiar and popular story in the Old Testament of a young boy fighting a giant. In the first Book of Samuel Chapter 17 verse 37, David explains to King Saul: "The same LORD who delivered me from the claws of the lion and the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

God was faithful in the past. God is faithful now. He will be faithful in the future.

6. [Finally] LISTEN.

Why did I mention dates when I went through the first 5 points? God talks to us daily. Pay attention. Listen. If Levi (a.k.a. Matthew) was not paying attention and was busy counting money, he would not have heard the call.



God does not impose His will on us; rather, He respectfully and quietly invites us to listen. He waits until we give Him our full attention and then reveals His will one step at a time.

The Lord has so much lined up for us to do this year and the years to come as individuals, as families, as members of the Family of Faith, as part of the Sword of the Spirit, as part of the Christian family.

Light is a very appropriate symbol as we reflect on God's message for us today. In Baptism, our candles were lit from the Easter Candle representing Christ's Eternal light. Before we end our day, our hope is for the light to be passed on before it gets extinguished.

The Lord is asking us to RISE and SHINE.

How are we going to respond?

WORD GIFTS

Prophetic Words from our Community Gatherings



1
Phil 4:4 - "Rejoice in the Lord, I say it again; rejoice in the Lord"

Reminded of what Pope Francis said, 'Do not be men and women of sadness'

Our joy is born in having encountered Jesus, having Jesus in our life.

I sense that the Lord wants to remind us to..

Rejoice in God's mercy
Rejoice in the baptismal graces our Father generously provided

Rejoice in the opportunities to suffer in joy, basking in God's sanctifying grace.

Let your joy be the powerful and attractive virtue that will lead to me.

Rejoice in me and with me always.

2
Philippians 4:8
Brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Brothers and sisters, as we set our goals for this new year, I sense that the Lord is reminding us to stand firm in Him by following His teachings and applying them in our lives. May we draw ourselves closer to Him continuously seeking to be pure and holy. The word from the Lord.

3
John 3:30 "He must increase; I must decrease."

Where must Jesus increase in your life? Where must you decrease?

4
My children:
Don't be afraid. Have no fear. I am in control of what's happening around you. What can I not do - if I just will it? I can do anything!

Trust in my perfect will for you and your loved ones. Look beyond what seems to be a bleak situation. Look for My loving plan and receive it with faith. I love you and I only want the best for you. I am with you. Says the Lord.

5
1 John 4:20, "Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen."

My people walk in my spirit and truth. Even now grow in grace and wisdom and love others with the same love that My son Jesus loves you. Be willing to give of yourself for love of others in the same way that Jesus loved you and gave Himself up as a sacrifice for you. Manifest your love for Jesus by loving your neighbors unconditionally as I love you.

6
1 John 4:16-18
"...God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. In this is love brought to perfection among us, that we have confidence on the day of judgment because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear..."

Brothers and Sisters, let's starve fear with love. God loves us so much and He will not will anything bad for us but He loves great things for us.



Trust in my perfect will for you and your loved ones. Look beyond what seems to be a bleak situation. Look for My loving plan and receive it with faith.