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SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS

for DAILY LIVING

VOLUME II

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BISHOP OF ARLINGTON

Dear friends in Christ,

Each day, we are presented with challenges and opportunities. Through these brief reflections, I invite you to entrust your daily crosses and hopes to our Risen Lord and allow him to speak to your heart the message he wants you to hear.

Through the intercession of Mary our Mother and Saint Joseph, may God bless you and watch over you today, and always!

Sincerely in Christ,

Michael F. Burbidge

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge





Ludolf Bakhuizen, *Christ in the Storm on the Sea of Galilee* (1695)

While in a boat with his disciples in the midst of a storm, Jesus rebuked the wind and sea and said: “Be still!” The wind ceased and there was great calm.

In the midst of the storms we are experiencing, Jesus says: Do not be terrified; I am in the boat with you. So, be *calm* this day!



Saint Paul says:

“Have no anxiety at all.”

This is only possible if we do not spend energy on the things we cannot control; if we *entrust our cares to the Lord*; and if we rely not upon our own resources but on the grace and strength God supplies.

Then, his peace will be ours.





Peter denied Christ. Paul persecuted Christians. Yet, the Lord chose them to be his apostles and, with his grace, they became preachers of the Gospel.

Despite our past sins, *the Lord never gives up on us* and invites us daily to return to him and to do great things for his Church.





The names of the Archangels are associated with their functions: protector, communicator and healer.

Ask Michael to *protect* you from temptation; Gabriel to help you to *communicate* the Gospel by your example and Raphael to *heal* you of any anxiety during these challenging times.





Saint Thomas Aquinas:

“Grant me, O Lord my God,
a *mind* to know you, a *heart*
to seek you, *wisdom* to find you,
conduct pleasing to you, faithful
perseverance in waiting for
you and a *hope* of finally
embracing you.”





As we carry our crosses and persevere in the midst of challenges, may we repeat confidently the words of Saint Patrick:

“I arise today through God’s strength to pilot me; God’s might to uphold me; God’s wisdom to guide me; God’s hand to guard me; and God’s shield to protect me.”





We live in the world but do not belong to the world.

We belong to Christ.

Thus, we must reject worldly values and priorities and follow God's ways and commands.

There may be a price to pay for doing so, but the reward Christ promises is life eternal!



Reflect upon *Mary's humility, fidelity, purity, confidence and love.*

Which of these virtues require necessary growth in your life?

Through Mary's intercession and the divine assistance of her Son, you can make that improvement.

Begin today!



Sandro Botticelli, *The Virgin and Child* (1480-81)



Like Job, we may grumble and complain in the midst of our difficulties. But today, may we have the confidence of Saint Paul and say:

“I am content with my weaknesses and frustrations because in *Christ, who is the source of my strength*, I have strength for everything.”





Jesus said to the Apostles:

“As you enter a house, wish it peace.”

Do your part to make for a peaceful home: pray fervently; love intensely; be patient; stop quarreling; offer forgiveness; and spend quality time together.

Then, your home will be filled with the Lord's *peace*.





Jesus says:

“By your perseverance you will secure your lives.”

In these challenging times, pray specifically for the gift of perseverance rooted in the firm belief that God is in our midst and will strengthen, protect and sustain us with his grace.

Persevere - one day at a time!





The Holy Spirit dwells within us and
makes all things new.

We seek the transformative
power of the Holy Spirit and pray for
ourselves, our world and
our Church:

“Holy Spirit, dispel the darkness of
our times; turn hatred to love;
sorrow to joy and division to unity.”





For those who trust the Lord, there is no such thing as an unanswered prayer.

The answer may not be what we desire nor expect. Yet, it is always a response from a loving God who knows exactly what we need.

So, *never stop “asking, seeking and knocking.”*



Like Mary who visited Elizabeth in her time of need, may we spend time today with someone looking for consolation, encouragement and compassion.

With Mary's help, *may we carry Jesus with us*, the One who dwells within us and acts through us.





Sadly, in these days, you may have to pay a price for bringing your faith into your workplace and community.

Ask Saint Thomas More for his help so you may imitate his *courage*; never compromise who you are and what you believe and remain God's servant first!





Jesus assures us that with faith,
nothing will be impossible
for us.

Thus, a short and powerful prayer
we should say throughout each
day is:

“Lord, increase my faith.”

It is his gift to us and one we must
seek and nourish constantly.





Jesus expanded the commandment “not to kill” to include anger held deep within our hearts against those who have offended us.

Such anger along with harsh and bitter words toward others “kill” their spirits and destroy our peace.

Pray specifically for the grace *to love and to forgive.*





As we pray for unity and peace within our nation, we are also mindful of our ultimate destination, as conveyed by Saint Paul:

“Our citizenship is in heaven.”

Thus, he tells us not to be occupied with earthly things but “to stand firm in the Lord.”





We cannot merely grumble about evil. We must acknowledge and denounce it and, as believers, reflect our conviction that *evil will never conquer us*. God's power is stronger!

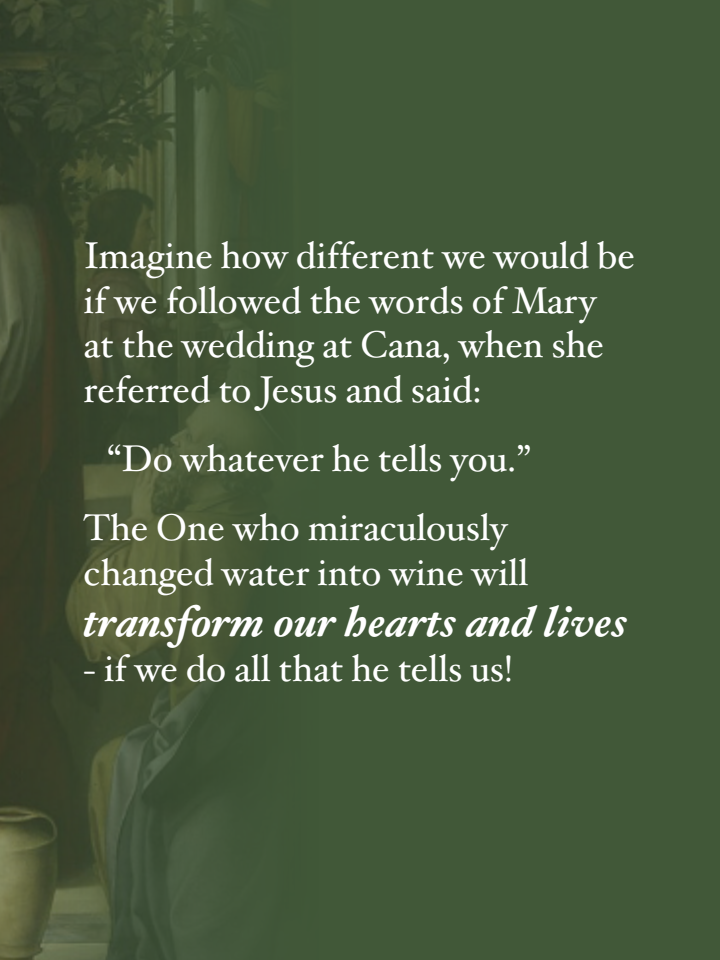
Walk through this day with the confidence of Jeremiah:

“The Lord is with me, like a mighty champion!”





Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, *The Wedding Feast at Cana* (1819)

A dimly lit scene from a wedding at Cana, showing a woman in a white dress and a man in a suit standing near a table with a large jar.

Imagine how different we would be if we followed the words of Mary at the wedding at Cana, when she referred to Jesus and said:

“Do whatever he tells you.”

The One who miraculously changed water into wine will *transform our hearts and lives* - if we do all that he tells us!



In the midst of the problems of our world, the Evil One wants us to think we are powerless.

Yet, Jesus assures us that the tiny seeds we plant daily - *our sacrifices, goodness and holy deeds - will never be in vain.*

If planted in faith, God will use them in miraculous ways.





Saint Alphonsus Liguori said:

“The past is no longer yours; the future is not yet in your power. You have only the present wherein to do good.”

See today as God's special gift and a remarkable opportunity to spread goodness in whatever place and situation the Lord sends you.





When the Lord calls us to himself, he will mercifully judge us not according to what we accumulated in this world but to what we shared and gave away to help others, especially those in need.

Spend this day trying to *grow* “*rich*” in *what matters to God*.





Jesus says:

“I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me.”

Reflect on that beautiful reality:

Jesus knows you by name!

Strive to know him more deeply by listening to his voice in prayer, the Good Shepherd who promises to lead, guide and protect you.





“Do not be disturbed by the clamor of the world, which passes like a shadow. Do not let false delights of a deceptive world deceive you.”

Saint Clare’s advice reminds us that we will only know *peace* and *true freedom* if we remember that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life!



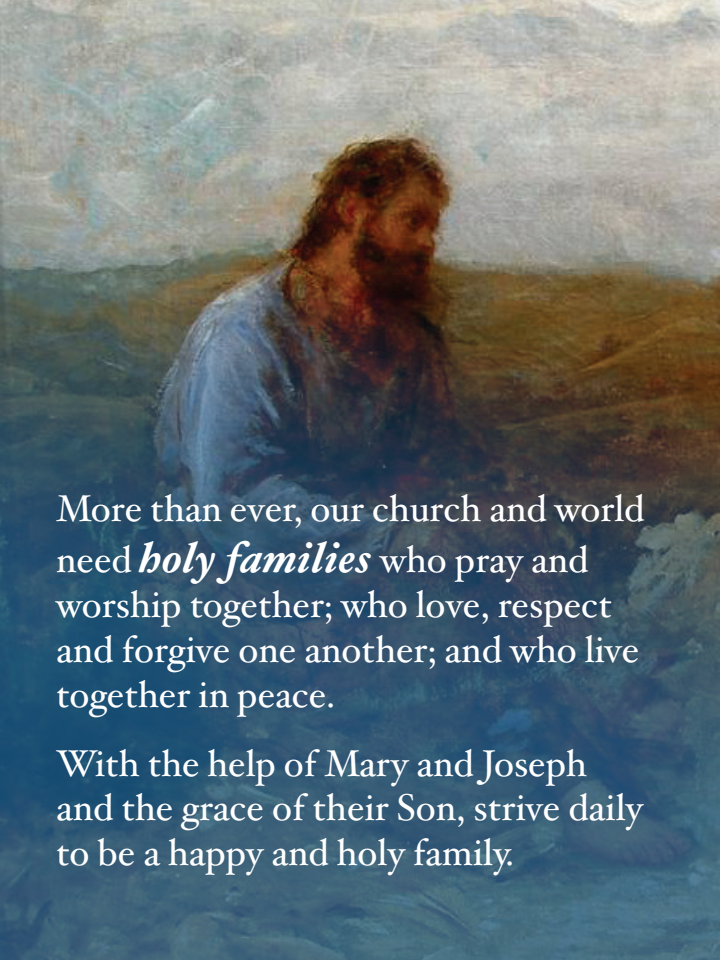


Jesus demonstrates his power to expel unclean spirits.

So in faith, we ask him to drive out from within us: impurity, bitterness, hatred, pride, jealousy and anything not of God.

Believe in his power to give you a clean and pure heart.





More than ever, our church and world need *holy families* who pray and worship together; who love, respect and forgive one another; and who live together in peace.

With the help of Mary and Joseph and the grace of their Son, strive daily to be a happy and holy family.



Noè Bordignon, *Holy Family of the Grappa* (1903)



If God is asking something difficult of you that you did not expect nor desire, turn to Saint Joseph for help.

Although confused and fearful upon hearing God's plan, *Saint Joseph responded with trust, faith and obedience.*

May we imitate his example and say "yes" to God's holy will.





Prophets are messengers
of God.

He continues to send them
and they are often right in
our midst.

*Be alert to the person God
will send to you today*

with a message he wants you
to hear.





As we try to live good and holy lives,
we sometimes sin, stumble and fall.
Jesus does not want us to stay down.

Thus, he lifts us in his mercy and
says the words he spoke to the
paralytic he healed:

“Rise, and walk.”

Yes, *walk in God's love and
mercy* this day.





Jesus touched the ears of a deaf man and spoke the words “be open” and the man was healed.

Ask the Lord to open your ears today so you may hear the message he is speaking to your heart.

Also, pray for the grace to *listen* attentively and respectfully to those you meet this day.





A *grateful heart* makes us peaceful; helps us to recognize we have what we need and keeps us from restlessly searching for more and more in this world.

Then, we can fix our eyes above and on the things that truly matter.





Ask for the grace to imitate
Mary's humility. *Put aside the
need to be in control.*

Trust in God's holy will and offer
a wholehearted "yes" to his
divine plan for you. Remember
the words of Jesus:

"The one who humbles himself
will be exalted."





Photograph by Gerald Martineau



THE MAGNIFICAT

*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.*

*He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.*

*He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.*

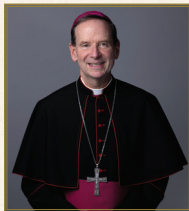
*He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.*



For more daily reflections, follow Bishop Burbidge
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HIS EXCELLENCY MOST REVEREND
MICHAEL F. BURBIDGE

Bishop of Arlington;
ordained May 19, 1984;
appointed Auxiliary
Bishop of Philadelphia
and Titular Bishop
of Cluain Iraird June
21, 2002; consecrated



September 5, 2002; appointed Fifth
Bishop of Raleigh June 8, 2006; installed
August 4, 2006; appointed Fourth Bishop
of Arlington, October 4, 2016; installed
December 6, 2016.



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
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