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SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS *for* DAILY LIVING

MOST REVEREND MICHAEL F. BURBIDGE

BISHOP OF ARLINGTON

Dear friends,

I hope these reflections offer you some comfort in times of distress, serenity in times of anxiety, and gratitude for the abundant blessings God continues to bestow upon us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Michael F. Burbidge

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge



Embrace whatever cross
you are carrying and any
suffering you are enduring
knowing they are never in vain;
that *you never carry them alone*
and they are “nothing compared to
the glory to be revealed to us.”

Also, consider offering your cross for
another person in need.



William-Adolphe Bougeureau, *Compassion* (1897)



Jesus healed a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years. At times, it may seem that our prayers are not being answered.

Do not get discouraged.
Persevere in faith and prayer.

It is all in God's time and according to his plan. He will always respond with what is best for us.





Saint Padre Pio:

“Prayer is the best weapon we have
and is the oxygen of the soul.

*So, pray, hope and
don't worry.*

Worry is useless. God is merciful
and will hear your prayer.”





The crowd prevented Zacchaeus from seeing Jesus so Zacchaeus climbed a tree.

At times, we must separate ourselves from worldly views and popular opinions and “rise above the crowd” in order to do what is *good, holy, just and pure*. When we do, we will see Jesus!





Jesus says:

“Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.”

The Lord knows the pressures and demands in our lives and reminds us we can only respond to them if we allow ourselves to *be still and refreshed in his presence.*

Find time today to rest with him!





While in a boat with Our Lord,
the disciples were terrified during a
violent storm. They turned to Jesus
and he calmed the winds and sea.

We are experiencing “stormy waters”
these days but remember that Jesus
is in the boat with us!

So, like the disciples we say:
“Lord, save us!”





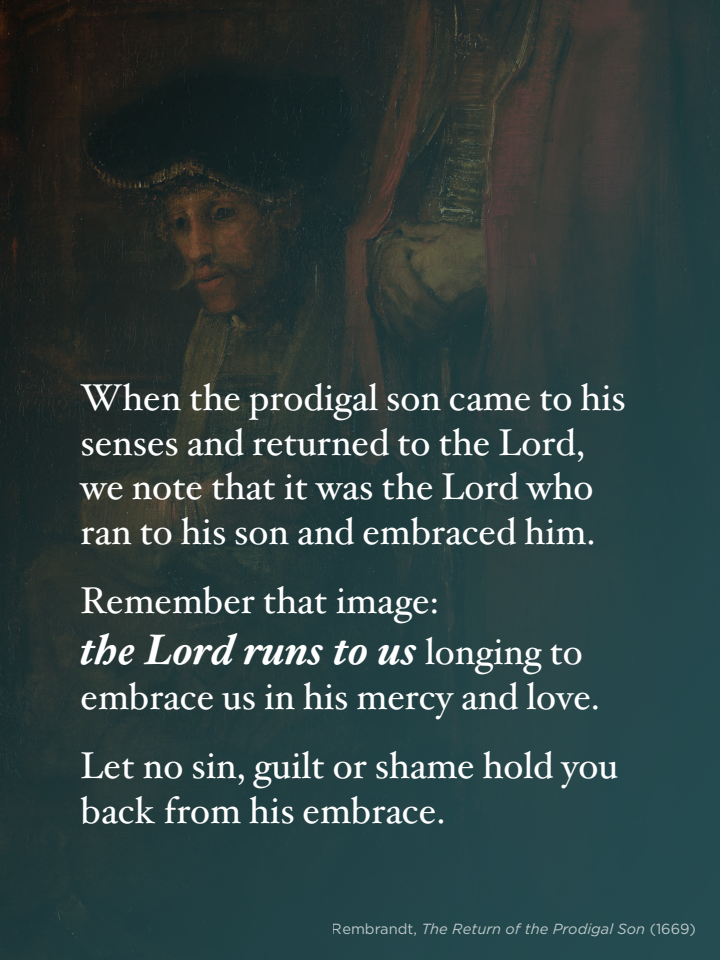
Jesus tells us never to tire of forgiving one another.

If you find it difficult to do so, just remember how many times he has forgiven you.

In thanksgiving for the Lord's love and mercy, may we *forgive* those who have hurt us and so know the peace of Christ.







When the prodigal son came to his senses and returned to the Lord, we note that it was the Lord who ran to his son and embraced him.

Remember that image:
the Lord runs to us longing to embrace us in his mercy and love.

Let no sin, guilt or shame hold you back from his embrace.



Saint John XXIII said:

“Human beings are like wine.
Some turn to vinegar and
others get better with age.”

In the spiritual life, “getting
better with age” is what we call
conversion and requires us
to say: “Lord, be merciful to me
a sinner.”





Are we, like Martha,
“anxious and worried
about many things”?

If so, maybe the Lord is
asking us to slow down and,
like Mary, to be still and
reflective as we sit at the
feet of Jesus.





Saint Monica prayed fervently for the conversion of her son, Augustine, and God answered her prayers.

Dear parents: *never underestimate* how God, in his time, will respond to your prayers and the seeds of faith you plant.

Never tire of entrusting your children to the Lord.





As we continue to pray for peace in our nation, Saint Teresa of Calcutta reminds us:

“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that *we belong to each other.*”

She tells us how to work for peace:

“Do not wait for world leaders. Do it alone, person to person.”





We are told the disciples
“left everything” and followed Jesus.

What possession, behavior or
relationship is keeping you from
following the Lord as you should?

Do not be afraid to let go of it.

There will be no void.
Jesus will replace it with his
abundant gifts and blessings.



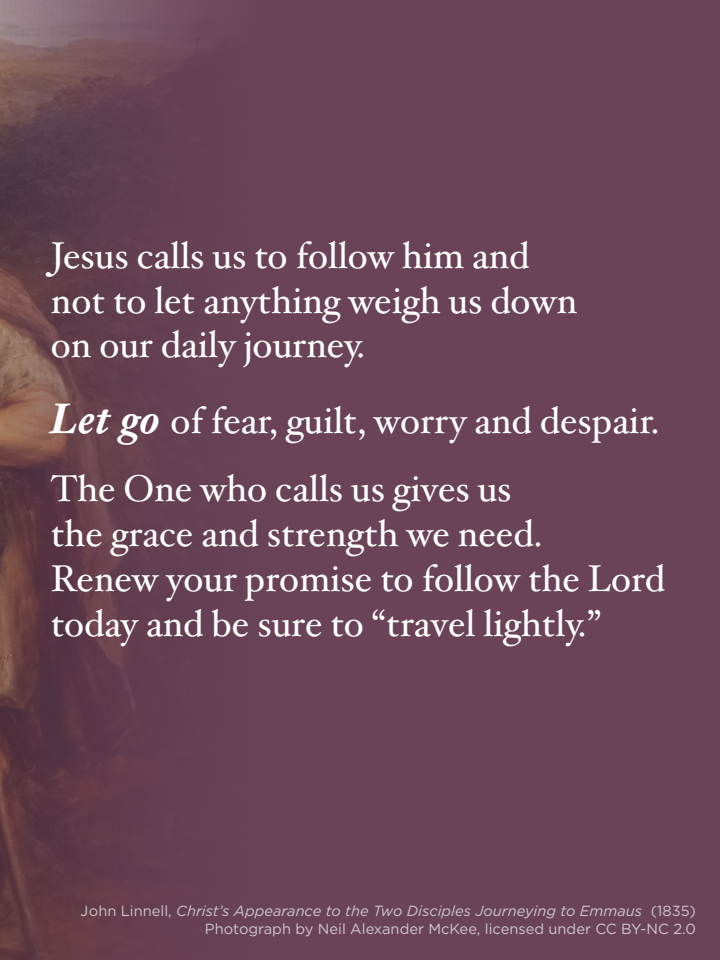


Jealousy often leads to destructive behavior as portrayed in the story of Cain and Abel.

Pray for the grace to be freed from envy and, instead, to *rejoice in the gifts and talents that others possess* ever mindful of the blessings God has bestowed upon you.







Jesus calls us to follow him and
not to let anything weigh us down
on our daily journey.

Let go of fear, guilt, worry and despair.

The One who calls us gives us
the grace and strength we need.
Renew your promise to follow the Lord
today and be sure to “travel lightly.”



In the midst of the evil we see
around us, Saint Catherine of Siena
tells us not to stand still.
Instead, she says:

“Start being *brave* about everything.
Drive out darkness and spread light.
Don't look upon your weaknesses.
Realize that in Christ crucified
you can do everything.”





We need to listen to others and respect them even when they disagree with us.

However, we are never to compromise who we are and what we believe.

Jesus loves us too much to let us stay in the middle. He reminds us that *we are either for him or against him.*

No compromises today!





In a weak moment, the disciples became impatient with a woman seeking healing for her daughter and they asked the Lord “to send her away.”

May we *never be too busy* for those seeking our help nor get annoyed with them but respond, like Jesus, with patience and compassion.





Saint Thomas Aquinas says that if we wish to live perfectly we should *meditate upon Jesus* on the cross, for there love, patience, humility and obedience are exemplified...

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you, because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.





Peter denied Christ. Paul persecuted Christians. Yet, the Lord chose both as his apostles and instruments in building the Church and spreading the Gospel.

No matter our past sins and denials, the Lord *never gives up* on us.

He continually calls us to be his faithful witness.





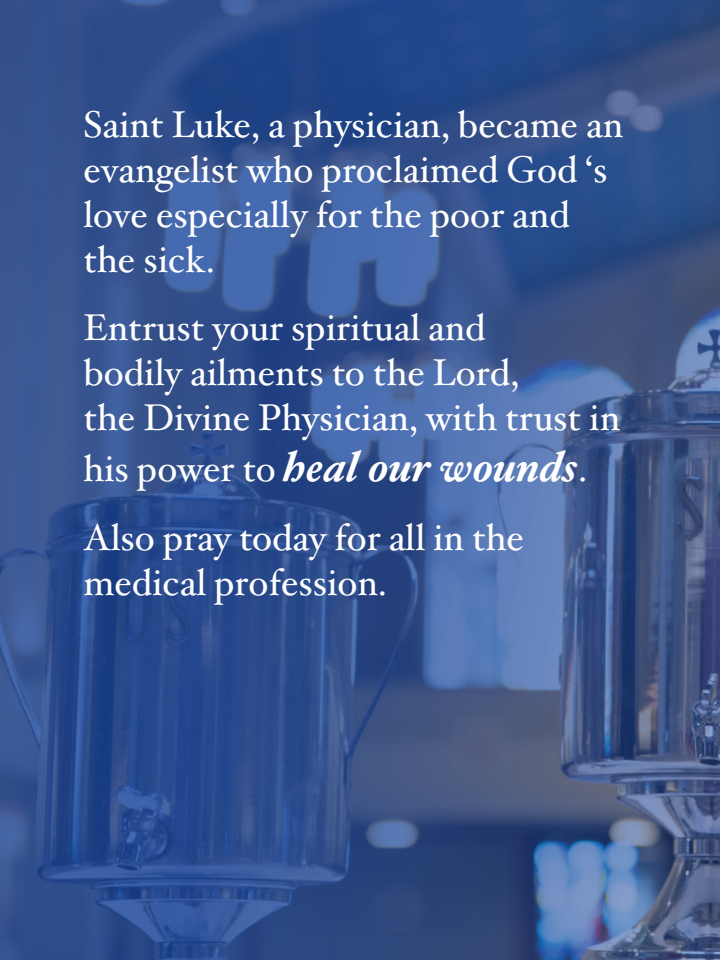
Saint Alphonsus Liguori:

“The past is no longer yours;
the future is not yet in your power.

You have only the present
wherein to do good.”

May we embrace this day as God’s
gift to us and spend it in loving
and generous service of him
and one another.





Saint Luke, a physician, became an evangelist who proclaimed God's love especially for the poor and the sick.

Entrust your spiritual and bodily ailments to the Lord, the Divine Physician, with trust in his power to *heal our wounds*.

Also pray today for all in the medical profession.





Jesus often condemned *hypocrisy*.
Think about how much time we
spend on our outward appearance.
If only such energy was devoted to
our interior lives!

Heed the words of the Lord:

“Cleanse first the inside of the
cup, so that the outside also may
be clean.”





Pope Saint John Paul II declared
Saint Isidore of Seville the patron
of the internet.

Pray for his intercession so that
your use of the internet and all
social media is morally appropriate
and *never takes priority*
over the time you spend with the
Lord, your family and friends.



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Saint Bernadine of Siena promoted devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus.

May we never say the name of Jesus in moments of frustration or anger.

Instead, may we only invoke the holy name of Jesus in *prayer, praise and thanksgiving* with all due respect and reverence.

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There is no such thing as an
unanswered prayer.

Our Heavenly Father will always
respond by giving us exactly what
we need and not necessarily what
we want.

Today and always, conclude your
prayers by saying with deep trust:
“Thy will be done.”





Include the Lord in your entire day,
not just in your morning and
night prayer.

Pause periodically throughout the
day and let him know that you are
aware of *his abiding presence*.

Saint Teresa of Avila says:

“Blessed is the one who truly
loves the Lord and always keeps
him near.”





We do not deserve God's mercy
nor do we have to earn it.

It is a pure gift! Our loving
and generous God longs to
forgive and to heal us
so that we may walk in
newness of life.

In faith and with humility
simply say: "Lord, be merciful
to me a sinner."





More than ever, we need Mary's help.

Upon hearing she would be the Mother of God, she moved from fear to courage and from doubt to trust.

Like Mary, *we must believe* the Lord will give us the grace we need, especially when our lives have been changed in a way we never anticipated.



Fra Filippo Lippi, *The Annunciation* (1435)
Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington



John the Baptist's persecutors did not ask him to deny Christ.

They asked him to be silent and to stop speaking the truth.

His refusal cost him his life.

May we imitate his *courage* and never be silent when we witness evil and any form of injustice, no matter the cost.





Often the Lord speaks to us in a “tiny whispering sound.” Allow time to be *still and quiet* today.

Pause and look at the beauty of creation all around you.

Truly listen to others you respect. In all these ways, you will hear the Lord’s voice in a “tiny whispering sound.”





Jesus reminds us that “wheat and weeds” (good and evil) coexist in our world and lives.

Do not get discouraged
when you see the weeds.

Because of God’s healing love, the power of the weeds to choke is not superior to the power of the wheat to grow and thrive!





Ten lepers were healed by Jesus,
but only one returned to
give him thanks.

How easy it is to take for granted
all the Lord has done for us.

Today, *write down the blessings*
for which you are most grateful
and be sure to give thanks to the
Lord your God.





Photograph by Gerald Martineau



*HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE,
THE LORD IS WITH THEE.
BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN,
AND BLESSED IS THE FRUIT
OF THY WOMB, JESUS.*

*HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF GOD,
PRAY FOR US SINNERS NOW
AND AT THE HOUR OF OUR DEATH.
AMEN.*



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

Bishop of Arlington;
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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.



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