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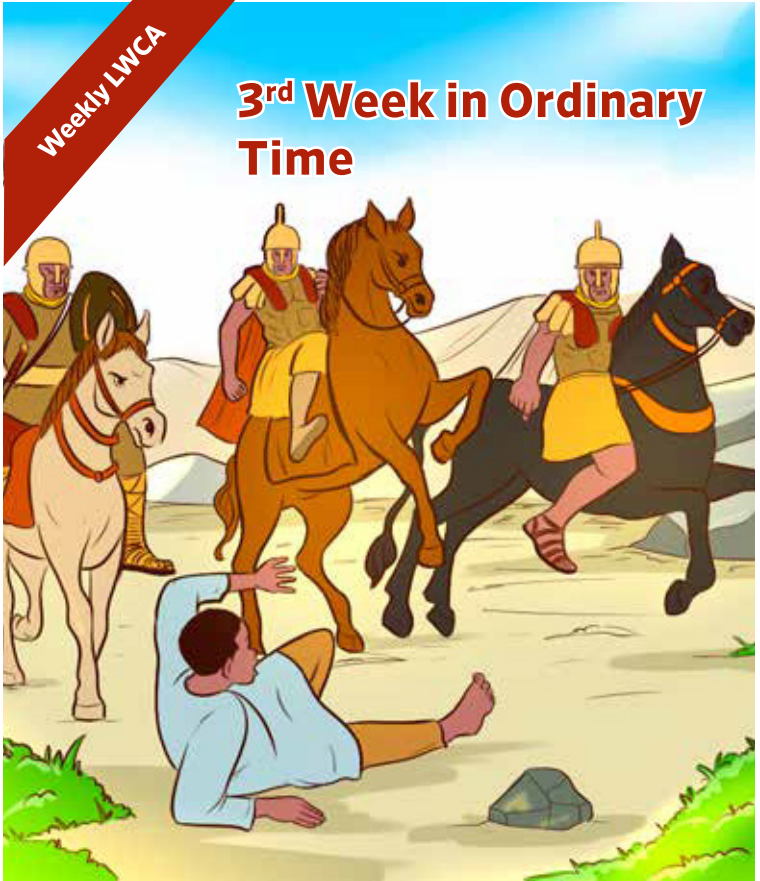
Living with Christ

GROWING UP DAILY WITH THE GOOD NEWS

Weekly LWCA

3rd Week in Ordinary Time

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On our cover: The Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle

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Editorial

January 2023



Rev. Fr. François Nzanzu, a.a. Nairobi-Kenya

God's Presence in our Ordinary Time

Each part of the liturgical year has either a special season or is in 'ordinary time'. Special seasons are: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter. Whenever the Church isn't celebrating one of these special seasons, we speak of 'Ordinary Time'. But, this does not mean that Ordinary Time has nothing special, because Jesus performed miracles all throughout the year. Thus, he is always with us in our daily and ordinary life.

Ordinary time does not need to be "ordinary". It does not mean that we get a break from the Liturgical Year. The opposite is true: Ordinary Time celebrates "the mystery of Christ in all its aspects". The Church continues to celebrate Saints days and other events such as the week of Christian Unity that we celebrate from January 18th to 25th. We also remember and celebrate the parts of Jesus' life that were ordinary, much like our own lives. The color of green is appropriate because it is the most ordinary color in our natural environment and it tells us that there is always hope because God is present in our ordinary life.



The Pope's Prayer Intention

For educators: We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all.

Other papal intentions and videos can be found on: <http://apostleshipofprayer.org/>

The Sacrament Of Holy Orders

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time (CCC 1536). It includes the episcopate (bishop), the presbyterate (*priest*) and the diaconate (deacon). By virtue of their ordination, bishops, priests and deacons are called to the service of all. They are called to be ministers like Jesus Christ who humbled himself to save the humankind.

A deacon is at the service of the bishop. There is a strong relationship between the episcopate and the diaconate. It is only the bishop who lays his hands on the candidates to the diaconal ordination. The proclamation of the Word of God in the liturgy is one of his duties. The diaconate may be permanent or not. While there are deacons who aspire to become priests, some decide to remain deacons their entire life. A great number of permanent deacons are married men. Since

Vatican II, some married men can become deacons but not priests.

A priest works hand in hand with the bishop to whom he promises obedience. He presides over the Eucharistic celebration in which Jesus Christ gives himself to the faithful as Bread of Life and Spiritual Drink. He also anoints the sick. We have the ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood. By virtue of Baptism, all Christians participate in the common priesthood of Jesus Christ who is the High Priest. The ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. The sacrament of Holy Orders is administered to a baptized male who has fulfilled the requirements described in the Code of Canon Law.

Bishops are the ministers of the sacrament of Holy Orders since they are the successors of the Apostles who were successors of Jesus Christ. It is important to note that only one bishop ordains priests and deacons. But three bishops are involved in the ordination of a priest called to the episcopate. The presiding bishop is called consecrator. The other two are called co-consecrators. In some countries where the number of bishops is limited,

Focus on the Sacraments

the Church authorities always find an alternative so that the ordination of a bishop may take place validly. During the ordination of a priest as well as the ordination of a bishop, the Holy Chrism oil is used. The hands of the priest are anointed while it is the head of the bishop that is anointed. The deacon is not anointed. It is worth saying that the same Holy Chrism oil is used during Baptism, Confirmation, the dedication of Churches and the consecration of altars.

Rev. Fr. Jérôme K. M. Kombi,
Kinshasa, D.R. Congo



Sunday January 22

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

*Isaiah 9: 1-4 Psalms (26) 27: 1. 4. 13-14 / 1 Corinthians 1: 10-13. 17/
Matthew 4: 12-23 (or Matthew 4:12-17)*



“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”



There is Power in the Word of God

As we celebrate the Word of God today, we shall be examining the centrality and power of His Word in our lives as Christians. Why is God's word important? Must I read the Bible? Is the Bible still relevant today? Ignorance of God's Word is Darkness. Are you confused about a certain decision you have to make? Read God's word. Are you troubled about life's predicaments? Read God's word. Do you wish to know what would happen in the future? Just read the word of God. Indeed, an encounter with God's word is an encounter with Jesus our light. No wonder today's responsorial psalm sings: "The Lord is my light and my salvation."

God's Word is More Important than the Preacher. In today's second reading, St. Paul is obviously disappointed with the Christians in Corinth because of divisions and quarrelling among them. While some were claiming to be followers of Paul, others were taking sides with Cephas (Peter) and some others, Apollos. This quarrelling among the believers was a sign of a great failure on their part to make God's word a priority in their lives.

God's Word demands immediate response. It is never enough that we read the Bible, we must also act on it. In



Sunday January 22

our Gospel passage, we see how Peter and Andrew as well as the sons of Zebedee, James and John, immediately left their nets and everything they were doing upon hearing the words: “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” The disciples followed Jesus leaving behind their means of livelihood, they trusted in Divine Providence.

God’s Word brings us healing; spiritually and physically. What happens when we create time for God’s words, when we listen attentively and make bold steps to apply God’s words in our lives? Miracles follow. All through the Gospels, we notice this pattern: when a crowd gathers around Jesus, He begins with preaching and after he had spent a great deal of time preaching to them, He begins to work miracles, healing them of their sicknesses, freeing them from their burdens and casting out demons from those oppressed by the devil.

When last did you devote some hours of your day to reading and meditating on God’s word? Could it be that you really do not have the time for God’s word? The truth is that you always have time for anything you consider to be important to you. The word of God is more important than riches, fame, comfort, or anything you can think of. The word of God is life.

Rev. Fr. Abu Evaristus, Benin City, Nigeria



Entrance Antiphon (*Ps (95) 96:1.6*)

O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, direct our actions according to your good pleasure, that in the name of your beloved Son we may abound in good works. Through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading (*Isaiah 9:1-4*)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder,



Sunday January 22

the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm ⁽²⁶⁾ 27: 1. 4. 13-14 (1a) —

The Lord is my light and my sal - va - tion.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
whom should I dread? **R.**

There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
only this do I seek:
to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord,
to inquire at his temple. **R.**



I believe I shall see the Lord's goodness
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord; be strong;
Be stouthearted, and wait for the Lord! R.

Second Reading (1 Corinthians 1:10-13.17)—————

**A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the
Corinthians**

I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgement. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarrelling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul? For Christ did not send me to baptise but to preach the Gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.
The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Sunday January 22

Acclamation (*Matthew 4:23*)

Alleluia. Alleluia. Jesus was preaching the Gospel of the kingdom and healing every infirmity among the people.
Alleluia.

Gospel (*Matthew 4:12-25*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee;

and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles - the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand?” As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James



the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Or: (Matthew 4:12-17)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



Sunday January 22

Prayer of the Faithful

The following intentions are suggestions only.

R. Lord, hear us!

For the Church in her mission to further the reign of God in the world, we pray to the Lord: R.

For charity, mercy and justice in our communities and societies, we pray to the Lord: R.

For strength and comfort for all who are suffering physically, spiritually or emotionally, we pray to the Lord: R.

For our parish community, challenged to see the face of Christ in everyone, we pray to the Lord: R.

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray, and in sanctifying them grant that they may profit us for salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Communion Antiphon (*Ps (32) 33:6*)

Look towards the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.

Or: (Jn 8:12)

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; those who follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Prayer after Communion

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, receiving the grace by which you bring us to new life, we may always glory in your gift. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Monday January 23

3rd Week in Ordinary Time

Memorial

Legal Protection of Unborn Children Day

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (95) 96:1.6) **O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.**

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, direct our actions according to your good pleasure, that in the name of your beloved Son we may abound in good works. Through Christ, our Lord...**Amen.**

Reading

(Hebrews 9:15.24-28)

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brethren: Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant. For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the

true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly with blood not his own. For then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once in all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgement, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm—
(Psalm (97) 98: 1. 2-3ab. 3cd-4. 5-6)

R. O sing a new song to the Lord, for he has worked wonders.

O sing a new song to the Lord, for he has worked wonders. His right hand and his holy arm have brought salvation. R.

The Lord has made known his salvation, has shown his deliverance to the nations. He has remembered his merciful love and his truth for the house of Israel. R.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song, and sing out your praise. R.

Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of song. With trumpets and the sound of the horn, raise a shout before the King, the Lord. R.

Acclamation *(2 Timothy 1:10)*

Alleluia. Alleluia. Our saviour Christ Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. **Alleluia.**

Gospel ————— *(Mark 3:22-30)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

At that time: The scribes who came down from Jerusalem said of Jesus, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,

and by the prince of demons he cast out the demons.” And called them to him and said to them in parable, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his good, unless he first binds the strong man; then indeed he may plunder his house. “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemies against the

Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of eternal sin” – for they had said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray, and in sanctifying them grant that they may profit us for salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ps (32) 33:6) **Look towards the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.**

Or: (Jn 8:12)

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; those who follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Prayer after Communion

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, receiving the grace by which you bring us

to new life, we may always glory in your gift. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**No Divided Kingdom
Can Stand.****Commentary**

**Hebrews 9:15.24-28,
Psalm 98 / Mark 3:22-30**

Jesus having been accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul explains that such was not possible because a kingdom divided against itself can never stand. One way to recognise a house or even a Church or any community that is on the verge of collapse is to study its lines of division. Wherever people are divided among themselves, they cannot make progress. Like a broom, its ability to sweep dirt depends on its ability to hold many single strands together. Put apart, none of the broomsticks can achieve what the entire broom can achieve.

Rev. Fr. Abu Evaristus, Benin City, Nigeria



Tuesday January 24

3rd Week in Ordinary Time

Memorial

Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps (94) 95:1.6) **O, sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.**

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, direct our actions according to your good pleasure, that in the name of your beloved Son, we may abound in good works. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

(Hebrews 10:1-10)

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brethren: Since the law has but a shadow of good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices which are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered? If the worshippers had once been cleansed, they

would no longer have any consciousness of sin. But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God’, as it is written of me in the roll of the book.” When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “Behold, I have

come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (39) 40: 2 and 4ab.
7-8a. 10. 11)***

***R. See, I have come, Lord,
to do your will.***

I waited, I waited for the Lord, and he stooped down to me; he heard my cry. He put a new song into my mouth, praise of our God. *R.*

You delight not in sacrifices and offerings, but in an open ear. You do

no ask for holocaust and victim. Then I said, “See, I have come.” R.

Your justice I have proclaimed in the great assembly. My lips I have not sealed; you know it, O Lord. R.

Your saving help I have not hidden in my heart; of your faithfulness and salvation I have spoken. I made no secret of your merciful love and your faithfulness to the great assembly. R.

Acclamation

(Matthew 11:25)

Alleluia. Alleluia. Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. **Alleluia.**

Gospel ————— *(Mark 3:31-35)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

At that time: The mother of Jesus and his brethren came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting about him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brethren are outside, asking for you.” And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brethren?” And looking at those who sat about him he said, “Here are my mother and my brethren! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray, and in sanctifying them grant that they may profit us for salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. Ps (32) 33:6) **Look towards the Lord and be**

radiant; let your faces not be abashed.

or

(Jn 8:12) **I am the light of the world, says the Lord; those who follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**

Prayer after Communion
Grant, we pray, almighty
God, that, receiving the
grace by which you bring

us to new life, we may
always glory in your gift.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Mother and the Brothers of Jesus Christ

Commentary

Hebrews 10:1-10 / Psalm 40
and Mark 3:22-30

Why did Jesus refuse to leave the crowd to attend to his relatives? First, they were standing outside (like the elder brother of the prodigal son), when they ought to have been inside. Secondly, Jesus, being such a good teacher seized the occasion to teach a powerful lesson: that He values those of us who hear His word and practice it. Jesus did not say Mary is not important. His respect for Mary cannot be doubted with the incidence at the wedding feast at Cana. Jesus only meant to say that you too are important for hearing and doing the will of God.

Rev. Fr. Abu Evaristus, Benin City, Nigeria



Wednesday January 25

3rd Week in Ordinary Time

Feast

The Conversion of Saint Paul, Apostle

Entrance Antiphon

(2 *Tm* 1:12;4:8) **I know the one in whom I have believed and I am sure that he, the just judge, the mighty, will keep safe what is my due until that day.**

we pray, nearer to you through the example of him whose conversion we celebrate today, and so make us witnesses to your truth in the world. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Gloria in excelsis (*Glory to God in the highest*) **is said.**

Reading —————
(Acts 22:3-16)

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Collect

O God, who taught the whole world through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Paul, draw us,

In those days: Paul said to the people [in Jerusalem], “I am a Jew, born at Tarsus

in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as you all are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brethren, and I journeyed to Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. “As I made my journey and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. And I fell

to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ “And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ “And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.’ “Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. “And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ “And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’ And when I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. “And one Ananias, a devout man

according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And in that very hour I received my sight and saw him. And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Just One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptised, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Or:

Reading _____
(Acts 9:1-22)

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

In those days: Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he journeyed he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” And he said, “Who are

you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting; but rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” The men who were travelling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul arose from the ground; and when his eyes were opened, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire in the

house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul; for behold, he is praying, and he has seen a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon your name.” But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” So Ananias departed and entered the house. And

laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptised, and took food and was strengthened. For several days he was with the disciples at Damascus. And in the synagogues immediately he proclaimed Jesus, saying, “He is the Son of God.” And all who heard him were amazed, and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called on this name? And he has come

here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests.” But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (115) 116 / 117:1.2)

**R. Go into all the world
and preach the Gospel.**

or: Alleluia.

O praise the Lord, all you nations; acclaim him, all you peoples! **R.**

For his merciful love has prevailed over us; and the Lord’s faithfulness endures for ever. **R.**

Acclamation (*John 15:16*)
Alleluia. Alleluia. I chose you from the world that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, says the Lord. **Alleluia.**

Gospel _____
(Mark 16:15-18)
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

At that time: [Appearing to the Eleven,] Jesus said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents,

and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings
As we celebrate the divine mysteries, O Lord, we pray, may the Spirit fill us with that light of faith with which he constantly enlightened the blessed Apostle Paul for the spreading of your glory. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Communion Antiphon
(Gal 2:20) **I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me.**

Prayer after Communion

May the Sacrament we have received, O Lord our God, stir up in us that fire of charity with which

the blessed Apostle Paul burned ardently as he bore his concern for all the Churches. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Rise, Repent and Wash
away your Sins****Commentary**

**Acts 22:3-16/Psalm 117
Mark 16:15-18.**

Today we celebrate the fact that God looked around all the men living in the world and decided to give a second chance to the very man who was all out to destroy Christianity. The beauty of Saint Paul's conversion was that the moment he rose from his feet, he never went back to his former ways. When Saul fell to the ground, he heard the voice of Christ saying: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Let us always remember that when we face persecution for the sake of our faith, Jesus Christ himself shares in our pain. Conscious of his presence in us, we would not only stay away from sin, but we would also make use of His power working through us. As Jesus tells us in today's Gospel passage, "And these signs will accompany those who believe, they will cast out demons...." (Mark 16:17-18).

Rev. Fr. Abu Evaristus, Benin City, Nigeria



Thursday January 26

3rd Week in Ordinary Time

Memorial

Saints Timothy and Titus, Bishops.

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Sir 15:5) In the midst of the Church he opened his mouth, and the Lord filled him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding and clothed him in a robe of glory (E.T. alleluia).

Or: Ps (36) 37:30-31.

The mouth of the just man utters wisdom, and his tongue tells forth what is

just; the law of his God is in his heart.

Collect

O God, who adorned Saints Timothy and Titus with apostolic virtues, grant, through the intercession them both, that, living justly and devoutly in this present age, we may merit to reach our heavenly homeland. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading —————
(2 Timothy 1:1-8)

**A reading from the second
Letter of Saint Paul to
Timothy**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy and peace from God the father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God whom I serve with clear conscience, as did my fathers, when I remember you constantly in my prayers. As I remember your tears, I long night and day to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am

reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you. For this reason, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control. Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but take your share of suffering for the Gospel in the power of God. The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

or

Reading —————
(Titus 1:1-5)

**A reading from the Letter
of Saint Paul to Titus**

Paul a servant of God and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised ages ago and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching in which I have entrusted by command of God our Saviour; to Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour. This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective,

and appoint elders in every town as I directed you.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm ———
(Psalm (95) 96)

**R. Tell among all the
peoples the wonders of the
Lord.**

O sing a new song to the Lord; Sing to the Lord, all the earth. O sing to the Lord, bless his name. R.

Proclaim his salvation day by day. Tell among the nations his glory, And his wonders among all the people R.

Give the Lord, you families of peoples, Give the Lord, Glory and

power; Give the Lord the glory of his name R

Say to the nations, “The Lord is king.” The world he made firm in its place; He will judge the peoples in fairness R

Acclamation (*Luke 4:18*)

Alleluia. Alleluia. The Lord sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives. **Alleluia.**

Gospel ————— (*Luke 10:1-9*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

At that time: The Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to

come. And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go your ways; behold I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ And if a son of peace is there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not it shall return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you; heal the sick

in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Receive, O Lord, we pray, the offerings of your people, which we bring in celebration of Saints Timothy and Titus, and in your kindness, render us fully acceptable, by

giving us sincerity of heart. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Communion Antiphon

(Mk 16:15; Mt28:20) **Go into all the world, and proclaim the Gospel. I am with you always, says the Lord.**

Prayer after Communion

May the Sacrament we have received, O Lord our God, nourish in us

that faith taught by the preaching of the Apostles and kept safe by the

labours of Saints Timothy and Titus. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Commentary

Timidity Is not a Virtue.

2 Timothy 1:1-8 / Psalm
96 / Mark 4:21-25

Yesterday, we celebrated the feast of the conversion of St. Paul. Today we are celebrating the memorial of two bishops we may likely refer to as the spiritual sons of St. Paul. From Paul's letter to Timothy, one great lesson we learn is that timidity is not a virtue. There is no room for being ashamed of testifying for the Lord. We are lights and light cannot be put under a bed. Dear friends, if we don't believe in ourselves, how do we convince the world that we are lights? Being timid is trying to hide the gifts and talents that God has deposited in you. It is keeping quiet when you should raise your voice for God out of fear of what people would do to you. As Saint Paul advises Timothy, the cure for spiritual timidity is rekindling the gift of God that is within you.

Rev. Fr. Abu Evaristus, Benin City, Nigeria



Friday January 27

3rd Week in Ordinary Time

Ferial

or **Saint Angela Merici, optional Memorial**

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps (94) 95: 1.6) **O Sing a new song to the Lord, sing to the Lord a new song all the earth. In His presence majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.**

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Reading —————
(Hebrews 10: 32-39)

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, direct our actions according to your good pleasure, that in the name of your beloved Son may abound in good works.

Brethren: Recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and affliction, and sometimes being partners

with those so treated. For you have compassion on the prisoners, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised. “For yet a little while, and the coming one shall come and shall not tarry; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and keep their souls.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm ⁽³⁶⁾ 37: 3-4. 5-6.
23-24. 39-40)***

**R. From the Lord comes
the salvation of the just.**

Trust in the Lord and do good; then you will dwell in the land and safely pasture. Find your delight in the Lord, who grants your heart’s desire. R.

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will act, and make your uprightness shine like the light, the justice of your cause like the noon-day sun. R.

By the Lord are the steps made firm of one in whose

path He delight. Though he stumble, he will never fall, for he Lord will hold him by the hand. *R.*

But from the Lord comes the salvation of the just, their stronghold in time of distress. The Lord helps them and rescues them, rescues and saves them from the wicked: because they take refuge in him. *R.*

Acclamation
(Matthew 11:25)

Alleluia. Alleluia. Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. **Alleluia.**

Gospel —————
(Mark 4: 26-34)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

At that time: Jesus said to the crowd, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come. “And he said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard

seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet; when it is sown, it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.” With many such parables he spoke to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray, and in sanctifying them grant that they profit us for salvation. Trough Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. Ps (32) 33:6) **Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your face not be abashed**

or

I am the light of the world, says the Lord those who follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Prayer after Communion

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, receiving the grace by which you bring us

to new life, we may always glory in your gift. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**See Your Present
Sufferings as Seeds****Commentary**

Hebrews 10:32-39 /
Psalm 37 / Mark 4:26-34

Just as seeds must die before producing a new plant, our sufferings and crosses help us die to ourselves so that we can remain virtuous, blossom in good deeds and bear fruits for God. Jesus compared the kingdom of God with a mustard seed that is so tiny yet grows into a shrub large enough to provide shade for birds. Never despise your little beginnings. The toughest aspect of a journey is the first few steps. Know that your promotion comes only after you decide not to give up. Do not pray that your sufferings will end, rather pray that you will get to reap its full fruits.

Rev. Fr. Abu Evaristus, Benin City, Nigeria



Saturday January 28

3rd Week in Ordinary Time

Memorial

Saint Thomas Aquinas, priest and doctor.

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (94) 95:1.6) **O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.**

Collect

O God, who made Saint Thomas Aquinas outstanding in his zeal for holiness and his study of sacred doctrine, grant us, we pray, that we may understand what he taught and imitate what

he accomplished. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading —————
(Hebrews 11:1-2.8-19)

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brethren: Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old received divine approval. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which

he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore, from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. These all died in faith, not having received what was

promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your descendants be named." He considered

that God was able to raise men even from the dead; hence he did receive him back and this was a symbol. The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
(Lk 1:69-70.71-72.73-75)

℟. **Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited his people.**

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old. ℟.

That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and remember his holy covenant. ℟.

The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life. ℟.

Acclamation (*John 3:16*)

Alleluia. Alleluia. God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son; that whoever believes in him should have eternal life.
Alleluia.

Gospel —————
(Mark 4:35-41)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go across to



the other side.” And leaving the crowd, they took him with them, just as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him. And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care if we perish?” And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

May the sacrifice which we gladly present on the feast day of blessed Saint Thomas Aquinas, be pleasing to you, O God, for taught by him, we, too, give ourselves entirely to you in praise. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Cf Lk 12:42) **Behold a faithful and faithful servant to distribute their allowance of food in due time (E.T. alleluia).**

Or: (Cf. Ps 1:2-3)

The man who ponders the law of the Lord day and night will yield his fruit in due season (E.T. alleluia).

Prayer after Communion

Through Christ the teacher,
O Lord, instruct those you
feed with Christ, the living
Bread, that on the feast day

of blessed Saint Thomas
Aquinas they may learn
your truth and express it in
works of charity. Through
Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Use Your Faith to Cure
Your Fear****Commentary**

**Hebrews 11:2-19 / Psalm in Luke
1:69-75 / Mark 4:35-41)**

The key to conquering fear is Faith. Faith makes us relax even when others are panicking. Mind you, being relaxed is not the same thing as spiritual laxity. That Jesus was asleep during a storm did not mean he was asleep all through the day. He was such a prayerful person that he would wake very early in the morning to pray and at times pray all through the night. When we pray like Jesus, we can afford to relax because even the things that are about to happen will be somehow revealed to us and then, we are able to see the bigger picture and look beyond our petty challenges. When you put everything in God's hands, you start seeing the hand of God in everything – even those things you consider as difficulties or problems.

Rev. Fr. Abu Evaristus, Benin City, Nigeria



Publisher: Pierre LANGLOIS

Publishing & Development Manager

Editor in Chief: Rev. Fr. François NZANZU a.a.

Assistant: Rev. Fr. Jean-Claude DIWEDIGA a.a.

Editorial Secretary: Virginia KABUGU

Graphic designer: Naomi SAWADOGO

Ghana Coordinator: Rev. Fr. Dennis OPOKU;

Associate Publishers: Fr. Walter Ihejirika, Regional Coordinator, LWC Nigeria,

Other **Contributors:** Rev. Fr. Emmanuel SALIFU

Rev. Fr. Jérôme K. M. KOMBI; Rev. Fr. ABU Evaristus.

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Rue E104, Lot 1076 Ilot 116 - Cocody Riviera 3 Abidjan , Côte d'Ivoire

Address: P.O. BOX 08 BP 2469 Abidjan 08 -

Phone number : (+225) 25 22 02 11 11 -

E-mail: info@livingwithchrist-africa.com





 WhatsApp : [+225 05 94 79 75 68 / +254727074304](https://wa.me/+2250594797568)

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