

Monday 11/30/09 The judgments of the Lord are true, and all of them are just. or: Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life. Rom 10:9-18 Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11 Mt 4:18-22
What comes first, the chicken or the egg? Today is the first Monday of the year, a very good time to consider beginnings. Science informs us that this universe we inhabit had a beginning billions of years ago, long before either chickens or eggs. If this is true, where did I begin? Was it the dimly remembered childhood where my consciousness first came to be? Could it have been the moment of my Baptism, my birth, my conception? Did I exist in the mind of God from that first instant of creation? Could my "beginning" be this very moment? Perhaps a better vantage point is to ask myself how I am being a beginning for others? How are they coming to call on Him because I have called on Him, after coming to believe, after having heard Him, after listening to the others He has sent? I like to think of myself as a "good egg", but I realize how much of a chicken I really am. Often too chicken to proclaim His name, to call on Him, to trust in Him, to completely surrender to Him. Lord! Let me see those beautiful feet, especially when I look down.

Saturday 11/28/09 Give glory and eternal praise to him. Dn 7:15-27 Daniel 3:82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87 Lk 21:34-36

Why does our Holy Mother, the Church, present us this image from Daniel on the last day of the year? Is it because the "Kingdom is at hand"...but not yet in our hearts? It is easy to hide or run away from this image by laying it on the whole race of humanity, and not thinking that it is meant personally for me. What and who are the kings of my life? Or better, is He the king of my life, or am I? As I grow older the beasts of the world,, the flesh and the devil may be losing their grip on me. I have become all too familiar with them and their ways. What is that fourth beast? Could it be my own self reliance, my inability to really, truly, surrender all to Him? It is the most powerful of beasts, steel and bronze are as water and air by comparison. And it manifests itself in so many and often subtle ways, as I consider how better I am than others, how I am more favored by God, more blessed, more loved, more trusted. But I am so encouraged by this image from Daniel, for it is an image of hope. That fourth beast too will pass away in final and absolute destruction, not through my power, but only through His. Then all the kingdoms I know will be firmly and gloriously under Him. Am I afraid? No! His grace makes me vigilant, joyfully and hopefully watching and waiting for that wonderful day that will mark my beginning.

Friday 11/27/09 Give glory and eternal praise to him! Dn 7:2-14 Daniel 3:75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81 Lk 21:29-33

Visions, dreams, ideas, wonderings, contemplation, meditation, they are all works of the mind. Perhaps they are evoked or directed by the Spirit, or perhaps they come from some other place altogether. It is all in thier meaning, how we understand them. Sometimes people get far too carried away by the images and by their own imagination. In the end, if such things are "of the Spirit" they all say the same thing, "The Kingdom of God is at Hand!" The signs are all around us all the time. He is hard at work 24/7, our only problem is that we are so slow to recognize it, because we are so busy with our own agendas and ideas. To quickly see His ways all we need do is take the time to slow down. Just stop, look, and listen. He will tell you what to do, and give you all you need to do it.

Thursday 11/26/09 Lord, I thank you for your faithfulness and love. Sir 50:22-24 138:1-2a, 2bc-3, 4-5 138:1-2a, 2bc-3, 4-5 Lk 17:11-19

This little gospel story has always seemed very curious to me. Why does Jesus ask about the others? He told them to go show themselves to the priest. The one He seems to praise is the one who didn't do as he was instructed? Very curious. I suppose that a hidden message is that the only way to show thanks to God is to fall at Jesus' feet and thank Him. Isn't that what it is all about? Jesus is the only way. And what are we thankful for? St Ignatius taught us to say, "Give me only your love and your grace, that's enough for me!"

Wednesday 11/25/09 Give glory and eternal praise to him. Dn 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28 Daniel 3:62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67 Lk 21:12-19

The end is coming. What is started will stop. What is begun will be finished, all in time. And then there will be no more time. All things and all time will pass away, and what really is, will really be. So how should we use this time that remains? Persevere! Persevere in prayer. Keep on learning the ways of God. Keep on acting with the power of the love you have been given. Do not waste time pondering the future. The future is clear. Spend each moment living His life and helping others to do the same.

Tuesday 11/24/09 Give glory and eternal praise to him. Dn 2:31-45 Daniel 3:57, 58, 59, 60, 61 Lk 21:5-11

Let every thing bless the Lord, praise and exalt Him above all forever! What is the gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay in my life that you must smash? What are the signs in my life of your nearness? Is there turmoil in my life? Then I know you are near. Is there peace and tranquility? Then I know you are near! Am I sick? Am I well? Am I happy? Am I sad? No matter what, you are right here, drawing all things to yourself, like a magnet draws iron. All I need do is let go and I fly to you, little by little in my brokenness, day by day in my reluctant way I am yielding my life to you.

Monday 11/23/09 Glory and praise for ever! Dn 1:1-6, 8-20 Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56 Lk 21:1-4
Life in the Spirit means living the selfless life. It is coming to the realization that absolutely everything comes from Him, everything belongs to Him, and nothing but Him matters anything at all. His wisdom is ten times better than all the magicians put together. Wouldn't you like to have His wisdom. It is available anytime you wish. It is right here in your very own heart. His wisdom is to give all for Him in each little encounter each and every day. Make every moment count. In the end each and every moment is a gift from God. Give it back to Him, all of it, by being just who He made you to be.

Saturday 11/21/09 I will rejoice in your salvation, O Lord. 1 Mc 6:1-13 Ps 9:2-3, 4 and 6, 16 and 19 Lk 20:27-40

As I grow older and consider my life it is easy to see what has brought me joy and what has brought me grief. And the real joy is in knowing what lies ahead. It is so very clear that where I am headed those things of grief cannot go. They are caught in the trap and are fading into distant memories.

Friday 11/20/09 We praise your glorious name, O mighty God. 1 Mc 4:36-37, 52-59 1 Chronicles 29:10bcd, 11abc, 11d-12a, 12bcd Lk 19:45-48

My body is a temple. Have I made it a "den of thieves?" Should it not be a "house of prayer?" The more I turn to Him the more others are "hanging on His words". As for my own words...let them be hanged!

Thursday 11/19/09 To the upright I will show the saving power of God. 1 Mc 2:15-29 Ps 50:1b-2, 5-6, 14-15 Lk 19:41-44

How curious that being alive in this world means constantly changing. Change is the only thing that is constant. The earth turns on its axis, it revolves around the sun, which in turn revolves around the center of the Milky Way, itself in motion among the nearby cluster of galaxies. Everything is in motion. Yet God is always the same. Day by day I am called to turn more and more toward Him. Day by day I am graced and gifted with all it takes to do so. How often what makes for peace seems hidden from my eyes! But He is opening them little by little and day by day, and every little glimpse of Him at work is truly wonderful to behold!

Wednesday 11/18/09 Lord, when your glory appears, my joy will be full. 2 Mc 7:1, 20-31 Ps 17:1bcd, 5-6, 8b and 15 Lk 19:11-28

Will the real Jesus please stand up!?! It seems to me that the moral of this lesson has to do with

courage. His fellow citizens despised him and end up dead. One servant was afraid of him and ends up penniless. Two servants know him, do their best, and end up with more responsibility. Who knows what happened to the other seven! So...Do not fear Him. Do not despise Him. Just listen to Him, follow Him in faith and have the courage to step out and put all He has given you to work in His service.

Tuesday 11/17/09 The Lord upholds me. 2 Mc 6:18-31 Ps 3:2-3, 4-5, 6-7 Lk 19:1-10
It seems most curious to me that, as I get older, though my eyesight gets worse, I can see Jesus better and better. While my body, slave that it is to nature, struggles, painfully at times, toward its end, my spirit rejoices in Him and soars day by day to new heights of joy as I watch Him at work in those around me. I have come to understand how blind and short of stature I am. I know I cannot get to Him on my own, and it has become the greatest joy of my life to be lifted and carried to Him by friends.

Monday 11/16/09 Give me life, O Lord, and I will do your commands. 1. 1 Mc 1:10-15, 41-43, 54-57, 62-63 Ps 119:53, 61, 134, 150, 155, 158 Lk 18:35-43
There is a curious theme in the Holy Scriptures that those who stand firm in their faith suffer and die at the hands of those who trust in themselves or other gods. Perhaps a part of the mystery is that each of us will die sooner or later, we are all in the process of dying. The important question is what waits for us? Who waits for us? If we are not blind, and seeing is a gift of God, then the glimpse of the life that waits for us in His eternal love makes the manner of our dying so unimportant by comparison. That is why, with His grace, we can drink even the most bitter cup in the faith that He will let no sacrifice go to waste, and will use our faith and trust in Him to touch the hearts of others.

Saturday 11/14/09 Remember the marvels the Lord has done! Wis 18:14-16; 19:6-9 Ps 105:2-3, 36-37, 42-43 Lk 18:1-8
Come, Lord Jesus! My life too was, and still often is, merely water. Flowing here and there with seemingly no firm place to stand. But on that beautiful blessed day that I realized His presence, I saw that rocky dry land emerging. How I rejoiced. How wonderful to watch as He wields His sharp sword striking down one by one the bitter angels that rule my life. And all the while the dry land, the firm place to stand, rises. And the only important question is. when He comes, when He truly arrives, will He find faith in the heart He has fashioned?

Friday 11/13/09 The heavens proclaim the glory of God. Wis 13:1-9 Ps 19:2-3, 4-5ab Lk 17:26-37

Do you remember where you were on the "day the Son of Man was revealed to you" for the first time? What a wonderful day of beauty it was, and the first thought? Wasn't it "Why did it take so long? Why did I not get here so much sooner? Now the living continues, but it is different. It is living, living abundantly. Living as you see, from a great distance the vultures that once were so important, as you watch, with the joy of relief, those vultures recede from view. What takes their place is the joy of the certain hope that He remains and your life with Him will never end, and He rises everywhere.

Thursday 11/12/09 Your word is for ever, O Lord. Wis 7:22b-8:1 Ps 119:89, 90, 91, 130, 135, 175 Lk 17:20-25

In life in the Spirit wisdom trumps everything else. In life in the Spirit wisdom is the mentality that puts everything else in the service of Love. She is not some flash of brilliance, or certain insight, or powerful revelation. Wisdom is the calm, steady, confident, step by step, walk with God. When we journey on foot, at times the path is level and broad and we continue with little or no attention to it. At times it becomes difficult or even dangerous and we need to consider each step carefully. Either way, when each step is made, as best we can, in the service of love we have the firm conviction that it is blessed by our Father. Of course, Jesus is the wisdom of God.

Wednesday 11/11/09 Rise up, O God, bring judgment to the earth. Wis 6:1-11 Ps 82:3-4, 6-7 Lk 17:11-19

In Baptism we are each Christened, priest, prophet, and king. For me sacrificing for others is always a challenge, while wandering around telling people what "God is saying" seems a lot easier and a lot more fun, but stepping up and taking responsibility for the care of others! Well that is the tough part. Priests just give what they get. Prophets flap their jaws. But a king has to walk the talk. He has to do the discernment. He has to listen to the prophets and figure out which one is "of God" and which is not. In the end he is the one who must see that the "holy precepts" are kept holy. He is the one who must lead the lepers back to Jesus with praise and thanksgiving!

Tuesday 11/10/09 I will bless the Lord at all times. Wis 2:23-3:9 Ps 34:2-3, 16-17, 18-19 Lk 17:7-10

Good Lord, I could use some help here! For many weeks now I have been in a running argument with my dear sister about whether she is a slave to righteousness or a friend of Jesus and daughter of the King. Why do you keep mixing these metaphors! Am I a slave or am I free? If I have no will how can I surrender it to you? If I am a slave why are your orders so hard to hear and understand? Could it be that I am truly free and truly your child, just still very little and immature? Am I still in need of constant supervision just to keep me out of harms way? Perhaps that's the answer. If so, I am truly grateful for my bigger brothers and sisters who are taking such good care of me and keeping me safe and sound.

Monday 11/9/09 The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High! Ez 47:1-2, 8-9, 12 Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9 1 Cor 3:9c-11, 16-17 Jn 2:13-22

The children of Israel spent forty years wandering in the desert to come into the promised land. Here these folks have been working away for six years longer only to come nowhere. But Jesus, in just three days, redeems all creation! And how does He do it? Did He make and execute a grand plan? Did He gather a host of brilliant and gifted craftsmen, or wise and courageous warriors? How ridiculous! He made no plan, save the firm decision to surrender His will in complete acceptance of the plan of His Father. He did so alone. His entourage proved to be the weakest and most clueless bunch in the history of mankind. Could it be that they had been chosen so? Could it be that only those who are weak and slow can be truly open to the power, and gifts, and wisdom His Father needs to supply for the task?

Saturday 11/7/09 I will praise your name for ever, Lord. Rom 16:3-9, 16, 22-27 Ps 145:2-3, 4-5, 10-11 Lk 16:9-15

How amazing is God and this faith He gives us. He is sharing His very life with us. Note the names the apostle mentions. Men and women, slaves and the city treasurer, Greeks, Romans, Asians, Jews! People with histories and stations in life so different, but all one body in Jesus. And what are all of them to do? "Make friends...". That is Jesus' command, even with dishonest wealth, make friends. C'mon friends, accept the fact you are all miserable sinners, we all are, but, praise God, someone has paid our debts. Let's all rejoice and spread the word. Let's all just be friends.

Friday 11/6/09 The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power. Rom 15:14-21 Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 Lk 16:1-8

So Jesus commends dishonesty? Wow! What is that all about? I think it is all a lesson in the great mercy of God. How often do we want to increase our brother's and sister's debts to God, they should do this, or they ought to do that. Maybe if we made it a little easier on them, everybody would be better off! One thing is absolutely certain. All of us stewards have a long record for squandering!

Thursday 11/5/09 I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

Rom 14:7-12 Ps 27:1bcde, 4, 13-14 Lk 15:1-10

I think this is one of the most misunderstood ideas in the Holy Scriptures. Everybody seems to act like He is talking about somebody else. I think He is talking straight to me. Will you join me today and make some angels happy?

Wednesday 11/4/09 Blessed the man who is gracious and lends to those in need. **Rom**

13:8-10 Ps 112:1b-2, 4-5, 9 Lk 14:25-33

Some sayings of Jesus really are too hard. I fear I am surley doomed. Perhaps it is the Irish in me, but I just cannot obey this missive. Brothers, fathers, sisters, even myself, no problem.

They are all pretty disgusting from time to time, but there is no way I can imagine hating my dear mother. Then again, maybe that is the message. We call Him Father, but He is so much more like Mother to me.

Tuesday 11/3/09 In you, O Lord, I have found my peace. **Rom 12:5-16ab Ps 131:1bcde, 2, 3**

Lk 14:15-24

As the oldest of fourteen children, I have many experiences that few others have had. Recently someone described "centering prayer" to me in such a way that it caused me to remember that my mother always had little children on her lap. Have you noticed how well behaved brothers and sisters are when they are together on their mother's lap? We really are all just weaned children. Let us enjoy the feast of God's love together and always behave like we are sitting on our mother's lap.

Monday 11/2/09 The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. **Wis 3:1-9 Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 Rom 5:5-11 or Rom 6:3-9 Jn 6:37-40**

Faith, Hope, and Love, are the gifts. Father, Son, and Spirit, are the givers. Time is where we live, at least for now. These bodies of flesh are passing away, and are gone in an instant, right along with time. Where will we be at the end? Isn't that all that matters? In faith, hope, and love, though we know we are not there yet, in the end we will be right where He wants us to be.