

## JANUARY 2025 SCRIPTURAL JOURNEY

By

Fr. Michael Barry, SS.CC

**For the New Year; That I may grow ever deeper in my faith and my faith may grow deeper in me!**

**Date: 2025-01-01 SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD- The Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord, Solemnity [Holyday of Obligation]**

**Day & Color:** Wednesday, White

**Readings:** Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21

**Reflection:** The shepherds were amazed at all that happened. We too now in the fullness of time should be more amazed because we are baptized into the fullness of His grace and gifts!

**Date: 2025-01-02 Sts Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church, Memorial**

**Day & Color:** Thursday, White

**Readings:** 1 Jn 2:22-28/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4/Jn 1:19-28

**Reflections:** In the first reading from St. John we are shown the love God has for us and bestows upon us. God's love has a life of love and holiness of God. There is a tendency to get into a routine rather than progress in His love and experience something new each day. Rather than become static we can and are able to grow in His love and grace, and especially His grace!

**Date: 2025-01-03 Christmas Weekday [The Most Holy Name of Jesus]**

**Day & Color:** Friday, White

**Readings:** 1 Jn 2:29-3:6/Ps 98:1, 3cd-4, 5-6/Jn 1:29-34

**Reflections:** "See what love God has for us that we are called children of God!" That is the wonder of our lives; that we are blessed and gifted in that reality! Our lives are in the love of God and if we deny that we are becoming 'Antichrist'. It is the realization that we may increase in his love and not our own love of self. There is a freedom and anointedness in His love while there is a bondage in our love of self.

**Date: 2025-01-04 Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious Memorial**

**Day & Color:** Saturday, White

**Readings:** 1 Jn 3:7-10/Ps 98:1, 7-8, 9/Jn 1:35-42

**Reflections:** We should focus on the first reading from the first letter of St John because it reveals the power of God's love! If we truly recognize the fact that we are begotten of God, and what that means, the implications of 'begotten'. We are free from sin! Sin does not control us! Emmanuel story Christmas and "God with us" is a living life in Jesus! So often we live what we want and desire and have to return, constantly called back, to a living life of love, holiness and grace in the Lord Jesus Christ!

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**Date: 2025-01-05 USA: THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD, Solemnity**

**Day & Color:** Sunday, White

**Readings:** Is 60:1-6/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13/Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12

**Reflections:** The Epiphany of the Lord! In the first reading from Isaiah we are called to 'rise up in splendor for your light has come!' The second reading from Ephesians tells us that even the Gentiles are called and are one in His body. In the gospel, the gospel of Matthew reveals the manifestation of the Christ child to the Magi, the kings of the earth and how they bestowed Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. In reality, we should live in our lives the daily manifestation of Christ, the living God, and realize that this too will be threatened, just like Herod's jealousy threatened the Child Jesus!

**Date: 2025-01-06 Christmas Weekday [USA: St André Bessette, Religious]**

**Day & Color:** Monday, White/White **Readings:** 1 Jn 3:22-4:6/Ps 2:7bc-8, 10-12a/Mt 4:12-17, 23-25

**Reflection:** Again we read from the epistle of St John the first reading and it tells us that we should test every spirit and the spirit that acknowledges that Jesus came in the flesh belongs to God and he who does not recognize that does not belong to God! We are begotten by God: will always belong to God! St Paul challenges the Romans "Can anything separate us from god?" The answer is yes we can separate ourselves from God. Let us cling fast to our divine inheritance!

**Date: 2025-01-07 Christmas Weekday [St Raymond of Penafort, Priest]**

**Day & Color:** Tuesday, White/White **Readings:** 1 Jn 4:7-10/Ps 72:1-2, 3-4, 7-8/Mk 6:34-44

**Reflection:** If we digress today from the first reading and focus on the gospel we read about the miracle of the loaves and the fish. Jesus multiplied the loaves and fish to feed five thousand plus people. Jesus cares and always takes care of us. He who trusts in the Lord will be raised up on eagle wings! What the Lord has for us is much better for us than what we have for ourselves, even Jesus trusted more in His Father than in Himself.

**Date: 2025-01-08 Christmas Weekday**

**Day & Color:** Wednesday, White

**Readings:** 1 Jn 4:11-18/Ps 72:1-2, 10, 12-13/Mk 6:45-52

**Reflection:** The gospel today tells us of Jesus walking on the waters and how terrified the disciples became when they saw Jesus walking on the waters. They were prevented from recognizing Jesus by their own fear! Have there been times in your life that you didn't recognize the touch of God or His presence in your life? Pray daily that nothing, absolutely nothing, keeps you from seeing the presence of God in your life daily. Everyday God is more present to you than the day before. Remember, it is the living God in you!

**Date: 2025-01-09 Christmas Weekday**

**Day & Color:** Thursday, White

**Readings:** 1 Jn 4:19-5:4/Ps 72:1-2, 14 and 15bc, 17/Lk 4:14-22a

**Reflection:** There is a profound truth in the first reading from St John which tells us that "We love God because God has 'first' loved us". It is not so much that we love an infinite God but that an infinite God first loved us! It makes a lot of sense; we are limited creatures that cannot love an infinite God, but with His infinite love we can love God! That's the reality of our existence and inheritance, not only for this present life, but for life eternal!

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**Date: 2025-01-10 Christmas Weekday**

**Day & Color:** Friday, White

**Readings:** 1 Jn 5:5-13/Ps 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20/Lk 5:12-16

**Reflection:** The first reading puts it very simply that the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus came through water and blood to testify to us that he is our Savior and Redeemer! So it is not only our faith, but also the Spirit of God and we are guaranteed that the Holy Spirit will be God's outreach to us in the proof of Jesus' resurrection! We are not dealing so much in our own belief as in God's "revealing". As the first Vatican Council put it in the document *Deus Revelans*, it is God revealing and God's revealing is a constant living revelation to us!

**Date: 2025-01-11 Christmas Weekday**

**Day & Color:** Saturday, White

**Readings:** 1 Jn 5:14-21/Ps 149:1-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b/Jn 3:22-30

**Reflection:** The gospel today has John the Baptist bearing witness that he is not the Christ but the one who bears witness to the living Christ. He, John, is the one who said "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world". That reality is still ever present in our lives. Jesus forgives our sins and all we have to do is to allow that reality of forgiveness to bear witness to Him.

**Date: 2025-01-12 THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD, Feast**

**Day & Color:** Sunday, White

**Readings:** Is 42:1-4, 6-7/Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10 or Ps 104:1b-2, 3-4, 24-25, 27-28, 29-30/Acts 10:34-38/Lk 3:15-16, 21-22

**Reflection:** Today is the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord and John the Baptist relates to us that he baptizes with water, but there is one coming who will baptize you with fire and the Holy Spirit! **That is Jesus!** St Cyprian, who wrote in the 300 hundreds, said that *there is a difference between those who are baptized and those who are baptized in the Holy Spirit!*

We are baptized in the Holy Spirit but it soon becomes passive. We don't identify with the fire.

Baptized in the Holy Spirit is an active living spirituality! It is the only way. If we abandon that it is extremely difficult to get back. The Lord wants it for us, but we don't want it for ourselves. We know better and open up for ourselves the way of sin and separation from God our redeemer!

**Date: 2025-01-13 Monday First Week in Ordinary Time [St Hilary, Bishop and Doctor of the Church]**

**Day & Color:** Monday, Green/White

**Readings:** Heb 1:1-6/Ps 97:1 and 2b, 6 and 7c, 9/Mk 1:14-20

**Reflection:** There are two profound truths in the readings today. The first reading from Hebrews tells us that in times past God spoke to us through the prophets but now God speaks to us in the fullness of time through His Son, Jesus Christ. *Where does He do that, In the gospels and the Word of God. If God's living word is not alive and living in us then we are dead! It is a double edged knife. In the book of Mark another profound truth is revealed: "This is the time of fulfillment. The Kingdom of God is at hand, Repent and believe in the gospel!". We never seem to have an attitude of repentance because we think that we are right even in our alienation from God.*

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**Date: 2025-01-14 Tuesday First Week in Ordinary Time**

**Day & Color:** Tuesday, Green

**Readings:** Heb 2:5-12/Ps 8:2ab and 5, 6-7, 8-9/Mk 1:21-28

**Reflection:** The question that arises from the gospel today is do we really know Jesus? Jesus came teaching the people and all were amazed at His authority. They knew Him as the son of Joseph and Mary. They had limited Him to whom they thought and 'knew' He was. We resent that when it is done to us. Nobody knows who we are and even at times we try to be someone else. We shut God out of our lives. *Everyday of our lives God is knocking at the door of our hearts to allow Him into our lives.* As He tells us "without Me you can do nothing" and "with Him all things are possible". Invite Jesus into your lives every day, because He has redeemed you, wants life with you!

**Date: 2025-01-15 Wednesday First Week in Ordinary Time**

**Day & Color:** Wednesday, Green

**Readings:** Heb 2:14-18/Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9/Mk 1:29-39

**Reflection:** The first reading from the Hebrews today reveals a profound truth and so often we fail to recognize the power of God's word in the scriptures. For instance today God reveals "since the children shared in flesh and blood so Jesus likewise shared in them that through them He might destroy the power of the devil". We are told that the devil goes around like a roaring lion seeking to devour us. That's the reality that seems to control us much more than the love of God in us. God has first loved us and God brings that love to us every day! We know how to live with the roaring lion who wants to devour us, it is in the infinite love of God who redeems us daily! Come let us return to the Lord, our God!

**Date: 2025-01-16 Thursday First Week in Ordinary Time**

**Day & Color:** Thursday, Green

**Readings:** Heb 3:7-14/Ps 95:6-7c, 8-9, 10-11/Mk 1:40-45

**Reflection:** We are halfway through January and how are we living our God life? Let me ask you a few questions: Is there a marked difference between 2024 and 2025? Have you slipped passively into the New Year without any newness in your life? Is God active in your life or is it 'been there and done that'? Do you experience the living God? Do you say a daily rosary even four of them? Frankly, there has to be a marked difference between 2024 and 2025. It is not too late to start!

**Date: 2025-01-17 St Anthony, Abbot, Memorial**

**Day & Color:** Friday, White **Readings:** Heb 4:1-5, 11/Ps 78:3 & 4bc, 6c-7, 8/Mk 2:1-12

**Reflection:** Today is the feast of St Anthony who lived in the 200 - 300. We know very little about him except he lived a life of extreme penance. He gave his wealth and inheritance to the poor and became a founder of monasticism. It was a life of solitude with his God. That is something that is missing in our lives today. *We may not be called to such an austere life as St Anthony but we are called to solitude with Jesus.* There has to be a time in our day of half an hour or an hour when we are alone with Jesus. *Witness how often Jesus withdrew from the Apostles to be alone with the Father. Don't be caught up with activity for goodness without solitude with Jesus!*

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**Date: 2025-01-18 Saturday First Week in Ordinary Time [BVM]**

**Day & Color:** Saturday, Green/White

**Readings:** Heb 4:12-16/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15/Mk 2:13-17

**Reflection:** Today we have, in Mark's gospel, *the call of the Apostle Levi. He got up immediately and followed Jesus. Not only that but he continued to follow Jesus even to martyrdom.* We on the other hand are likewise called and equipped to follow Jesus. Do we love the way of that call much more than Levi who walked with Jesus? We are bound to Jesus by the sacraments. Our lives should be ever alive in Jesus. ***We should be motivated by St Paul who said "I live now not I but Christ lives in me."***

**Date: 2025-01-19 SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**Day & Color:** Sunday, Green

**Readings:** Is 62:1-5/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10/1 Cor 12:4-11/Jn 2:1-11

**Reflection:** The first reading from Isaiah today gives us a deep and everlasting insight into God's plan, Isaiah has God saying *"I will not be silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her vindication shines forth like the dawn and her victory like a burning torch"*. What does that mean other than God's plan of salvation and the restoration of His fallen away people. God's love is much more than our love and we can only achieve that love by surrendering to it. As the scripture tells us, *"Greater is He who lives in us than he who lives in the world"*. *That truth comes to life in the gospel of John today when Jesus performs His first miracle and introduces His public ministry at the request of His Mother. When Jesus is with us Mary is not far behind and vice versa.*

**Date: 2025-01-20 Weekday [St Fabian, Pope and Martyr; St Sebastian, Martyr]**

**Day & Color:** Monday, Green/Red/Red

**Readings:** Heb 5:1-10/Ps 110:1, 2, 3, 4/Mk 2:18-22

**Reflection:** The whole question of fasting comes up in the gospel and why Jesus' disciples don't fast. Jesus tells them that when He is with them there is no need for fasting but when He is absent then they fast. Fasting is Mary's message from Medjugorje. *Fasting disposes us to God.* Fasting reminds us that a sacrifice allows God an opportunity, remember in the gospel that the demon could not be cast out except by prayer and fasting. *Fasting gives us an encounter with the living God, remember that Jesus fasted for forty days and nights. Prayer is good, but prayer and fasting is excellent!*

**Date: 2025-01-21 St Agnes, Virgin and Martyr Memorial**

**Day & Color:** Tuesday, Red **Readings:** Heb 6:10-20/Ps 111:1-2, 4-5, 9, 10c/Mk 2:23-28

**Reflection:** The first reading to the Hebrews is very reaffirming because it tells us that God does not overlook our good works and that God blesses and honors them. Likewise, God blessed Abraham, because *Abraham obeyed God and knew that obedience is better than sacrifice.* As Jesus Himself says *"if you love Me keep my commandments and we (Trinity) will come to you and dwell in you"*. How awesome is that or are we persuaded by Satan to follow an evil path to our own destruction?

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**Date: 2025-01-22 Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children**

**Day & Color:** Wednesday, White/Violet **Readings:** Heb 7:1-3, 15-17/Ps 110:1, 2, 3, 4/Mk 3:1-6

**Reflection:** Today begins a time of peace and justice, and also today we are urged to pray for the unborn children. *Isaiah puts us on the right track when he tells us that the people in darkness have seen a great light. We have seen that but have we really seen that? That light is the light of life as St John tells us there has to be a motivating light in our lives every day. It is a very good practice to recite a psalm every day. The Psalms too are the living word of God! They support the God life in us as they did with the people of the Old Testament. **The word of God only lives in us by the power of the Holy Spirit!***

**Date: 2025-01-23 USA: Weekday [USA: St Vincent, Deacon and Martyr; USA: St Marianne Cope, Virgin]**

**Day & Color:** Thursday, Green/RedWhite

**Readings:** Heb 7:25-8:6/Ps 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 17/Mk 3:7-12

**Reflection:** The gospel of St Mark today gives us insight into who Jesus is. He is God no doubt. Why even the demons and evil spirits recognize Him as the Son of God. They shout out at Jesus, 'You are the Son of God'. Do we shout that out or even believe it? What was said of us in the scriptures that we have forsaken him who restored us to life is true. Why? We cannot come up with an answer.

***Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man you have no life in you. Is that true of us, that really we have no life in us? Come let us return to our Eucharistic life.***

**Date: 2025-01-24 St Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor of the Church, Memorial**

**Day & Color:** Friday, White

**Readings:** Heb 8:6-13/Ps 85:8, 10, 11-12, 13-14/Mk 3:13-19

**Reflection:** Today is the feast of St Francis de Sales. He lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a difficult time. It was the time when Martin Luther, Zwingli and others took people out of the Church to form their own churches. Francis focused on restoration. This is our challenge today because over the past ten to twenty years many Catholics have left the Catholic church for their own selves. They do not believe and even worse they have lost their value system. There is no wrong and there is consequently no right either. ***St Francis' classic book is Introduction to a Devout Life. We should get hold of his book and live it. It restores us to Jesus and a life of grace.***

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**Date: 2025-01-25 The Conversion of St Paul the Apostle, Feast**

**Day & Color:** Saturday, White

**Readings:** Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22/Ps 117:1bc, 2/Mk 16:15-18

**Reflection:** Today is the feast of the Conversion of St Paul. It seems like a contradiction and one that certainly we wouldn't advocate. *Paul, known as Saul, persecuted the Christians and even concurred in the martyrdom of St Stephen, and yet he encountered Jesus; 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' Saul encountered Jesus and became Paul.* The truth is that no matter what we have done God does not give up on us! Not once but many times, it is a time of visitation. Jesus has a time in fact many times of our visitation. *Pray to be open to those times of visitation, because that is the way we grow and progress in Him.*

**Date: 2025-01-26 THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**Day & Color:** Sunday, Green

**Readings:** Neh 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15/1 Cor 12:12-30 or 12:12-14, 27/Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21

**Reflection:** This is the third Sunday in Ordinary Time. In the second reading from the Corinthians today we read about the **Mystical body of Christ, which is the Church!** Pope Pius XII wrote this in his encyclical, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 'We are all baptized into Christ and like our human body we have many parts with different functions so we have many functions in the Church of Christ and God binds us together in a unity stronger than our human existence. We are never alone in the Church. *We belong to Jesus. We are one, holy, catholic and apostolic church and community. We are under the authority and guidance of God in the Holy Spirit.*

**Date: 2025-01-27 Weekday [Saint Angela Merici, Virgin]**

**Day & Color:** Monday, Green/White

**Readings:** Heb 9:15, 24-28/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4, 5-6/Mk 3:22-30

**Reflection:** Today is the feast of St Angela Merici who lived around 1470. She dedicated herself to the education of young women and founded the Congregation of the Ursuline. They were a strong influence on young women in Europe. Ursuline education was comparable to a Jesuit education for young men. They still exist but are very few in number.

**Date: 2025-01-28 St Thomas Aquinas, Priest and Doctor of the Church, Memorial**

**Day & Color:** Tuesday, White

**Readings:** Heb 10:1-10/Ps 40:2, 4ab, 7-8a, 10, 11/Mk 3:31-35

**Reflection:** Today is the feast of St Thomas Aquinas. He lived in the 1200s. He was known as the Angelic Doctor and wrote the *Summa Theologica*. which became the standard book for the formation of the clergy. He was a Dominican priest, wrote many devotional books and catholic hymns as well. In particular one known as the *Pange lingua*. It is unfortunate that much of his teaching has been abandoned and the formation of the clergy is not nearly as strong as it once was. *We need restoration and especially prayer for priests.*

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Jesus is told that His Mother and family are outside wanting to speak with Him and He answers blessed are those who hear the word of God and follow it. It seems like a rebuke of Mary but it's not. He emphasizes those are in His presence and those who are not. He doesn't snub His mother but tries to correct those who are busy about many busybody things rather than the kingdom of God.

**Date: 2025-01-29 Weekday**

**Day & Color:** Wednesday, Green

**Readings:** Heb 10:11-18/Ps 110:1, 2, 3, 4/Mk 4:1-20

**Reflection:** Today's gospel from Mark tells us about the parable of the seed that was sown. It had four areas where it was planted and only one place fostered growth. Some fell among thorns, some fell on the pathways, some fell on shallow ground, and finally some fell on deep soil where it grew and produced fruit abundantly. I often wonder if we pay heed to His parables, because they too are for our instruction and give us insight into God's presence with us!

**Date: 2025-01-30 Weekday**

**Day & Color:** Thursday, Green

**Readings:** Heb 10:19-25/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6/Mk 4:21-25

**Reflection:** Again from Mark's gospel today Jesus asks His disciples if a lamp's light is hidden or put into a compromising position, it is impossible to even be a lamp. This has great advice for us because by our faith we are the light that must shine in the darkness. Unless our light shines in the darkness we have no life, *His life and His light, the light of Christ! Let your light shine before men that they may see the light of Christ alive in you.*

**Date: 2025-01-31 St John Bosco, Priest, Memorial**

**Day & Color:** Friday, White

**Readings:** Heb 10:32-39/Ps 37:3-4, 5-6, 23-24, 39-40/Mk 4:26-34

**Reflection:** Today let us confront ourselves and see where our heart is. Do we have a hardened heart? Do we have a bitter heart? Do we have a jealous heart? Do we have an unforgiving heart? Do we have a divided heart? Do we have a separated heart? *As Augustine puts it, 'Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee, Lord!'*