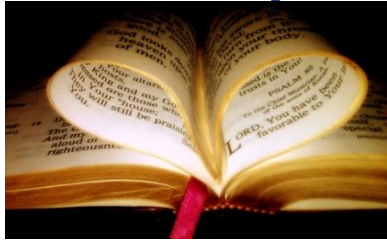


*"Return to Me, says the Lord With your Whole Heart." Joel 2:12*



Dearest sisters and brothers in Christ,

Giving of ourselves wholeheartedly is a treasure of rare delight. This is a blessing in action! All that we have comes to us from God. As Christians, we are one in the family of Christ; brothers and sisters, all children of God. What better way are we to use our lives than in service to our Lord? Is there a better way to use our blessings than to share all we have been given with everyone God sends our way?

Many ponder what their purpose is in this life. We may wonder in any God given moment what it is that we are called to do by our Lord. Those among us who shine the brightest light are those who shine the light of God through themselves! We need only pray and then listen for God to speak to us. Pray is not just about saying words. Pray is also listening to God's plan for us. Pray is also listening to God's calling. Let us pray with humility, compassion and wholehearted love. Let us pray for each other. All that we do in wholehearted service to our Lord, works for good. Give to God wholeheartedly: give your joy and your weeping. Let God hold you in His eternal and loving embrace.

*"Return to the Lord, even now, with your whole heart.*

*Return to the Lord with your whole heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your hearts, not your garment and return to the Lord, your God." Joel 2:12*

On each new day, awaken with a prayer of gratitude in your heart. Offer thanks for your health, for all wonders, grand and small. We all feel relief upon recovering from illness. We all feel joy when someone we love succeeds. May we give thanks to God. May we each give thanks to God for another day of breath, for our children's health, for our ability to help someone else, for our capacity to be in a position to be the giver, and for the awareness that we all need to ask for help. We all share this delicate human condition bound by strands of fist and bone. May we lay down hateful weapons and extend the warm of human kindness through wholehearted care for each other. May we use the tender example that Mother Mary used to hold her child, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Pray wholeheartedly that we may *return to our Lord*. May we use our God-given life, in every single way that we are able, in service to God who gives us everything we need and more. May we pray for peace within our heart and throughout the world. In God's holy name we pray, *Amen*.

Fr. Vincent Phung