

APRIL 2 2025 FATHER PRINCE MICHAEL

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

The intimate relationship between Jesus and God the Father is clearly explained in today's Gospel. It speaks of Jesus' mission through obedience to the Father and the Father's love for His Son. But it also gives us a glimpse of the love, the care, and the protection that God the Father extends to all His children.

When I was doing my ministry in India as a pastor, one of the altar servers, who was studying in third grade, came with his mother to bless his bicycle, which he bought new. It is the custom there to bless new vehicles too, so I blessed it

After three days, he came back with his bicycle, saying to me, "Father, you did not bless my bicycle properly." I just asked him, "What happened?" He said, "See the mudguard of the back wheel? It's shaking. It's a little (unclear) cross."

Meanwhile, there was another altar server who came and saw that, and he said, "The mudguard has only one screw, a single screw. So since it is a new-style bicycle, it's a little loose," and he tightened it.

As with this altar server, many times we do not understand the love, care, and protection which God gives.

In today's first reading, we heard how God assures us with His protection: "Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even this may forget, yet I will not forget."

In the same way, God loved His only Son. As God protected and guided His Son, in the same way He also protects and watches over us.

When we face trials or a moment of uncertainty, we might feel abandoned or question God's presence. But He's always actively involved in our lives—healing, guiding, and shielding us from harm, even when we fail to see it. His protection is constant, not only through direct intervention, but also by giving us strength to endure challenges.

The Father's protection is through Jesus. Jesus emphasizes unity with the Father, saying, "The Son can do nothing on His own, but only what He sees the Father doing."

Today we remember the memorial of St. Francis of Paola, who was born in 1416 in Italy and was the founder of the Minim Friars, a severely ascetic order. Francis decided to become a contemplative hermit, but God was calling him to do the apostolic life. Then he began to use the gifts which God had given—the gifts of miracles and prophecy—to minister to the people of God.

As a defender of the poor and oppressed, Francis suffered the wrath of the King of Naples. Apart from his wishes to become a hermit, Francis of Paola believed in the love, care, and protection of God. So he lived an apostolic life and advocated for the people of God, especially for those who are poor and oppressed.

How do we respond to the Father? If we wish to live under the love, care, and protection of the Father, we must respond in faith and obedience—just as Jesus sought to do the Father's will in all things.

Moreover, we are called to reflect the Father's love and protection to others, just as He cares for us. Let's open our hearts to walk in His ways and be confident that no matter what we face, we are safe in His hands.