

INTRODUCTION

This week’s guidelines will help us to contemplate and recognize the humility of God becoming one like us. He touches our flesh, touches our human experience, to show us the value of our life. It amazes us to see the humility of Jesus who never count equality with God but even took the form of a slave and died for us on the cross. Jesus’ life becoming one like us will nourish us and will lead us more closer to God.

This is an amazing aspect of God’s revelation that God made flesh forever, a reality that marked humanity “God made flesh and we cannot live as if nothing has happened” (Martin Descalzo) The world sees God as so distant, like a monster; but he made himself little, accessible, in the cry of a baby, God in Jesus is close to man. “Who has a God so close like you Lord?”

The word of God is close to us, this closeness is in a creature fragile and docile. He ‘detached’ himself from heaven and became a brother to us. What is the meaning of this for us in our mission? If we do not detach ourselves from our ways we won’t understand the meaning of His incarnation for them.

The incarnation is an answer of God to so many realities that we live - the need for intimacy, familiarity, understanding, confidence. God is not a distant God. He is so near and he wants to be with us. Jesus being born is to make us feel that we have somebody whom we can be with who understands us and accepts us for who we are.

In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear. ...For, by his incarnation, he, the son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each

man. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin... (Read Gaudium et Spes 22 paragraphs 1-2)

MONDAY

Becoming one like us

“Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,^[a] being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth
(Philippians 2:6-11)

In Jesus Christ, God took on a human face and became our friend and brother. –
Pope Benedict XVI

“Lord Jesus, I thank you because you are my God yet you are also my friend, my companion, my defender, my comfort. You are so close and so familiar. Thank you Jesus because when you are with me I feel that I’m with Somebody who knows me perfectly. You love me so much that you sacrificed your being a God and become like slave and even died on the cross to save me from sin. Your ways Lord are many times unimaginable and hard to comprehend but I thank you because I know you did all these for your great love for me. May in times of difficult moments

*and when I feel alone, I’ll remember that you are there ready to give your life for me. Thank you Lord for your loving self-giving.
In what situation do I see Jesus accompanying me today?*

TUESDAY

In humility and simplicity

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. **(Luke 2:6-7)**

God is so great that he can become small. God is so powerful that he can make himself vulnerable and come to us as a defenseless child so that we can love him.
–Pope Benedict XVI

*“Lord Jesus, I thank you for your humility and simplicity because it gives so much life and awakening in me. You have showed that love is not complicated but simply to be what you are and to love with all honestly. Our world presents a different kind of love. May we be wise and keen in seeing what is real. Help us to be molded and be guided by your living example so that we may also be able to love like you. The world needs this authentic love. May our hearts be open to receive you everyday as you want to be born in each of our heart. Help us to be a channel of your love. Teach us your humility.
How can I be a bridge of love today in the concrete places where I am?*

WEDNESDAY

Growing in love and maturity

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. **(Luke 2:40)**

¹³ until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ,¹⁴ so that we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery, from their cunning in the interests of deceitful scheming. **(Ephesians 4:13-14)**

*“Lord Jesus, your human life is lived to the full. You have grown and matured beautifully because you have been a good son. You have been humble and your heart is open to love wholeheartedly. Give us your wisdom to grow in maturity in our loving. Help us to be more sensitive to other people. May we appreciate and be grateful to all the people that helped us grow. We will not become what we are today if not from the people that has gone ahead of us and has lead us the way.
Who were the people that has walked with you and has helped you grow in faith? In way you can help others as well?*

THURSDAY

His closeness to us

What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? **(Deuteronomy 4:7)**

But now this is what the Lord says, he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by

name: you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. Since you are precious and honored in my sight and because I love you. I will give people in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid for I am with you: I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west.

(Isaiah 43:1-5)

"Lord Jesus, you are a God so close indeed. You never make us feel abandoned and orphaned. Your being born like us is a clear manifestation that you want to be with us and be close to us. When the different calamities struck us, you were with us. Your visible sign is clearly shown on the people who gave their time, resources and effort to be of help. The calamities had awakened the generosity and sensitivity of the people around the world. I thank you Lord because indeed you are a living God who knows what we need. May we always be open to receive you in our hearts everyday.

How do I see Jesus helping me in the concrete situation that I carry in my heart today?

FRIDAY

The answer of God to so many realities

We are yours from of old; but you have not ruled over them, they have not been called^[a] by your name^[a] Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you!² As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to

make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you!³ For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you
(Isaiah 63-19; 64:1-3)

Disturb us, Lord

Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.

"Lord Jesus, We are in the world where so many distract us. May you disturb us Lord in moments that we are too taken by that attractions of the world and loses out what's real happiness that satisfies our deepest longings. Give us the strength to go against current. May we strive for what is more lasting. Lord may our life be instrument of leading your people back to you. Give the generous heart to respond to your call everyday. And to realize that if we welcome you in our hearts, you will guide us and be with us in this mission. What are the realities I see around me that Jesus is calling me to be an instrument of his love?

SATURDAY

Becoming a visible sign of the Word made flesh

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.
(Luke 2:12)

³⁴ Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'Look, he is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is opposed-³⁵ and a sword will pierce your soul too -- so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.'
(Luke 2:34-35)

"Lord Jesus, You are truly the visible sign of God's word becoming flesh. Thank you so much Lord for the gift your life. You make us feel that your love is actual and not something that cannot be reached. Jesus your humility being born in a manger tells us that you are a God so simple yet so rich in love. We pray for those who are alone, discouraged, abandoned that they may find you wanting to be with them. May there be more willing response of being the hands and feet of God to reach those who still did not know that we have a God so poor yet so rich in love for us that He gave His only Son to be with us and to save us. What are the sign of God I see around me at home, at work, in school or in the concrete places where I am now?

SUNDAY READINGS

4th Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: **Isaiah 7:10-14**
Psalm: **Psalms 24:1-6**
2nd Reading: **Romans 1:1-7**
Gospel: **Matthew 1:18-24**

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"THE WORD IN OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE"

December 16-22, 2013



Objective of the week:

- To contemplate and recognize the humility of God becoming one like us.
- To allow God to touch our flesh and all our human experience in order that he can show the value of our life.