

INTRODUCTION

In this week of prayer, we focus on the strong realities that needs our attention and will provoke an immediate, creative, and sincere action of evangelization. These realities oftentimes are perceived to be contagious and incurable, corrupting our real identity. As lay faithful and followers of Christ, we are encouraged to look, to see, to feel compassion, and to do something persistently to change even a bit by responding to the call of sharing the gospel.

Pope Francis calls our attention to *“the great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience.*

The Pastoral letter of the Philippines states that *poverty is a social and spiritual problem in our country. It is estimated that twelve million of our people have gone to foreign countries in their search for adequate income to support their families’ needs. While this has brought many material advantages, it has also resulted in great harm to family life. And many of our overseas Filipino workers work in conditions of servitude and are often submitted to humiliations. This endemic poverty is gravely contrary to the will of God. Politics on the other hand is perhaps the biggest obstacle to the integral development of our nation. Recent developments have highlighted the corruption in connection with the pork barrel which those in power are loath to give up despite their blatant misuse for political patronage. It is now clear that our people are poor because our leaders have kept them poor by their greed for*

money and power. Lastly Business and Commerce, in this area, corruption also exists. We know that our tax collecting agencies are notorious for their extortionary practices. Corrupt tax collectors of course imply business people who cooperate in their corrupt activities either to survive in business or to reap bigger profits. Corruption in business leads to further impoverishment of the poor and widens the gap between rich and poor. Dear lay faithful, you are in the best position to creatively work out solutions which will satisfy the demands of justice and charity. What are you doing to create wealth, to preserve wealth, and to share wealth? Do the more prosperous among you feel the sufferings of our poor brothers and sisters?

MONDAY

The interior life being caught up

Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God’s voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fade. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless. That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God’s will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ.

(Evangelii Gaudium 2)

He said to them, “Are even you likewise without understanding? Do you not realize that everything that goes into a person from outside cannot defile, since it enters not the heart but the stomach and passes out into the latrine?” (Thus he

declared all foods clean.) “But what comes out of a person that is what defiles. From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile.” **(Mark 7:14-23)**

Most often than not, we are so focus on our personal wants, dreams and aspirations and even working hard to make them into reality. Jesus is teaching us to be cautious and mindful of what is really within us to be clear in our intentions.

Is God included in your dreams and aspirations? Do you spend time talking with him?

TUESDAY

The problem of Poverty

In those days when there again was a great crowd without anything to eat, he summoned the disciples and said, “My heart is moved with pity for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will collapse on the way, and some of them have come a great distance.” His disciples answered him, “Where can anyone get enough bread to satisfy them here in this deserted place?” Still he asked them, “How many loaves do you have?” “Seven,” they replied. He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then, taking the seven loaves he gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to distribute, and they distributed them to the crowd. They also had a few fish. He said the blessing over them and ordered them distributed also.

They ate and were satisfied. They picked up the fragments left over—seven baskets. **(Mark 8:1-10)**

Jesus felt compassion and pity for all people looking and wanting to be with him. He never runs out of mercy, in fact what he desires for us is richness and abundance in whatever we need. Jesus never gets tired of preaching to the people for 3 days. He feeds the people to their satisfaction and even more 7 baskets were collected as excess.

We are becoming poor because we failed to acknowledge and thank God for the many blessings that He provided us, we keep on asking for more and complaining without thanking Him. Thank God daily and share whatever you have and experience the richness of life. Have you tried sharing and bringing God to others?

WEDNESDAY

The creative solution of the lay faithful

From that place he went off to the district of Tyre.* He entered a house and wanted no one to know about it, but he could not escape notice. Soon a woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit heard about him. She came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by birth, and she begged him to drive the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, “Let the children be fed first.* For it is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs. She replied and said to him, “Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s scraps. Then he said to her, “For saying this, you may go. The demon has gone out of your daughter. When the

woman went home, she found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

(Mark 7:24-30)

Presented by the strong reality and the effect of poverty and oppression in our country today, cybersex scandal, human trafficking, and prostitutions would make us felt hopeless and we rather say, who are we in front of these giant issues? The Lord is exactly needing and accompanying you to do something, to trust in HIM and to stand firm as Lay Faithful courageous enough to live life in accordance with the Gospel. Like the the woman, nothing stops her from receiving the mercy of God through her faith.

How far do we live the gospel and trust God in our life?

THURSDAY

The problem of Politics

As he drew near, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If this day you only knew what makes for peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. **(Luke 19:41-42)**

For you know how one must imitate us. For we did not act in a disorderly way among you, nor did we eat food received free from anyone. On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day we worked, so as not to burden any of you. Not that we do not have the right. Rather, we wanted to present ourselves as a model for you, so that you might imitate us. In fact, when we were with you, we instructed you that if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat. We hear that some are conducting themselves among you in a disorderly way, by not keeping busy but minding the business of others. Such

people we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and to eat their own food. But you, brothers, do not be remiss in doing good.

(2 Thessalonians 3:7-13)

Politics is a strong inclination of craving for riches and power. Many people in these situations are blinded by selfishness, trying to build worthless treasures by injustice and corruption neglecting to build the real treasures of enriching others by their life of sincerity and integrity.

Are you living in integrity?

FRIDAY

What the lay faithful are doing?

Again he left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!" (that is, "Be opened!") and immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

(Mark 7:31-37)

Don't just be scandalized or complacent of what is happening around you. Standoff from afar look, see and be

open and ask God for help. It would be less expected from you to keep your goodness within you. You are a shepherd of the flock of God's people. Lead the flock to the green pasture as Jesus did.

Can you give something more of your life for the gospel?

SATURDAY

In the world of business and commerce.

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money-changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace. His disciples recalled the words of scripture, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

(John 2:13-17)

Many of us today consumed most of our time in gadgets and technology. Don't let your heart be filled with consumerism and with deceitful happiness they bring. Allow Jesus to cleanse us from within and savor the real joy that he gives.

Are you happy of what you are doing now?

SUNDAY READINGS

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Sirach 15:15-20

Psalm – 119

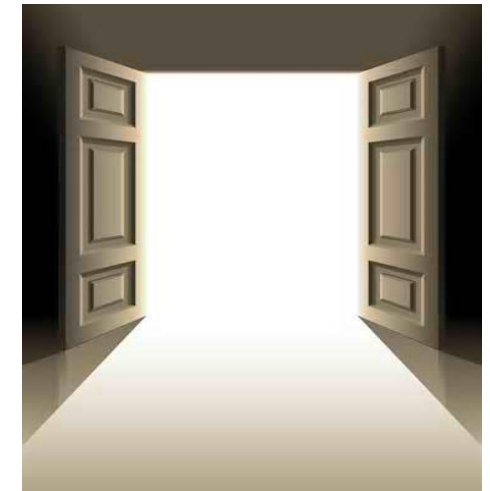
Second reading – 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

Gospel – Matthew 5:17-37

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

“Ephphatha!” that is, “Be opened!”



February 10-16, 2014



Objective of the week:

To direct our attention and action with eyes of faith to several areas of special concern at our world in the Philippines