

INTRODUCTION

Last week, we were reminded of our vocation as Verbum Dei to bring Christ to the people as many as possible. As our founder Fr. Jaime Bonet says, 'the best way to feed the crowd is through the word of God'. Furthermore, we were also graced with the fruitfulness and success of our 3rd Verbum Dei National Encounter last weekend. The encounter provoked in us as VD Family that sense of missionary conviction "to speak, to announce to the world what we believe", in order to awaken in them a life of holiness of which we are all called to live as children of God. "Be holy because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:16). Thus, "our preaching centered in the conversion and sanctification of all people in Christ is summed up in an entire and unconditional collaboration with the Holy Spirit and Mary. The Holy Spirit is the Lord and giver of Life and the artisan of all holiness and perfection and Mary is the mother of each son and daughter in her Son Jesus." VD Statute 160.

Mother Mary plays an important role in our lives because She leads us to the path of holiness. Holiness is making our heart and mind congruent with that with Christ in order to live with Him and be like Him. And as God's children, sealed by the Holy Spirit God wanted us to live a holy life formed, shape, and guided by the Holy Spirit. Remember that we are living in this world full of entertainment and vanities that fall us apart from living a holy life. We must not give in to the green jokes, pornography, and the like, for these are vexations to the soul. We are called to live "as is fitting among saints" (Eph. 5:3) for we are created from a God who is holy thus, he wanted his creations to be holy like Him.

"It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walks of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of love and by His holiness a human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society." (LG, 40)

On the other hand, we celebrate the All Saints' Day to give recognition to those people who were pilgrims like us. They lived with Christ and for Christ. Their Christian journey was a total submission for Him who was the center of their lives. They were able to conquer sufferings and continued living their good works and prayers until the very end. Now they are being rewarded by God for their endurance in following Him and now are in heaven, the eternal presence of God in glory.

⁹After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

¹⁰And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

¹¹All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

¹³Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?"

¹⁴I answered, "Sir, you know. "And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7: 9-14)

Likewise, the All Souls' Day is to remember all the souls who are still in the process of purification. It is a reminder to all of us pilgrims on earth to continue our prayers and good works to live in holiness for our sanctification and at the same time for the salvation of the souls in purgatory.

MONDAY

Doing our tasks for God's greater glory

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Behold now we are children of God; it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. And anyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:1-3)

A person who follows God's will knows how to sacrifice his pleasures for God's greater Glory and for the benefit of others. In doing His will, others do not understand about it for their focus are on material things – recreation and worldly amusements are their only desires. But a person who focuses on eternal life will most likely become like Jesus Christ himself. His words and actions are congruent with His and will radiate through others that gives light to them because they shall see God in Him. This is how to live in holiness. Holiness is putting one's heart and mind in Christ in order to continue loving his work and others no matter how laborious it is.

In holiness, we can see Christ in our work and in others; furthermore, we are able to sustain doing our difficult tasks as we enjoy the sweetness of serving God. Behold, we can experience the love of God in a very special way.

What is your attitude when doing your task? Do you do it for Christ? Was there a time that you had experienced the sweet love of God when you're at work?

TUESDAY

Suffering is a measure of love for Christ

The church is held, as a matter of faith, to be unflinchingly holy. This is because Christ the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is hailed as "alone holy", loved the Church as his

Bride, giving himself up for her so as to sanctify her (Cf. Eph 5:25-26); he joined her to himself as His body and endowed her with the gift of the Holy Spirit for the Glory of God. Therefore all in the church, whether they belong to the hierarchy or as cared for by it, are called to holiness according to the apostles saying "For this is the will of God, your sanctification." (1 Th 4:3; Cf Eph 1:4; Lumen Gentium, 39). It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love and by their holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society"

(Lumen Gentium 40)

God alone is holy. Because of his abundant love for each one of us, He sent us the Holy Spirit to enlighten and to guide our path towards holiness so that we may become like Him.

To suffer for Christ is a privilege to become holy. It is a road that leads to the path of life so that others may believe and live for Jesus Christ. One important thing in suffering is acceptance with all humility for Christ because it is only through suffering that we can measure our love to him. According to Mother Teresa of Calcutta, "what is the use of grumbling when you suffer for Christ? Through silence, it gives us a new way of looking at things." Through this we are in the fullness of our Christian life because we can gain wisdom and wisdom is from God which motivates us to do good, to capacitate us to fight against temptation, to carry our crosses and to face our trials with confidence in God. We are all invited to live for Christ amidst the haste and chaos of this world so that we may become holy.

WEDNESDAY

We are sealed with the Holy Spirit and is meant for heaven

²Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He

called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea:³ “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”⁴ Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

(Revelations 7:2-4)

We are all destined to be in heaven because we are all sealed by the Holy Spirit, yet we should not be complacent because temptations are so strong enough to fall us apart from God. We must always be vigilant by fixing our eyes on Jesus who suffered and died for us. Therefore, we must also suffer for Him by not being easily tempted by the worldly amusements and by not giving up our crosses for our sanctification. As St. Therese of the Child Jesus said, “Let’s spend heaven by doing good works on earth.”

Who is my strength during temptation? Do I suffer for Jesus?

THURSDAY

Sufferings lead us closer to Christ

The forms and tasks of life are many but holiness is one that sanctify which is cultivated by all who act under God’s Spirit and obeying the Father’s voice and adoring God the Father in spirit and truth, follow Christ, poor humble and cross-bearing, that they may deserve to be partakers of His glory.

(Lumen Gentium, 41)

Let’s always remember that life is temporal. What is important in this life is to live with Christ to gain heaven which is eternal. One thing that leads us closer to Christ is through suffering because through this we can recognize our limitations thus, we cling ourselves to Christ who is our God who makes our impossibilities turn into possibilities. As we fix our eyes on Him, we conquer temptation and regain strength from Him that bears the fruits of patience, humility, understanding, etc. then we can humbly carry our cross with

trust and confidence in Him. Through this we partake His sufferings in Calvary and these sufferings would become beautiful and meaningful for it is not you alone who carries your cross but you are carrying with Jesus. It is an act of adoring Christ in a silent way at the same time an act of our sanctification.

How do you carry your cross? Do you carry it as an act of sanctification?

FRIDAY

We must clothe ourselves with the values of Christ

You are the people of God, He loved you and chose you for His son. So then you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, goodness and patience. **(Colossians 3:12)**

As VD disciples, we are all encouraged to live out the values for they will neither be rotten nor be stolen but are tickets to heaven. Living the values is a measure of our prayer. Therefore we are all invited to pray to the Word of God more and more to make the word become flesh in us. Our values are the fruits of our prayer that would speak to others that God is in us. This is the way the saints lived. They lived their lives full of values because they had possessed the attributes of Jesus through constant prayer and meditation. In living Jesus’ attributes, suffering would become meaningful and persevering and this is what we need to do as pilgrims of this earth.

Do I pray the Word of God everyday? Do I live out His Words day by day?

SATURDAY

Living out toward eternal life

But now you have been set free from sin and are the slaves of God. Your gain is a life fully dedicated to Him and the result is eternal life.

(Romans 6:22)

The saints are the people who lived an ordinary life into something extra-ordinary because they lived simply and happily doing the will of the Father despite the sufferings and pains. Because of their intimacy with God, the gifts of the Holy Spirit overflow in them that made themselves dedicated to follow Christ faithfully.

The way to holiness is not easy because it needs full commitment. If you have dedication to live for Christ, sufferings would become bearable and meaningful. The saints were able to continue their journey of faith until the very end because they accepted sufferings which means they allowed the blood of Jesus Christ to fill their hearts in order to gain strength and gradually transform themselves and gain eternal life.

Eternal life is a goal of one’s Christian journey. How to gain eternal life is simply through prayer and living out the prayer. What sustains the saints in facing their crosses and trials are only acceptance with humility and trust in God through listening to the Word of God. According to Mother Teresa of Calcutta, “What matters in prayer is not what we speak to God but what He speaks to us.” Therefore, we are all encouraged to pray more and more each day by listening to Him who speaks to us who is our hope, our strength and our consolation to carry out our crosses with all humility and obedience to His will. Through this, we allow ourselves to help Jesus carry His cross at the same time allow Jesus to carry our cross.

31ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First reading: Wisdom 11:22-12:2

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13, 14

Second reading: 2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2

Gospel: Luke 19:1-10

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

“God wants you to be holy”

(c.f. 1 Th. 4:3)

October 28 – November 3, 2013

Objective of the week:

To be aware that as baptized Christians we are all called to live as is fitting among saints’ holy life (Eph. 5:3).