

INTRODUCTION

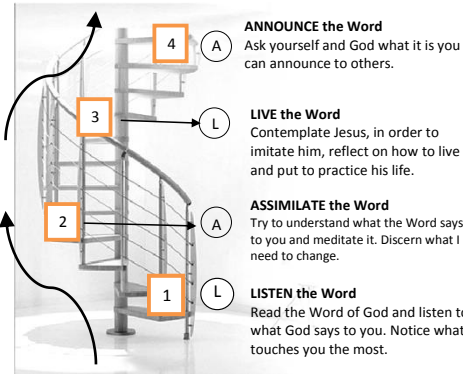
In this special year of grace, the Church encourages us to outline a new style of behaving and relating with God, with ourselves and with our brothers.

As the year started, we are blest with this Year of Mercy. It is of great significance the Mercy of God that the International Eucharistic Congress is held here in the Philippines, Cebu in particular and with the Gift of Priesthood in the Ordination of Fr. Bong. These two events simply manifest Gods continuous gift of mercy for all of us personally and as a community. May these gifts bring us into realization and recognize God as the ultimate source of this great mercy. As God's children we inherit such attribute, that we always need to look for Jesus and his Works of Mercy. That instead of being spectators, we may also practice in our daily life, Jesus' works of mercy in these challenging times. In the way we are living, God's kingdom will be manifested. With all these, may we bring healing in a simple way to the community we are in and to the whole church.

PRAYING WITH THE WORD

- "For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ." **St. Jerome**
- And let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for "we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying." **St. Ambrose**
(Dei Verbum #25 Vatican II document)

DYNAMISM OF THE WORD



MONDAY

Mercy is God's Initiative and Innate in us

And the Word became flesh* and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth **(John 1:14)**

From the beginning, God has been consistently merciful to HIS people, sending them prophets to concretize HIS words for them. But the people were stubborn until Jesus was sent who became the concrete model of good words, deeds and conviction.

Do we believe that as children of God we inherit this trait of Mercy?

TUESDAY

Activate the Mercy within by looking for Jesus who is the real source,

35The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, 36and as he watched

Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God."* 37The two disciples* heard what he said and followed Jesus. 38Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day **(John 1:35-39)**

Looking for Jesus each day will encourage us more and invite us to be more sensitive to the needs of our brothers. It will awaken in us the seed of being merciful, the seed of being concerned not only to the material or physical needs but also to the moral, intellectual and spiritual needs of our brothers and sisters.

Are we excited each day to be motivated by Jesus to recognize every opportunity to do works of mercy?

WEDNESDAY

Mercy rather than Condemn

while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.* 2But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. 3Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. 4They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. 5Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women.* So what do you say?" 6They said this to test him, so that

they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger.* 7* But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." 8Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. 9And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. 10Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, [and] from now on do not sin anymore." **(John 8:1-11)**

In this experience of Jesus, the woman who is a public enemy and about to be judged and be stoned to death for the sin she committed still deserved the Mercy of Jesus. He forgave her sins, condemning her not and inviting her not to sin again. Do we have same experience of condemning and judging others? Do we reach to the point of forgiving and not condemning like Jesus?

THURSDAY

Mercy rather than Hate

25 There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" 27He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all

your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”28He replied to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.” 29 But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. 32Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. 33But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. 34He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. 35The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’ 36Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” 37He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

In this story, Jesus is telling us the ultimate challenge of how Mercy works as God expected us to do. It is always not easy to do a favor to the person whom we don't want to work with, to live with or to be with and especially if this person hurts us.

How did the Samaritan went through all of the good works? If the Samaritan did it well, Can we do it as well? Alone we

cannot, but with Jesus nothing will be so difficult.

FRIDAY

Make Mercy a way of living

The Council Fathers strongly perceived, as a true breath of the Holy Spirit, a need to talk about God to men and women of their time in a more accessible way. The walls which for too long had made the Church a kind of fortress were torn down and the time had come to proclaim the Gospel in a new way. It was a new phase of the same evangelization that had existed from the beginning. It was a fresh undertaking for all Christians to bear witness to their faith with greater enthusiasm and conviction. The Church sensed a responsibility to be a living sign of the Father's love in the world.

(Misericordiae Vultus #4)

Concrete works of mercy shouldn't be one time or big time rather a habit, small or big. We need to get used to of responding to the daily invitation of the Holy Spirit of bearing witness to our faith in words and in deeds, with greater joy and conviction.

Do we exercise works of mercy as often as possible?

SATURDAY

Allow the Mercy of God to work, Manifest HIS kingdom in you and in the Community you are in.

We are afflicted in every way, but not constrained; perplexed, but not driven to despair **(2 Corinthians 4:8)**

We shall be filled, above all, with a sense of gratitude and thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity for having granted us an extraordinary time of grace. We will entrust the life of the Church, all humanity, and the entire cosmos to the Lordship of Christ, asking him to pour out his mercy upon us like the morning dew, so that everyone may work together to build a brighter future. How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! May the balm of mercy reach everyone, both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst! **(Misericordiae Vultus #5)**

“A sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst” is what a world we need to live with. This should be the desire and hope of each believer seeing the fruit of the great Mercy of God for our life, for our brothers and sisters, and the church. May the Mercy of God, with our collaboration, greatly abound to all in this year of mercy.

Is our life a reflection of Jesus' Mercy for all?

SUNDAY

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 71: 1-6,15-17

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Gospel: Luke 4:21:30

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

“Use the medicine of mercy and do not take hold of the weapons of ruthlessness”

General Theme: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. **(Luke 6:36)**

General Objective:

- to unite the prayer of the VD Family with same spirit of the whole Church in this extraordinary year of mercy.
- to be aware of the graces this year on what mercy brings to us in our journey of faith.

51st Eucharistic Congress



Cebu, Philippines
24th - 31st January 2016
Christ in You, Our Hope of Glory

Objective of the week:

To recognize the medicine of Mercy for peace