

## INTRODUCTION

Happy Easter to all! Christ is risen! Christ is alive! He has conquered the world and has brought us to new life. This is the truth that we continue to celebrate and bring with us during this Easter Season and the whole of our lives.

These coming weeks ahead, we will deepen on the themes for the National Disciples' retreat. These will be under the spirit of the Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Pope Francis entitled 'Evangelii Gaudium'(The Joy of the Gospel). As people filled with Easter joy, we are invited this week to a renewed experience of our encounter with Jesus. ***"I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them..."(EG #3) "or a renewed encounter with God's love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship..."(EG #8).***

For the past days, we have been praying on the Resurrection passages. We have seen how the search for Jesus after his death continued in the lives of the disciples. From Mary Magdalene who searched for him in the tomb, to the disciples searching for answers as they walked to Emmaus, from Peter who went back fishing, searching for this first encounter with Jesus and many others. They were all searching to encounter him once again in their lives, but Jesus appeared to them, introduced them to a new way of encountering him. He brought them to a renewed relationship beyond the relationship that they used to have in the past. Jesus reached out to them and appeared to them many times and in many ways in the middle of their doubts, fears and challenges in accepting

all that happened. Jesus showed to them that he is beyond all these.

Jesus is inviting us this week to allow him to bring us to a renewed experience of his love. Not to remain and be contented of our knowledge of him in the past, but to continue seeking for a renewed relationship of him in a risen life.

## EASTER MONDAY

### You must be born anew

There was one of the Pharisees called Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews, <sup>2</sup> who came to Jesus by night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher; for no one could perform the signs that you do unless God were with him.' <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered: In all truth I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above. <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said, 'How can anyone who is already old be born? Is it possible to go back into the womb again and be born?' <sup>5</sup> Jesus replied: In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit; <sup>6</sup> what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above. <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

***(John 3:1-8)***

*Jesus is inviting us that in order to live as people of Easter joy, who have received new life, we need to be born anew. This Easter Season, he is telling us the vitality of this constant desire to be*

*born anew. What is the newness that Jesus is giving me this Easter Season?*

## EASTER TUESDAY

### Renewing my encounter with Jesus

<sup>7</sup> Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above. <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> 'How is that possible?' asked Nicodemus. <sup>10</sup> Jesus replied, 'You are the Teacher of Israel, and you do not know these things! <sup>11</sup> 'In all truth I tell you, we speak only about what we know and witness only to what we have seen and yet you people reject our evidence. <sup>12</sup> If you do not believe me when I speak to you about earthly things, how will you believe me when I speak to you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man; <sup>14</sup> as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up <sup>15</sup> so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. ***(John 3:7-15)***

*Easter Season is a time to renew once again, to be born anew in my relationship with Jesus. What kind of newness in my relationship with Jesus did I experience this Easter?*

## EASTER WEDNESDAY

### Love restores our joy

<sup>16</sup> For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but

so that through him the world might be saved. <sup>18</sup> No one who believes in him will be judged; but whoever does not believe is judged already, because that person does not believe in the Name of God's only Son. <sup>19</sup> And the judgement is this: though the light has come into the world people have preferred darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, to prevent his actions from being shown up; <sup>21</sup> but whoever does the truth comes out into the light, so that what he is doing may plainly appear as done in God.'

***(John 3:16-21)***

*One of the greatest and obvious experience in Easter is joy that comes from the heart. A joy that many times we cannot explain, and a joy that nothing and no one can take away from us. The experience of his love restores that deep joy and raises our lives to all that is eternal.*

## EASTER THURSDAY

### Challenges in our encounter with Jesus

<sup>54</sup> and, coming to his home town, he taught the people in their synagogue in such a way that they were astonished and said, 'Where did the man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? <sup>55</sup> This is the carpenter's son, surely? Is not his mother the woman called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Jude? <sup>56</sup> His sisters, too, are they not all here with us? So where did the man get it all?' <sup>57</sup> And they would not accept him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is despised only in his own country and in his own house,' <sup>58</sup> and he did not work

many miracles there because of their lack of faith. **(Matthew 13:54-58)**

*Many times, the challenges continue the same as we go back to the world around us, to the same usual rhythm of daily life. But there is a change in us. We don't look at them as hindrances to be with Jesus, but we now have courage and a stronger faith to believe that he has conquered the world. His love goes beyond and is much greater than all the challenges.*

#### EASTER FRIDAY

##### The joy of a missionary disciple

After this, Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee -- or of Tiberias- <sup>2</sup> and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he had done in curing the sick. <sup>3</sup> Jesus climbed the hillside and sat down there with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> The time of the Jewish Passover was near. <sup>5</sup> Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' <sup>6</sup> He said this only to put Philip to the test; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. <sup>7</sup> Philip answered, 'Two hundred denarii would not buy enough to give them a little piece each.' <sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, <sup>9</sup> 'Here is a small boy with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that among so many?' <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat down. <sup>11</sup> Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were sitting there; he then did the same with the fish, distributing as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup> When they had eaten enough

he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing is wasted.' <sup>13</sup> So they picked them up and filled twelve large baskets with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. <sup>14</sup> Seeing the sign that he had done, the people said, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.' <sup>15</sup> Jesus, as he realised they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, fled back to the hills alone. **(John 6:1-15)**

*The joy of every missionary disciple is experiencing and encountering Jesus in the mission. In the mission, we can become witnesses of his miracles, of his joy and the change in the lives of the people because of him. Let us learn to enjoy relating with Jesus in a new way as we go with him in the mission.*

#### EASTER SATURDAY

##### Jesus restores our greatness as missionary disciples

<sup>6</sup> Jesus said: I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you know me, you will know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him. <sup>8</sup> Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, <sup>9</sup> 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say, "Show us the Father"?' <sup>10</sup> Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? What I say to you I do not speak of my own accord: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his works. <sup>11</sup> You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is

in me; or at least believe it on the evidence of these works. <sup>12</sup> In all truth I tell you, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, and will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> Whatever you ask in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. **(John 14:6-14)**

*Jesus is the source of joy. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. When we are with him, he will restore us to greatness. He will bring to greatness all what little we can offer to him.*

#### EASTER SUNDAY

##### Easter Week 3

First Reading: **Acts 2:14-28**

Psalm: **Psalm 16:1-11**

Second Reading: **1 Peter 1:17-21**

Gospel: **Luke 24:13-35**



## Verbon Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

## With Christ, joy is constantly born anew.

April 28-May 4, 2014



#### Objective of the week:

To renew our encounter with Jesus that restores our joy as missionary disciples.