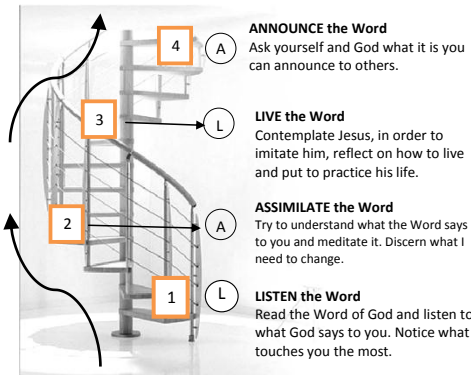


## INTRODUCTION

Now is the week of great thanksgiving to God for His mercy for all of us. It was a nice experience last week to witness the attitude of John the Baptist as how he fixed his gaze to God through prayer in order to experience the merciful love of God and in turn he was able to serve God by sharing mercy to others as he performed his responsibility to clear the way for Jesus.

We are invited this week to keep our gaze on others fixing on his mercy. According to the saying, "We cannot give what we do not have," so therefore, there is a need that each one of us must be sensitive to the overflowing merciful love of God in our life so that we can also share this to others. As Mark 5:19 said, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you."

We can't be sensitive and aware of the mercy of God if we don't acquire the attitude of simplicity and humility like a child. Which is concretely demonstrated by Jesus as a child, Senior Santo Nino, as we recently celebrated the feast of Santo Nino de Cebu. We are reminded that a childlike attitude makes us sensitive of the merciful love of God and thus in return we will be able to fix on the mercy for others to be shared.



### MONDAY

**Savor God's gaze of mercy in your life for you to keep your gaze of mercy on others**

**Psalm 103:3-4** <sup>3</sup> He forgives all your offences, cures all your diseases, <sup>4</sup> he redeems your life from the abyss, crowns you with faithful love and tenderness;

**Psalm 146:7-9** <sup>7</sup> gives justice to the oppressed, gives food to the hungry; Yahweh sets prisoners free. <sup>8</sup> Yahweh gives sight to the blind, lifts up those who are bowed down. <sup>9</sup> Yahweh protects the stranger, he sustains the orphan and the widow. Yahweh loves the upright, but he frustrates the wicked.

**Psalm 147:3-6** <sup>3</sup> healing the broken-hearted and binding up their wounds; <sup>4</sup> he counts out the number of the stars, and gives each one of them a name. <sup>5</sup> Our Lord is great, all-powerful, his wisdom beyond all telling. <sup>6</sup> Yahweh sustains the poor, and humbles the wicked to the ground.

"It is proper to God to exercise mercy and He manifests his omnipotence

particularly this way." Saint Thomas of Aquinas' words show that God's mercy rather than a sign of weakness is, the mark of His omnipotence. For this reason the liturgy, in one of its most ancient collections, has asked us to pray: "O, God who reveal your power above all in your mercy and forgiveness." Throughout the history of humanity, God will always be the one who is present, close, provident, holy and merciful.

***(Misericordiae Vultus 16)***

*How do you describe God's nature? Do you experience His mercy and enjoy it? Have you been able to connect to Him in prayer as the source of real mercy?*

### TUESDAY

**You can only be called a disciple if you will become like your teacher**

**Luke 6:36** <sup>36</sup> 'Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate.

**Luke 10:25-28** <sup>25</sup> And now a lawyer stood up and, to test him, asked, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' <sup>26</sup> He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? What is your reading of it?' <sup>27</sup> He replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.' <sup>28</sup> Jesus said to him, 'You have answered right, do this and life is yours.'

**1 John 4:8-16** <sup>8</sup> Whoever fails to love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> This is the revelation of God's love for us, that God sent his only Son into the world that we might have life through him. <sup>10</sup> Love consists in this: it is not we who loved

God, but God loved us and sent his Son to expiate our sins. <sup>11</sup> My dear friends, if God loved us so much, we too should love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God, but as long as we love one another God remains in us and his love comes to its perfection in us. <sup>13</sup> This is the proof that we remain in him and he in us, that he has given us a share in his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> We ourselves have seen and testify that the Father sent his Son as Saviour of the world. <sup>15</sup> Anyone who acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God. <sup>16</sup> We have recognised for ourselves, and put our faith in, the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.

*How much effort do you spend to fix your eyes to our teacher of love, Jesus? Have you examined the longings of your heart to become like Him? Are you aware that we need to be like Jesus as our life is called to be like Christ?*

### WEDNESDAY

**God's Loving Desire: For us to be like Christ, our brother and teacher**

"Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tendencies she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching and in her preaching and her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love. The Church has an endless desire to show mercy."

***(Misericordiae Vultus 10)***

"However, without a witness to mercy, life becomes fruitless and sterile, as if

sequestered in a barren desert. The time has come for the Church to take up the joyful call to mercy once more. It is time to return to the basics and to hear the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters. Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instill in us the courage to look to the future with hope." (*Misericordiae Vultus 10[8]*)

*Do you hear the voice of Jesus calling you to be like Him clearly? How enthusiastic are you to give mercy to others? Are you determined to go and make your life be the bearer of God's mercy for others?*

#### THURSDAY

##### **Gratefulness to the mercy of God is seen by our acts of mercy for others**

**James 1:22-25** <sup>22</sup> But you must do what the Word tells you and not just listen to it and deceive yourselves. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the Word and takes no action is like someone who looks at his own features in a mirror and, <sup>24</sup> once he has seen what he looks like, goes off and immediately forgets it. <sup>25</sup> But anyone who looks steadily at the perfect law of freedom and keeps to it -- not listening and forgetting, but putting it into practice -- will be blessed in every undertaking.

*How open are you for the invitation of the Church to rethink about the quality of your relationship to others? How much time and effort do you spend to read and listen to the words of God in order to be an effective witness of the mercy of God?*

#### FRIDAY

##### **To forgive and be forgiven is the living sign of the Father's love in the world**

"Now the Bride of Christ wished to use the medicine of mercy rather than taking up arms of severity. The Catholic Church as she holds high the torch of Catholic truth at this Ecumenical Council, wants to show herself a loving mother to all; patient, kind, moved by compassion and goodness toward her separated children."

The modern world's values were not only respected and honored, its efforts approved, its aspirations purified and blessed... services to mankind, of every condition, in every weakness and need. (*Misericordiae Vultus 4*)

"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 Fathers' love in the world." (*Misericordiae Vultus 4*)

#### SATURDAY

##### **The Hands of Mary our Mother the Immaculate Conception is the door of God's mercy for all mankind**

**Luke 1:29-38** <sup>29</sup> She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, <sup>30</sup> but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. <sup>31</sup> Look! You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; <sup>33</sup> he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' <sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?' <sup>35</sup> The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come

upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And I tell you this too: your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, <sup>37</sup> for nothing is impossible to God.' <sup>38</sup> Mary said, 'You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said.' And the angel left her.

**Luke 1:41-45** <sup>41</sup> Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup> Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? <sup>44</sup> Look, the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. <sup>45</sup> Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

*Do you experience the overflowing mercy of God through His words? Are you aware that the gaze of God's mercy on you is his desire for you to be the door of his mercy for others? Is your heart and mind convinced that mercy will always be greater than sin? Why?*

#### SUNDAY

##### **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 19

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** 1 Corinthians 12:12-30

**Gospel:** Luke 1:1-4, 14-21

# Verbum Dei

## GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

### **" We are called to keep our gaze on others fixed on the mercy of God "**

January 18-24, 2016

**General Theme:** "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (cf. 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.



#### **Objective of the week:**

To look at others in the same way as Jesus did fixing on the Father's mercy.