

INTRODUCTION

Last Sunday we celebrated on the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. This feast is also very significant and important for us Verbum Dei not just because he is our patron saint, but also because we were called to live the same charism and apostolic zeal of St. Paul from the very beginning.

This week we will pray and deepen on the process of His conversion and how we are called to discover, to live and move forward with the dream of God for us as a Family.

Let us also continue to draw strength from Pope Francis and all the messages he has for us as a Family and as a Filipino people.



MONDAY

Seek for the will of God

(Memorial of Sts. Timothy and Titus, Bishops)

I urge you, then, brothers, remembering the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, dedicated and acceptable to God; that is the kind of worship for you, as sensible people. ² Do not model your behaviour on the contemporary world, but let the renewing of your minds transform you, so that you may discern for yourselves what is the will of God -- what is good and acceptable and mature.

(Romans 12:1-2)

To hear and accept God's call, to make a home for Jesus, you must be able to rest

in the Lord. You must make time each day to rest in the Lord, to pray. To pray is to rest in the Lord. But you may say to me: Holy Father, I know that; I want to pray, but there is so much work to do! I must care for my children; I have chores in the home; I am too tired even to sleep well. I know. This may be true, but if we do not pray, we will not know the most important thing of all: God's will for us. And for all our activity, our busy-ness, without prayer we will accomplish very little. ***(Pope Francis on the Family)***

We can always have the excuse that I am tired and busy with so many things and I don't have time to pray and attend prayer meetings. Many times I can think that prayer and his will gives me additional demands for my already busy schedule. What if I follow only His will? Perhaps knowing and doing his will gives me enough to live a good and peaceful life. Maybe I am the one, with all my unnecessary things in life, who is making me tired and busy. Seek for His will.

TUESDAY

Connecting to God's dream

Coasts and islands, listen to me, pay attention, distant peoples. Yahweh called me when I was in the womb, before my birth he had pronounced my name. ² He made my mouth like a sharp sword, he hid me in the shadow of his hand. He made me into a sharpened arrow and concealed me in his quiver. ³ He said to me, 'Israel, you are my servant, through whom I shall manifest my glory.' ⁴ But I said, 'My toil has been futile, I have exhausted myself for nothing, to no purpose.' Yet all the while my cause was with Yahweh and my reward with my God. ⁵ And now Yahweh has spoken,

who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him and to re-unite Israel to him;-I shall be honoured in Yahweh's eyes, and my God has been my strength.- ⁶ He said, 'It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I shall make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach the remotest parts of earth.'

(Isaiah 49:1-6)

You can't have a family without dreams. When you lose the capacity to dream, then you lose the capacity to love. And this energy to love is lost.

(Pope Francis on the Family)

Let us discover and connect to the dream of God for us and for the world. Let us dream with Him as a Family by constantly listening to Him in every daily encounter with the Word of God. How often do I dream with God? Love does not consist only in gazing each other but looking together at the same direction. (The Little Prince)

WEDNESDAY

This is my chosen instrument to bring my name to everyone.

(Memorial of St. Thomas Aquinas)

Meanwhile Saul was still breathing threats to slaughter the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked for letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, that would authorise him to arrest and take to Jerusalem any followers of the Way, men or women, that he might find. ³ It happened that while he was travelling to Damascus and approaching the city, suddenly a light from heaven shone all round him. ⁴ He fell to the ground, and then he heard a

voice saying, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' ⁵ 'Who are you, Lord?' he asked, and the answer came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.' ⁶ Get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' ⁷ The men travelling with Saul stood there speechless, for though they heard the voice they could see no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing at all, and they had to lead him into Damascus by the hand. ⁹ For three days he was without his sight and took neither food nor drink. ¹⁰ There was a disciple in Damascus called Ananias, and he had a vision in which the Lord said to him, 'Ananias!' When he replied, 'Here I am, Lord,' ¹¹ the Lord said, 'Get up and go to Straight Street and ask at the house of Judas for someone called Saul, who comes from Tarsus. At this moment he is praying, ¹² and has seen a man called Ananias coming in and laying hands on him to give him back his sight.' ¹³ But in response, Ananias said, 'Lord, I have heard from many people about this man and all the harm he has been doing to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ He has come here with a warrant from the chief priests to arrest everybody who invokes your name.' ¹⁵ The Lord replied, 'Go, for this man is my chosen instrument to bring my name before gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; ¹⁶ I myself will show him how much he must suffer for my name.' ¹⁷ Then Ananias went. He entered the house, and laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, I have been sent by the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, so that you may recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁸ It was as though scales fell away from his eyes and

immediately he was able to see again. So he got up and was baptised,¹⁹ and after taking some food he regained his strength. After he had spent only a few days with the disciples in Damascus,²⁰ he began preaching in the synagogues, 'Jesus is the Son of God.' **(Acts 9:1-20)**

We can be working hard already with so much zeal. Like St. Paul, perhaps there are moments when we need to experience a deep conversion wherein Jesus wakes us up, changes the direction of our vision and live according to the dream He has for us and for the world.

THURSDAY

As ambassadors of Christ, His love should always impel us.

¹⁴ For the love of Christ impels us, once we have come to the conviction that one died for all; therefore, all have died.
(2 Corinthians 5:14)

²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

(2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

...conversion to the newness of the Gospel entails a daily encounter with the Lord in prayer. The saints teach us that this is the source of all apostolic zeal!

(Pope Francis)

We are ambassadors of Christ to the world. This is who we are. How can I draw more from Christ the apostolic zeal I need to live my identity?

FRIDAY

Get up, act and move forward

¹⁰ Love can cause no harm to your neighbour, and so love is the fulfilment of the Law. ¹¹ Besides, you know the time has come; the moment is here for you to stop sleeping and wake up, because by now our salvation is nearer than when we first began to believe. ¹² The night is nearly over, daylight is on the way; so let us throw off everything that belongs to the darkness and equip ourselves for the light. ¹³ Let us live decently, as in the light of day; with no orgies or drunkenness, no promiscuity or licentiousness, and no wrangling or jealousy. ¹⁴ Let your armour be the Lord Jesus Christ, and stop worrying about how your disordered natural inclinations may be fulfilled. **(Romans 13:10-14)**

In our families, we have to get up and act! Faith does not remove us from the world, but draws us more deeply into it. This is very important! We have to be deeply engaged with the world, but with the power of prayer. Each of us, in fact, has a special role in preparing for the coming of God's kingdom in our world.

(Pope Francis on the Family)

Let us not be drowned by our challenges in life, but to get up, act and move forward as a Family. May our love for Him give us the zeal to be more sensitive, more deeply involved and engaged with the world – bringing the Gospel to everyone. Faith does not make us run away and hide from the world, but it forms us to be true apostles changing the world.

SATURDAY

Networks that expand the newness of the Gospel.

(Memorial of St. John Bosco)

The Gospel calls individual Christians to live lives of honesty, integrity and concern for the common good. But it also calls Christian communities to create "circles of integrity", networks of solidarity which can expand to embrace and transform society by their prophetic witness. **(Pope Francis)**

2. The Verbum Dei Missionary Family is an institution of the Catholic Church at the service of the Word of God, to which belong all the faithful who share the same spirituality and mission of Verbum Dei... **(Statutes of the VDMFa 2)**

4. Its goal is the living-out and propagation of the Kingdom of God through prayer, testimony of life, and the ministry of the Word, forming apostles of Christ, and creating evangelizing communities. The VDMFa, with the motto of the first disciples of Jesus, "We will dedicate ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word", and the spirit of the first Christian community, concretizes and centers its specific mission in the Word of God.

(Statutes of the VDMFa 4)

We are called not just to be good individuals but to build networks spreading the transforming power of the Word of God. Am I just concerned for my own spiritual growth or am I helping in building the Kingdom through creating evangelizing communities?

SUNDAY READINGS

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Deuteronomy 15:18-20

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 95

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 7:32-35

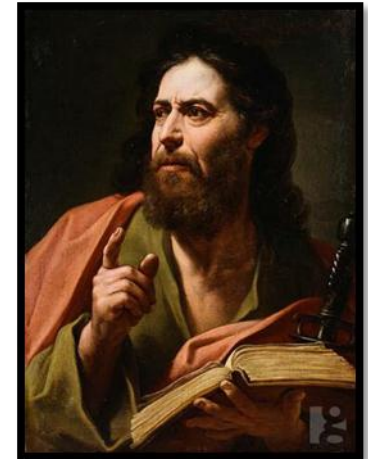
Gospel: Mark 1:21-28

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"The love of Christ impels us."

January 26-February 1, 2015



Objective of the week:

To look at the Conversion of St. Paul and experience as a Family his same conversion through the encounter with Christ - becoming true evangelizers in the world of today.