

INTRODUCTION

God wants a family, and HE created you to be a part of it. The Bible is the story of our LORD building a family who will love, serve, glorify, adore, honor and worship HIM. As children in God's family we are given the riches and treasures of HIS grace; kindness, patience, wisdom, power, glory and mercy as our materials in order to build His kingdom here on earth.

This is our task; God is counting on us to be bridge to others. "We will put all our efforts into ensuring that all people "reach full knowledge of the truth" (1Tim 2:4): being, knowing, and experiencing that we are all brothers and sisters, children of the one Father, with the same rights and duties. Our greatest ideal will be to make disciples of Jesus Christ of all nations who, in their turn, may proclaim, with their lives and with their words, the Good News of the Kingdom (Lk4:43) and the marvellous works of God." VDFC#9

This is the inheritance that God entrusts us, to make known HIS LOVE to the world and to reveal to them that we all belong to one big family of God. God has reserved a priceless inheritance for HIS children. It is kept in heaven for you, pure and unfaded, beyond the reach of change and decay (1 Peter 1: 4)

Being included in God's family is the highest honor, the greatest privilege you and I will ever receive. How can I start treating other believers like a member of my own family?

As a part of the Verbum Dei family, how do I reach out to others and share to them the LOVE of GOD?

MONDAY

Reaching out to other through a life of Loving Service

The entire law is summed up in a single command: "LOVE your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:14)

"This is good and it pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth"

(1 Timothy 2:4)

God wants us to love everyone, but HE is particularly concerned that we learn to love others in his family. This is called fellowship. Jesus said that our love for each other is our greatest witness to the world. LOVE is the most important part of our life - to love God & others. (1 John 3:18)

One of the best expressions of love is time. Whenever you give your time, you are giving a portion of your life. You are making a sacrifice which is the essence of love.

Is love the top priority in my relationships? How do I show or give it to others?

TUESDAY

We build God's Kingdom today living the Beatitudes

Jesus saw the crowds and went up a hill, where he sat down. His disciples gathered around him, ²and he began to teach them:

³*"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!*

⁴*"Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!*

⁵*"Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has*

promised!

⁶*"Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires;*

God will satisfy them fully!

⁷*"Happy are those who are merciful to others;*

God will be merciful to them!

⁸*"Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God!*

⁹*"Happy are those who work for peace; God will call them his children!...*

(Matthew 5:1-12)

¹⁴*"You are like light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁶In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5: 13-16)*

"By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will... It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are closely associated that these may always be effected and grow according to Christ and maybe to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer."CCC#898

WEDNESDAY

Jesus called me to belong and be committed to God's family

"In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (Romans 12:5)

Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. ¹⁰If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him.

¹²*Two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break.*

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-10.12)

We're created for community and fellowship. While our relationship to Jesus is personal, God never intends it to be private. In God's family you're connected to every other believer. We belong to each other for eternity. The church is a body, not a building or an organization. We discover our role in life (in the body of Christ) through our relationships with others. Only in regular contact with others can we learn real fellowship. We can experience the truth that we are interconnected and dependent on each other. True fellowship is being as committed to each other as we are to our LORD. *"We are each of us angels with only one wing, and we can only fly embracing each other."* (Luciano de Crescenzo)

Every Christian needs to be involved in a small group within your church. Community is a way of living our Christian faith, our discipleship. It can be a home fellowship group, a Bible study group, youth or couples group where real community takes place.

Does my level of involvement in my church demonstrate that I love and am committed to God's family?

THURSDAY

Cultivating Community

Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:25)

"...The intimate union of the apostle with Christ will make him or her feel vitally

connected to every brother and sister with bonds stronger than even those of flesh and blood. In the heart of the Church, in obedience to her, and with her, we will feel the fraternal pulse healthy or ill, of all people without exception or discrimination whatsoever; with Christ and like him, we will give our life for the same Church and for the faith of our brothers and sisters throughout the world." **VDFC#44**

To help build genuine fellowship in your church or small group you must be humble, honest, courteous, respect confidentiality and have frequent and regular contact with others, and everything around in whom build among us bonds stronger than flesh and blood: Jesus. Relationships take time and effort, but in Jesus our heart in loving others grow and expand, He teaches us to love others in Him.

You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor. (James 3:10)

Make the effort to be humble and courteous. "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5). Community has nothing to do with compatibility. The basis for our fellowship is our relationship to God.

Deep fellowship is built with confidentiality, acceptance and trust.

How could I help *cultivate* the characteristics of real community in my small group and church?

FRIDAY

A community cultivated and nourished in God's love engenders communion.

God loves Unity

"The groups of believers were united in their hearts and spirit... In fact, they shared everything." (Acts 4:32)

⁹ "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those you gave me, for they belong to you. ¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine; and my glory is shown through them. ¹¹ And now I am coming to you; I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world. Holy Father! Keep them safe by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one just as you and I are one..." (John 17:9-11.22-23)

God desires us to experience oneness and harmony with each other. The Holy Trinity is unified and God wants us to be unified, too. Jesus in his final moments prayed passionately for our unity. And the Holy Spirit is the one who unites us in love.

Nothing is more valuable to God than his church. Jesus paid it with HIS blood and it is worth protecting. You need to think of yourself as an agent of unity, commissioned by Jesus Christ to promote and preserve the fellowship among believers. "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Eph 4: 3)

Oveta Culp Hobby said, "Brotherhood doesn't come in a package. It is not a commodity to be taken down from the shelf with one hand ---- it is an accomplishment of soul-searching prayer and perseverance."

Do I accept the responsibility to protect the unity of my church? What am I

personally doing to protect the unity in my church family right now?

SATURDAY

Reach out by Loving your Enemies

"But love your enemies, do good to them and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked." (Luke 6:34-36)

From the time John preached his message until this very day the Kingdom of heaven has suffered violent attacks, and violent men try to seize it. (Matthew 11:12)

Peacemaking is not avoiding conflict. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, was never afraid of conflict. Sometimes we need to avoid conflict, sometimes we need to create it, and sometimes we need to resolve it. So we must pray and to ask Jesus continual guidance and enlightenment. Peacemaking is also not appeasement, is also to experience the challenge to create it. (Mt11:12) Christ refused to back down on many issue, standing HIS ground in the face of evil opposition.

Mahatma Gandhi said. "It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemies is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business."

With whom do you need to restore fellowship? God has restored our relationship with him through Christ, and has given us this ministry of restoring relationship."

Who do I need to restore a broken relationship with today?

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ"

(Ephesians 1:5)

OUR VERBUM DEI FAMILY IS A FAMILY REACHING OUT

August 19-25, 2013

Objective of the Week:

To be able to recognize the mission that Jesus gives us is to tell the world of HIS LOVE, thus creating his kingdom and building of Christian Communities.