

INTRODUCTION

In the first half of this week, we still continue in celebrating Christmas day in the Octave of Christmas. During the start of the New Year, we continue to deepen the mystery of his love revealed to us during the rest of the Christmas season.

As we come to the end of this year and to welcome the New Year, we are invited as a Verbum Dei Family, to rise up together in splendor in the middle of the darkness we have experienced in the past year. We are called as a Family to reveal the 'love became flesh' in the world of today and show to them that the Lord shines and keeps on shining brightly in all the realities of life. He is the source of light through the year ahead.

It is good to reflect on the past year and to recognize how God has been revealing to us his love in all the past year's events. It is good at the same time to spend these days thanking Him of all what has happened and all what we have received. Let us also live concrete attitudes like gratitude, willingness and strength to live out our resolutions for the year ahead.

As a Verbum Dei Family, aiming for our Local Family Assembly at the end of this month, we deepen on our belongingness and identity in revealing the Word made flesh – Christ Jesus, and the mystery of his love to all nations, races and cultures represented in the Magi and the shepherds who witnessed his birth and proclaimed what they have seen and heard. He wants to be known by us.

MONDAY

Seek Jesus like shepherds

“When the angels had left them and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go as far as Bethlehem and see what the Lord has made known to us.’ So they came hurriedly and found Mary and Joseph with the baby lying in the manger. On seeing this they related what they had been told about this child, and all were astonished on hearing the shepherds. As for Mary, she treasured all these messages and continually pondered over them. The shepherds then returned giving glory and praise to God for all they had heard and seen, just as the angels had told them.” (Luke 2: 15-20)

There are several stars leading us to Jesus --- the star of the Word of God, the star of our faith, the Church teachings, Mother Mary as the “star of the sea”, the star of our conscience (the voice of God within us). “A man’s conscience can tell him his situation better than the seven watchmen in the lofty tower.” (Sirach 37:14)

“In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals form social relationships” (Gaudium et Spes 16)

Jesus wants his love to reach to all the ends of the earth. As part of the Verbum Dei family, we can share in this mission. We too can be a shining star to others. Each one with eyes of faith can recognize many stars in their life. Who or what is the star that has led you closer to God?

TUESDAY

Be an epiphany of his love

...After the meeting with the King, they set out. The star that they had seen in the East went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. The wise men were overjoyed on seeing the star again. They went into the house and when they saw the child with Mary his mother, they knelt and worshipped him. They opened their bags and offered to him their gifts of gold, incense and myrrh.” (Mathew 2:1-11)

The Magi were those who followed a star which can represent faith. Many who witness epiphany of God first heard of his glory before witnessing it directly. “Only the one who first bends his ear in prayer will be able to bend his knee in front of the Lord’s presence. If we do not recognize his coming in HIS WORD how can we recognize him when he comes in his glory?” (Fr. McTavish, FMVD). Jesus needs you to be an epiphany. There are several Herods who will try to stop you. Like the Magi, fix your eyes on Jesus and do not go back to Herod but go home another way. Ask Jesus for an increase in faith and the grace to desire to listen to your Word.

WEDNESDAY

We have experienced God’s love revealed

Something which has existed since the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have watched and touched with our own hands, the Word of life -- this is our theme. ² That life was made visible; we saw it and are giving our testimony,

declaring to you the eternal life, which was present to the Father and has been revealed to us. ³ We are declaring to you what we have seen and heard, so that you too may share our life. Our life is shared with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ We are writing this to you so that our joy may be complete.

(1 John 1:1-4)

“But when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son. He came born of woman and subject to the Law, in order to redeem the subjects of the Law and to make us adopted sons and daughters of God. And because you are sons God has sent into your hearts the spirit of his Son which cries out: Abba! : that is: Father! You yourself are no longer a slave but a son, and yours is the inheritance by God’s grace.” (Galatians 4:4-7)

Today we ponder on the feast of Mary, the Mother of God. It is a time to remember the woman who allowed herself to be an instrument of God’s grace, who accepted completely her role in salvation history. We are led into the mystery of the Incarnation --- God became man. Mary was humble enough to accept God’s will along with her willingness to cooperate --- “May it be done to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38) She took the risk of death by stoning or divorce for being found pregnant by Joseph and yet she says yes, trusting and surrendering to God.

“As we contemplate in the Mother of God a life totally shaped by the word, we realize that we too are called to enter into the mystery of faith where by Christ comes to dwell in our lives. Every Christian believer, Saint Ambrose reminds us, in some way

interiority conceives and gives birth to the word of God: even though there is only one Mother of Christ in the flesh, in the faith Christ is the progeny of us all. Thus, what took place for Mary can daily take place in each of us, in the hearing of the word and in the celebration of the sacraments.” (Verbum Domini no. 29)

As part of the Verbum Dei family may Mary always remind us of our mission --- to give birth to Christ, to conceive the Life in our prayer and to share it to others?

THURSDAY

The call to reveal Jesus to all nations, races, cultures and generations.

“You may have heard of the graces God bestowed on me for your sake. By a revelation he gave me the knowledge of his mysterious design, as I have explained in a few words. This mystery was not made known to past generations but only now, through revelations given to holy apostles and prophets. Now the non-Jewish people share the inheritance; in Christ Jesus the non-Jews are incorporated and are to enjoy the Promise.” **(Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6)**

“Therefore, go and make disciples from all nations. Baptize them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to fulfill all I have commanded you. I am with you always until the end of this world. “

(Matthew 28:19-20)

“Christians need to be the testimony of Christ so, through HIM he can continue acting. The church calls us to the apostolate, (what is to be an apostolate, why to be and how to be).

Without you I cannot continue the redemption of humanity because you are part of me in my body. For charity it is to be with the example of prayer and sacrifice.” (Jaime Bonet)

Let us be sensitive to God’s love this day. Jesus is telling us, “Be an epiphany of my love to all!” What are the ways to remind others of God’s light, life and love?

FRIDAY

The Name showing that God saves

“That is why God exalted him and gave him the Name which outshines all names, so that at the Name of Jesus all knees should bend in heaven, on earth and among the dead, and all tongues proclaim that Christ Jesus is the Lord to the glory of God the Father.” **(Philippians 2:9-11)**

“The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, ‘There is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. It is he of whom I said: A man comes after me who is already ahead of me, for he was before me. “

(John 1:29-30)

“The name Jesus means “God saves”. The child born of the Virgin Mary is called Jesus, ‘for he will save his people from their sins’ (Mt 1:21): ‘there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) (CCC 452)

“The Redeemer of Man, Jesus Christ, is the center of the universe and of history. To him go my thoughts and my heart in this solemn moment of the world that the church and the whole family of present-day humanity are now living.” (Redemptor Hominis)

How do you honor the Most High Name of Jesus? Do you think, say and do things like Jesus?

SATURDAY

Rise up in splendor Verbum Dei!

“Arise, shine, for your light has come. The glory of Yahweh rises upon you. Night still covers the earth and gloomy clouds veil the peoples, but Yahweh now rises and over you his glory appears. Nations will come to your light and Kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes round about, and see: they are all gathered and come to you together, your sons from afar, your daughters carried in arms. This sight will make your face radiant, your heart throbbing and full; the riches of the sea will be turned to you, the wealth of the nations will come to you. **(Isaiah 60:1-6)**

⁵ For a son has been born for us, a son has been given to us, and dominion has been laid on his shoulders; and this is the name he has been given, 'Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace'. **(Isaiah 9:2&5)**

Jesus, in all HIS power and glory is present in every Eucharist, in a small piece of bread. Do you recognize this as a great treasure? Jesus wants to reign in our hearts, will you let him?

SUNDAY READINGS

Epiphany

First reading – **Isaiah 60:1-6**

Responsorial psalm – **Psalm 72**

Second reading – **Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6**

Gospel – **Matthew 2:1-12**

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

“Rise up in splendor...Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you...” (Isaiah 60:1)

December 30, 2013 – January 5, 2014



Objective of the week:

1. To continue deepening in what we are celebrating this Christmas season, how the mystery of the love of God was revealed to us and became flesh in Jesus.
2. To enter in the spirit towards our preparations for the Verbum Dei Family Local Assembly.