

INTRODUCTION

This month we are going to deepen and pray on the Pastoral Exhortation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines for the 2014 Year of the Laity entitled "Called to be saints... sent forth as heroes"). We started last week praying on how the joy of the Gospel fills our hearts and lives when we encounter Him.

This week, we continue to pray on this message starting with the feast of the Presentation of the Lord and recognizing our own presentation of our lives to Him.

When you were joined to Christ by the Spirit at baptism, you also became sharers of the threefold mission of Christ teacher, priest and servant. You were baptized not only to share in Christ's dignity as Son of God, but also to share in his mission for the salvation of the world. You share in Christ's dignity and mission with all others who are likewise united to him by the Holy Spirit. In uniting you to him, Christ also united you to all those who are united with him. With all those who are united to Christ by faith and baptism, you form one body of Christ, whose head is no less than Christ himself. Thus the whole body manifests and prolongs Christ's life and mission in the world. You, our dear lay faithful, have as your particular mission the sanctification and transformation of the world from within. In fact, many of you are called by the Lord to do service in the Church and for the Church...

Yet, your own specific task, and the special responsibility given to you by the Lord is to find your own sanctification in the world, and sanctify the world and transform it so that this world becomes more and more God's world, God's

kingdom, where his will be done as it is in heaven. You are called by Jesus to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The Lord Jesus told his disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to make all nations his disciples. This command to the whole Church falls especially on you, who are in the world.

As Pope Francis has been repeatedly telling Catholics, you must go into the world of the family, of business, of economies, of politics, of education, of the mass media and the social media, to every human endeavor where the future of humanity and the world are at stake and to make the difference, the difference that the Gospel and the grace of Christ bring to affairs. (Pastoral Exhortation of the CBCP Philippines)

MONDAY

Sharers of the threefold mission of Christ

"As for his gifts, to some he gave to be apostles, to others prophets, or even evangelists, or pastors and teachers. So he prepared those who belong to him for the ministry, in order to build up the Body of Christ, until we are all united in the same faith and knowledge of the Son of God. Thus we shall become the perfect Man, upon reaching maturity and sharing the fullness of Christ. Then no longer shall we be like children tossed about by any wave or wind of doctrine, and deceived by the cunning of men who drag them along into error. Rather, with sincere love, we shall grow in every way toward him who is the head, Christ. From him comes the growth of the whole body to which a network of joints gives order and cohesion, taking into account and making use of the function of each one. So the body builds itself in love."

(Ephesians 4: 11-16)

There is diversity of gifts, but the Spirit is the same. There is diversity of ministries, but the Lord is the same. There is diversity of works, but the same God works in all.

(1 Corinthians 12:4)

All of us have something in common through Christ and through the work of the Holy Spirit, which calls us to union, love and peace. But there are particular gifts which we must place at the service of the community in order to build up the Body of Christ. Jesus invites us to become a mature community, capable of being led by the truth and of building itself up through love. We should consider to what degree we are conscious of our Christian responsibilities. Are you conscious of the Verbum Dei Family's dedication to prayer and to the ministry of the Word and in forming apostles of Christ?

TUESDAY

The whole body of Christ prolongs his life and mission

"As the body is one, having many members, and all the members, while being many, form one body, so it is with Christ. All of us, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free men, have been given baptized in one Spirit to form one Spirit. The body has not just one member, but many. God himself arranged the body in this way, giving more honor to those parts that need it, so that the body may not be divided, but rather each member may care for the others. When one suffers, all of them suffer, and when one receives honor, all rejoice together."

(1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

"Now, you are the body of CHRIST and each of you individually is a member of it. So God has appointed us in the church. First apostles, second prophets, third teachers. Then come miracles, then gift of healing, material help, administration in the church and the gift of tongues."

(1 Corinthians 12:27-28)

"Do you want to honor Christ's body? Then do not scorn him in his nakedness, nor honor him here in the church with silken garments while neglecting him outside where he is cold and naked. The rich man is not one who is in possession of much, but one who gives much."

(St. John Chrysostom)

We cannot have a true community unless each of us shares his life---- placing our talents at the service of others. As soon as one is really committed to a Christian life, the spirit awakens in him new and sometimes unexpected capabilities. Are you willing to share your gifts to others for the mission?

WEDNESDAY

Sanctification and transformation of the world from within

"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt has lost its taste, how can it be made salty again? It has become useless. It can only be thrown away and people will trample on it. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and covers it; instead he puts it on a lamp stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine before others, so that they may see the good you do and praise your Father in Heaven."

(Mathew 5:13-16)

In the book of the prophet Isaiah it says that God will make us a light to the nations so that his salvation can reach to the ends of the earth. Jesus calls us to save the world. The covenant of salt was the covenant of God with those who were to serve him forever. As a member of the Verbum Dei family, we are called to be a witness of faith, hope and love in midst of suffering in this world. We are challenged to bring out the essence of Christian identity we share. St. John Chrysostom wrote in the fourth century: "You are the light of the world." Do you have enough faith to believe that as Christians we are called to be salt and light for the world?

THURSDAY

Find your own sanctification in the world

"For that same reason, he who is in Christ is a new creature. For him the old things have passed away; a new world has come. All this is the work of God who in Christ reconciled us to himself, and who entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation. Because in Christ God reconciled the world with himself, no longer taking into account their trespasses and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation."

(2 Corinthians 5:17-19)

"Yet those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its vices and desires. If we live by the Spirit let us be led by the Spirit. Let us not be conceited; let there be no rivalries or envy of one another."

(Galatians 5:24-25)

The believer who is truly free is the one who consider himself the "slave" of Christ. This is the way to have faith in daily life. We are to remember that we belong to Christ and that we are at the

service of our brothers and sisters. From this attitude we derive joy and peace. The Christian's mission is to be actively involved in the task of universal reconciliation. We present ourselves as ambassadors of Christ when we visit the sick or needy; to be present to listen to the worries and cares of the desperate, the poor and the needy; to be in fraternal fellowship with others who have the same problems as ours. What are the other ways in finding your own sanctification in this world?

FRIDAY

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

"While Jesus was still speaking, some people arrived from the official's house to inform him, your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Master any further? 'But Jesus ignored what they said and told the official, 'Do not fear, just believe'. When they arrived at the house Jesus saw a great commotion with people weeping and wailing loudly. Jesus entered and said to them 'Why all this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep.' Taking her by the hand, he said to her, 'Talitha kum!' Which means: 'Little girl, get up!' The girl got up at once and began to walk around."

(Mark 5:35-36, 38-39, 41-42)

Jesus wants to show us the Will of the Father --- for God, life not death is the stronger force. The truly dead are those who have imprisoned themselves in egoism, pride and have rejected the call to be children of God. God calls us to life --- a new life founded on faith. Do you hear this call and His WILL to be done on earth as it is in heaven?

SATURDAY

Go to the world of every human endeavor

"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)

"As Jesus went ashore he saw a large crowd, and he had compassion on them for they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he started a long teaching session with them."

(Mark 6:34)

Jesus had committed himself totally to the church of his apostles. HE is always searching for ways to share the faith of the Church. As a member of the Verbum Dei family, we must not leave this responsibility to others (like the clergy). It is a great commissioning ----- it is a commandment. ...**you must go into the world of the family, of business, of economies, of politics, of education, of the mass media and the social media, to every human endeavor where the future of humanity and the world are at stake and to make the difference, the difference that the Gospel and the grace of Christ bring to affairs.**(Pope Francis) Will you go and make disciples?

SUNDAY READINGS

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 58: 7-10

Psalms: Psalm 112: 4-9

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. "

February 3-9, 2014



Objective of the week:

To share in the same mission of Jesus for the sanctification of the world.