

INTRODUCTION

"He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the end" (Philippians 1:6) This month, we are invited to contemplate Jesus especially in His public life looking at his availability to discover and understand the plan and strategy of the Father. We are called to pray on this so that we can also know and live as disciples the greatest apostolic efficacy.

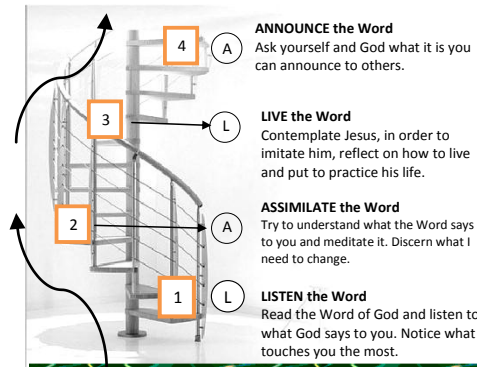
After the Resurrection we knew how the disciples looked back at all the work Jesus did through His words and deeds. Jesus began all these good works also in us as fruits of the Resurrection and He assures us each day that He will perfect it. Now we contemplate his first works in the public ministry and how he himself understood along the way the plan and strategy of the Father. Jesus grew in His understanding in the mission through constant prayer and work with the Father. **"My Father is always working and I too must work."** (John 5:17) Through his openness and availability, he was able to change His ways and follow what the Father sent Him to do.

Let us be intelligent in our mission of forming apostles by learning the strategies Jesus learned in his public life.

PRAYING WITH THE WORD

- "For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ." **St. Jerome**
- And let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for "we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying." **St. Ambrose** (Dei Verbum #25 Vatican II document)

DYNAMISM OF THE WORD



MONDAY

Jesus began His proclamation to make come true the Scriptures.

¹² Hearing that John had been arrested he withdrew to Galilee, ¹³ and leaving Nazara he went and settled in Capernaum, beside the lake, on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴ This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁵ Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali! Way of the sea beyond Jordan. Galilee of the nations! ¹⁶ The people that lived in darkness have seen a great light; on those who lived in a country of shadow dark as death a light has dawned. ¹⁷ From then onwards Jesus began his proclamation with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is close at hand.'

(Matthew 4:12-17)

¹⁴ After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the gospel from God saying, ¹⁵ 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel.' (Mark 1:14-15)

The first works of Jesus in his public life was already awareness on his

part that he is fulfilling the Scriptures. His presence and His proclamation were very much connected to all the promises said in the Scriptures.

TUESDAY

Proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom and brought healing (Memorial St. Peter Mary Chanel and St. Louis Marie de Montfort)

²³ He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing all kinds of disease and illness among the people. ²⁴ His fame spread throughout Syria, and those who were suffering from diseases and painful complaints of one kind or another, the possessed, epileptics, the paralysed, were all brought to him, and he cured them. ²⁵ Large crowds followed him, coming from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea and Transjordan. (Matthew 4:23-25)

¹⁴ Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. ¹⁵ He taught in their synagogues and everyone glorified him.

(Luke 4:14-15)

The first works of Jesus in his public life was to bring the good news of the Kingdom of God to everyone. He did this not just by words but proving that the Kingdom is true and present among them by the healing he showed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

WEDNESDAY

He taught with authority (Memorial of St. Catherine of Siena)

²¹ They went as far as Capernaum, and at once on the Sabbath he went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority. ²³ And at once in their synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit, and he shouted, ²⁴ 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.' ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked it saying, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' ²⁶ And the unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions and with a loud cry went out of him. ²⁷ The people were so astonished that they started asking one another what it all meant, saying, 'Here is a teaching that is new, and with authority behind it: he gives orders even to unclean spirits and they obey him.' ²⁸ And his reputation at once spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside. (Mark 1:21-28)

Through the first works of Jesus, we see how he taught the people. We see how his teaching made a deep impression on them. This is because he taught with authority and even showing that the power of the Resurrection is much more powerful than the works of the devil.

THURSDAY

Jesus understood the plan and strategy of the Father (Memorial of St. Pius V)

³² That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. ³³ The whole town came crowding round the door, ³⁴ and he cured many who were sick with diseases of one kind or

another; he also drove out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was.³⁵ In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house and went off to a lonely place and prayed there.³⁶ Simon and his companions set out in search of him,³⁷ and when they found him they said, 'Everybody is looking for you.'³⁸ He answered, 'Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can proclaim the message there too, because that is why I came.'³⁹ And he went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out devils.

(Mark 1:32-39)

It is not just a matter of responding to the needs of the people according to what I think is best, but doing the will of the Father. Jesus had to pray every day and perhaps change plans according to what the Father sent him to do.

FRIDAY

The challenges in the first works of the public life.

(Feast of St. Joseph the worker)

¹⁶ He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read,¹⁷ and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:¹⁸ The spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,¹⁹ to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.²⁰ He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant

and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him.²¹ Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even while you are listening.'²² And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips. They said, 'This is Joseph's son, surely?'

(Luke 4:16-22)

²⁰ He went home again, and once more such a crowd collected that they could not even have a meal.²¹ When his relations heard of this, they set out to take charge of him; they said, 'He is out of his mind.'^(Mark 3:20-21)

As we make ourselves available to the God's plan, there will always be challenges. We see in Jesus how he experienced rejection in his own hometown and by his own people and understood wrongly. Let us not stop working even though we experience all these challenges.

SATURDAY

Learning the strategy in the teachings of Jesus.

(Memorial of St. Athanasius)

Seeing the crowds, he went onto the mountain. And when he was seated his disciples came to him.² Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:³ How blessed are the poor in spirit: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.⁴ Blessed are the gentle: they shall have the earth as inheritance.⁵ Blessed are those who mourn: they shall be comforted.⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for uprightiness: they shall have their fill.⁷ Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God.⁹

Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be recognised as children of God.¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightiness: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.¹¹ 'Blessed are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you falsely on my account.'¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.¹³ 'You are salt for the earth. But if salt loses its taste, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled under people's feet.'¹⁴ 'You are light for the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden.'¹⁵ No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house.¹⁶ In the same way your light must shine in people's sight, so that, seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven.

(Matthew 5:1-16)

Learning the strategies of Jesus, we see the content of his preaching. We see how he brought the message of the Good News to all people especially the poor and the marginalized in society, encouraging them to be the light for the world and the salt of the earth.

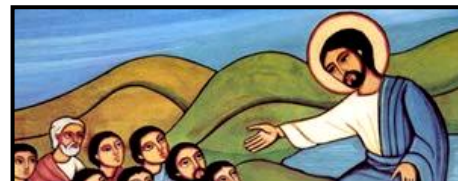
5th SUNDAY OF EASTER READINGS

1st Reading: Acts 9:26-31

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 22

2nd Reading: 1 John 3:18-24

Gospel: John 15:1-8



Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.” (Matthew 9:35)

April 27-May 3, 2015

General Theme: “He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the end” (Philippians 1:6)

General Objective:

To contemplate Jesus' availability to God's Plan during his public life and how He has come to understand along the way the **strategy** to reach it. Strategy with the greatest apostolic efficacy: to make disciples who in turn make other disciples.

Objective of the week:

To contemplate Jesus during his first works in the public life.