

INTRODUCTION

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to all! We thank you all for your self-giving during this year and especially to those who have faithfully prayed and lived daily the Word of God.

We are now in the Christmas Season. In this season, we continue to reflect on Jesus' birth and how well we welcome the tenderness of God. As Pope Francis said in his homily, "Nevertheless, what is most important is not seeking him, but rather allowing him to find me and caress me with tenderness. The question put to us simply by the Infant's presence is: do I allow God to love me?"

Jesus came into the world. What Good News is there when he finds a Family who is ready to welcome Him, receive Him and live with Him. Last weekend, we celebrated the feast of the Holy Family. We are called as a Verbum Dei Family to look at the Holy Family and learn from them how they embraced Jesus throughout his life in the world.

As a Christian Family, what is our response? We pray that as we welcome the New Year ahead, we could know Him one step better. We should ask ourselves if we have the courage to share that tenderness with those around us, the Pope continued. "The Christian response cannot be different from God's response to our smallness. Life must be met with goodness, with meekness. When we realize that God is in love with our smallness, that he made himself small in order to better encounter us, we cannot help but open our hearts to him and beseech him: 'Lord, help me to be like you, give me the grace of tenderness in the most difficult circumstances of life, give me the grace of closeness in the face

of every need, of meekness in every conflict.'"

MONDAY

The Word of God was born in a Family.

²⁵ Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to the restoration of Israel and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. ²⁷ Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, ²⁸ he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said: ²⁹ Now, Master, you are letting your servant go in peace as you promised; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen the salvation ³¹ which you have made ready in the sight of the nations; ³² a light of revelation for the gentiles and glory for your people Israel. ³³ As the child's father and mother were wondering at the things that were being said about him, ³⁴ Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'Look, he is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is opposed- ³⁵ and a sword will pierce your soul too -- so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.' ***(Luke 2:25-35)***

The promise and fulfillment of the Word of God is present before us. Can you identify with Simeon, whose hopes have been fulfilled? As one family in faith, in what ways can we help each other discover the newness that Christ's birth brings?

TUESDAY

The role of the Family in the growth and maturity of the Word of God.

¹⁴ I have written to you, children, because you have come to know the Father. I have written to you, parents, because you have come to know the One who has existed since the beginning. I have written to you, young people, because you are strong, and God's word remains in you, and you have overcome the Evil One. ¹⁵ Do not love the world or what is in the world. If anyone does love the world, the love of the Father finds no place in him, ¹⁶ because everything there is in the world -- disordered bodily desires, disordered desires of the eyes, pride in possession -- is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world, with all its disordered desires, is passing away. But whoever does the will of God remains forever. ***(1 John 2:14-17)***

³⁹ When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And as the child grew to maturity, he was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with him. ***(Luke 2:39-40)***

Each person has a distinct role in the Family. Do we use this to let the Word of God grow and mature in our Family? Do we find God's favour by doing His will every day?

WEDNESDAY

The Word of God was recognized and accepted.

In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except

through him. ⁴ What has come into being in him was life, life that was the light of men; ⁵ and light shines in darkness, and darkness could not overpower it. ⁶ A man came, sent by God. His name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness to the light, so that everyone might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, he was to bear witness to the light. ⁹ The Word was the real light that gives light to everyone; he was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world that had come into being through him, and the world did not recognise him. ¹¹ He came to his own and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believed in his name ¹³ who were born not from human stock or human desire or human will but from God himself. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John witnesses to him. He proclaims: 'This is the one of whom I said: He who comes after me has passed ahead of me because he existed before me.' ¹⁶ Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received -- one gift replacing another, ¹⁷ for the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. ***(John 1:1-18)***

Not everybody recognized and accepted the Word of God but a few did. Am I one of those few people? Do I persevere in giving witness to God's unconditional love amidst my own littleness?

THURSDAY

***A Blessed New Year to all!
(Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God)***

²² Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, ²³ 'Speak to Aaron and his sons and say: "This is how you must bless the Israelites. You will say: ²⁴ May Yahweh bless you and keep you. ²⁵ May Yahweh let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. ²⁶ May Yahweh show you his face and bring you peace." ²⁷ This is how they must call down my name on the Israelites, and then I shall bless them.'

(Numbers 6:22-27)

⁴ but when the completion of the time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, ⁵ to redeem the subjects of the Law, so that we could receive adoption as sons. ⁶ As you are sons, God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son crying, 'Abba, Father'; ⁷ and so you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir, by God's own act. ***(Galatians 4:4-7)***

¹⁶ So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, ¹⁸ and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as they had been told. ***(Luke 2:16-20)***

Let us learn how to live like Mary, treasuring Jesus in her heart. This time is to throw away the old person in me and welcome the blessings of this New Year with concrete resolutions in the Verbum Dei Family.

FRIDAY

***The Word of God lives among us –
remain with Him.***

²⁴ Let what you heard in the beginning remain in you; as long as what you heard in the beginning remains in you, you will remain in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵ And the promise he made you himself is eternal life. ²⁶ So much have I written to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. ²⁷ But as for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you; since the anointing he gave you teaches you everything, and since it is true, not false, remain in him just as he has taught you. ²⁸ Therefore remain in him now, children, so that when he appears we may be fearless, and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

(1 John 2:24-28)

²⁵ and they put this question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the Prophet?' ²⁶ John answered them, 'I baptise with water; but standing among you -- unknown to you -- ²⁷ is the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandal.' ²⁸ This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

(John 1:25-28)

To remain with Jesus means to have a constant and faithful dialogue with Him, to let Him walk with us, and to allow Him to enter in our daily activities. Does the Word of God find its permanent place in me? Has my conviction grown?

SATURDAY

***We are His Family that welcomes Him
and points everyone to Him.***

You must see what great love the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children -- which is what we are! The reason why the world does not acknowledge us is that it did not acknowledge him. ² My dear friends, we are already God's children, but what we shall be in the future has not yet been revealed. We are well aware that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is. ³ Whoever treasures this hope of him purifies himself, to be as pure as he is. ⁴ Whoever sins, acts wickedly, because all sin is wickedness. ⁵ Now you are well aware that he has appeared in order to take sins away, and that in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who remains in him sins, and whoever sins has neither seen him nor recognised him. ***(1 John 3:1-6)***

²⁹ The next day, he saw Jesus coming towards him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. ³⁰ It was of him that I said, "Behind me comes one who has passed ahead of me because he existed before me." ³¹ I did not know him myself, and yet my purpose in coming to baptise with water was so that he might be revealed to Israel.' ***(John 1:29-31)***

As Verbum Dei Missionary Family, we welcome Jesus, pointing the way for others to follow Christ. How are we continuing the work of revealing Christ to others?

SUNDAY READINGS

The Epiphany of the Lord

1st Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 72

2nd Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

***"My eyes have seen
the salvation which
you have made ready
in the sight of the
nations" Luke 2:30-31***

December 29- January 4, 2014



Objective of the week:

To welcome the New Year as one Family looking at how the Holy Family welcomed Jesus – the Word of God and lived with Him in this world.