

INTRODUCTION

We are now in the Ordinary time of the Liturgical Calendar. As we started the week with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we are going to deepen it during these days.

As we enter the New Year, we usually talk of new life, new resolutions and leaving behind the old ways. Baptism is indeed a way of entering in the new life of Jesus. We are called to go back to our origins; to discover once again what we were called to be from our Baptism. We were made as Beloved children of the Father. This is our identity and we are called to live each day the dignity of the children of God, filled by the Holy Spirit and always listening to His voice.¹² *But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believed in his name¹³ who were born not from human stock or human desire or human will but from God himself. (John 1:12-13)* In other words, those who live as His children follow Jesus as his disciples. How can we live as children of the Father? Jesus is teaching us to live under the gaze of heaven which is opened for us and to listen always to the Holy Spirit.

Mercy and Compassion was revealed by Jesus in his life. This was what he was preaching and this was how he reached out to everyone. He showed in His life the authority of the forgiveness of sins which he invites all of us to do the same as baptized Christians. This is the life and the love we are called to live and to share to everyone. Yes, from our Baptism we have become missionary disciples; *In all the baptized, from first to last, the sanctifying power of the Spirit is at work, impelling us to evangelization... In virtue of their Baptism, all the*

members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. (Evangelii Gaudium 119-120) and our mission is to bring people to reconcile to God. *...Like John the Baptist, we will aim to diminish and disappear, so that others may come to know the Lord and be left alone with Him as soon as possible. Therefore, our apostolic activities focus on leading people to prayer and to an interpersonal, peaceful dialogue, alone with Christ and in direct contact with the person of Christ. (Constitutions of the Verbum Dei Missionary Fraternity 47)*

MONDAY

Come and I will make you fishers of people.

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.' ¹⁶ As he was walking along by the Lake of Galilee he saw Simon and Simon's brother Andrew casting a net in the lake -- for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, 'Come after me and I will make you into fishers of people.' ¹⁸ And at once they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ Going on a little further, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending the nets. ²⁰ At once he called them and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him.

(Mark 1:14-20)

The right time has come to follow Jesus and to enter in the Kingdom of God; to leave behind the old ways and to start to follow the ways He is calling us

to live. Like the first disciples, they left everything and followed Him.

TUESDAY

You are my Son, my Beloved.

⁷ In the course of his preaching he said, 'After me is coming someone who is more powerful than me, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. ⁸ I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.' ⁹ It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. ¹⁰ And at once, as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.' ***(Mark 1:7-11)***

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. ***(John 1:12-13)***

Let us descend with Jesus in the waters of the Jordan so that he can raise us up to live our true identity and dignity as Beloved children of the Father. Let us discover once again our roles and duties as baptized in the world of today.

WEDNESDAY

To proclaim the message is the reason why I came.

²⁹ And at once on leaving the synagogue, he went with James and John straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed and feverish, and at once they told him about

her. ³¹ He went in to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to serve them. 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 1:29-39)

In all the baptized, from first to last, the sanctifying power of the Spirit is at work, impelling us to evangelization... In virtue of their Baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. ***(Evangelii Gaudium 119-120)***

Jesus in his life, revealed the power of mercy and compassion through his words and actions by touching the lives of everyone. He teaches his companions to do the same not only to those close to them but a compassion that reaches out to everyone. As baptized, he is teaching us how to live as missionary disciples.

THURSDAY

Listen to Him today. Do not harden your hearts.

⁷ That is why, as the Holy Spirit says: If only you would listen to him today! ⁸ Do not harden your hearts, as at the rebellion, as at the time of testing in the desert, ⁹ when your ancestors challenged me, and put me to the test, and saw what I could do ¹⁰ for forty years. That was why that generation sickened me and I said, 'Always fickle hearts, that cannot grasp my ways!' ¹¹ And then in my anger I swore that they would never enter my place of rest. ¹² Take care, brothers, that none of you ever has a wicked heart, so unbelieving as to turn away from the living God. ¹³ Every day, as long as this today lasts, keep encouraging one another so that none of you is hardened by the lure of sin, ¹⁴ because we have been granted a share with Christ only if we keep the grasp of our first confidence firm to the end.

(Hebrews 3:7-14)

We receive the Holy Spirit through our Baptism in order that we can live always with Him and be led by Him. How can I live my life listening more to the Holy Spirit and to encourage one another to do the same as a community of faith?

FRIDAY

I have the authority to forgive sins.

When he returned to Capernaum, some time later word went round that he was in the house; ² and so many people collected that there was no room left, even in front of the door. He was preaching the word to them ³ when some people came bringing him a paralytic carried by four men, ⁴ but as

they could not get the man to him through the crowd, they stripped the roof over the place where Jesus was; and when they had made an opening, they lowered the stretcher on which the paralytic lay. ⁵ Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, 'My child, your sins are forgiven.' ⁶ Now some scribes were sitting there, and they thought to themselves, ⁷ 'How can this man talk like that? He is being blasphemous. Who but God can forgive sins?' ⁸ And at once, Jesus, inwardly aware that this is what they were thinking, said to them, 'Why do you have these thoughts in your hearts? ⁹ Which of these is easier: to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven" or to say, "Get up, pick up your stretcher and walk"? ¹⁰ But to prove to you that the Son of man has authority to forgive sins on earth' -- ¹¹ he said to the paralytic-'I order you: get up, pick up your stretcher, and go off home.' ¹² And the man got up, and at once picked up his stretcher and walked out in front of everyone, so that they were all astonished and praised God saying, 'We have never seen anything like this.'

(Mark 2:1-12)

To live as true children of God is to live a new life reconciled with God. And a life lived under the forgiveness of God, brings and reconciles people to Him. This is the authority of Jesus and we have been given the same. How many people have I brought back to God?

SATURDAY

I came to call sinners.

¹³ He went out again to the shore of the lake; and all the people came to him, and he taught them. ¹⁴ As he was walking along he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus

sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him. ¹⁵ When Jesus was at dinner in his house, a number of tax collectors and sinners were also sitting at table with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many of them among his followers. ¹⁶ When the scribes of the Pharisee party saw him eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' ¹⁷ When Jesus heard this he said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. I came to call not the upright, but sinners.' ***(Mark 2:13-17)***

As baptized and disciples of Christ, we recognize that we are sinners ourselves and that Jesus called us to live with the same privileges as God's children. Let us learn not to judge people harshly but to discover how Jesus calls them as well to follow Him.

SUNDAY READINGS

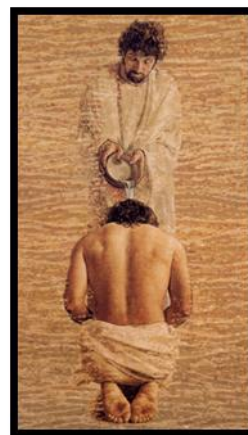
Feast of the Sto. Niño

1st Reading: Isaiah 9:1-6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 97

2nd Reading: Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18

Gospel: Mark 10:13-16



Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"...to those who did accept him, he gave power to become children of God."

January 12-18, 2015



Objective of the week:

To discover once again and live our identity as beloved children of God from our Baptism.