

INTRODUCTION

Last week's guidelines proved how subtle is the word of God in creating within us an unpredictable occurrence of transformation which undeniably wonderful, unexpected encounter with Jesus. This unforgettable experience, somehow in a concrete way, will ignite a radical following moved by a strong conviction of the Love that Jesus has been giving to those whom HE Chooses. Peter, for instance, the fisherman who thought and believed that he knew very well about fishing, yet at the instance when he was in need, Jesus came, showed him a better job more than fishing. Peter became a close and familiar friend with Jesus. He learned many things: was impulsive, sometimes doubting, often times trusting. He recognized Jesus as the Messiah yet betrayed Him, recognized his failure and continued to follow with Jesus. He was entrusted with the supreme authority by Jesus and became the first Pope.

Another apostle is Paul, the very person who persecuted Christians during his time. Who could have thought not even Ananias (who was one of avid followers of Jesus) that Paul would soon become the great messenger of God's Love. Paul was ignorant about Jesus but a single encounter changed everything and Jesus became the very close friend of Paul. The arrogant Paul became humble, started to discover and know several things about Jesus. He understood Jesus and his teachings and became aware of his task as a follower

of Christ. He went to several places to share the good news starting with the Jews then to the Gentiles. He wrote several letters of friendship, precautions and encouragement. His life was a total witnessing and full of conviction; several times he was imprisoned and persecuted yet He was trusting, confident and believed in the sufficiency of the grace of God.

The two apostles differed in race, profession, and culture. What was common was that they both encountered Jesus, became friends with Jesus and their life was amazingly changed. Both of them became great messengers of God's Word.

Are you ready to accept Jesus as a friend and become one of his apostles?

MONDAY

"To make Apostles is to make friends of Jesus"

I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. **(John 15:15)**

Jesus, during his public life and ministry, built a trusting and confident relationship founded not solely on a master-slave relationship or on a Teacher-student one, but most of all on Friendship. Jesus laid it all, his feelings, expressions, projections, and His ways, His total human and divine nature. In

this way, Jesus in a personal way and with so much transparency to whom He chooses, convey effectively the message of God and how it affect actively in the way they must live each day. A deep sense of apostleship comes from a deep faith and a strong encounter of the love and friendship of Jesus. Like what Jesus did, to form apostles is to start with the sweetest relationship built on friendship.

Do you consider Jesus as one of your friends? Do you spend time talking with him today?

TUESDAY

"An Apostle is like his master"

No disciple is above his teacher, no slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he becomes like his teacher, for the slave that he becomes like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household!

(Matthew 10:24-25)

An apostle of conviction is humble, sensible and sensitive to what his Master is doing and even inherits almost all the traits of his master. Jesus is the image of a great master and teacher. He gave and transcended everything he learned and heard from His Father our God and our Father. If we have eyes and ears we will gradually recognize, hear and understand Jesus: His ways, follow the path He took and live the way He did.

*Am I trying my best to live like Jesus?
Am I following Jesus or someone else?*

WEDNESDAY

"An Apostle is called and chosen"

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother. **(1 Corinthians 1:1)**

God, who is all knowing, sees you inside and out: your frailties, limitations, shortcomings, talents, capabilities and capacities. God will always awaken in you HIS being a part of you. Imagine how Jesus chose Peter along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, how He caught vast amounts of fishes in an unexpected time of the day. We see how Paul, on his way to Damascus was called by Jesus. He became blind and his sight was restored when he was anointed by Ananias.

A call from God is unique and special in an unexpected way, it doesn't have to be extraordinary as long as you recognize and hear HIS Voice, a change of Mind and Heart follows.

Are you responding positively to the Call and invitation of God? Or it is still a NO, NO Lord for this time? What holds you back?

THURSDAY

"An Apostle is a witness"

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,

throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **(Acts 1:8)**

God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. **(Acts 2:32)**

The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead; of this we are witnesses. **(Acts 3:15)**

We are witnesses of these things, as is the Holy Spirit that God has given to those who obey him.” **(Acts 5:32)**

We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and (in) Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. **(Acts 10:39)**

Get up now, and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness of what you have seen [of me] and what you will be shown. **(Acts 26:16)**

The apostles, like Peter and Paul, the martyrs and saints had made bold declarations about Jesus Christ’s life, death and resurrection for which they themselves were the witnesses. Their lives had simply spoken and manifested Christ’s life and mission on earth. They became the propagator of God’s love after Jesus.

After knowing and receiving Jesus in your life, how is your witnessing this time? Is my witnessing affective to the life of others?

FRIDAY

“An Apostle is sent”

Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with the wisdom of human eloquence, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning.

(1 Corinthians 1:17)

Jesus reached to so many places, accepting that He was sent by God with one purpose and objective: to bring Good News to all mankind regardless of culture and tradition, races, social status and ages that they may savor life to its fullness. Jesus fulfilled and completed excellently what was expected of Him by God our Father.

Now, the ball is in our hands. You are to continue what Jesus had started. Every apostle believes that he is sent for a specific task for the same mission of Christ.

Look around: do you consider your home, workplace, school, and community that you belong the very specific place that God is sending you to bring the Good News?

Do you believe that you are sent by God to a specific place for a very specific task?

SATURDAY

“An Apostle is a Herald”

And if Christ has not been raised, then empty [too] is our preaching; empty, too, your faith. **(1 Corinthians 15:14)**

But it was not for him alone that it was written that “it was credited to him”; it was also for us, to whom it will be credited, who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over for our transgressions and was raised for our justification. **(Romans 4:23-25)**

If you are a friend of Jesus, having lived and inherited some of his qualities, and have become a good witness of His mission and accepting the reality of being sent to as many places and as many situations as it can be; believing and acknowledging that this transformation, sense of mission and radical following is only possible because God wills it first and because of his Mercy and Grace, then you are a herald of God’s Word.

An official messenger of God is joyful and glad in bringing good tidings of Hope and Love.

Do I take time to share the message of Love that God has invited me to do, or I am just eaten by my fear and inferiority?

SUNDAY READINGS

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

Psalm: Psalm 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130

2nd Reading: Romans 8:28-30

Gospel: Matthew 13:44-52

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER



**“I am an
apostle by the
grace of God”**

July 21-27, 2014

Objective of the week:

To be aware that the root to be Apostle is the encounter and knowledge of Jesus and to discover the characteristics of the Apostle.