

INTRODUCTION

Last week's guidelines have made us aware of the characteristics of the apostles and the root to be apostle, that is, the encounter and knowledge of Jesus. How long have we been encountering Jesus in our prayer and in the daily rhythm of our lives? The maturity of our relationship with Jesus will determine also the maturity of our love for Him. If we love God we are also willing to love the people that He entrusted to us. We were once children who were fed and taught how to walk in the way of God by the people who owned the responsibility to be a mother and a father in faith. The people who responded to the call of God have been very persistent and persevering in sharing to us the spirit that they have received. They shared to us their beautiful experience in the love of God and they have not kept it themselves.

The dream of God for His people is to make all of them His disciples, His friends and His followers. The realization of His dream depends on our commitment to reach out and take care of His people who are walking in the dark and have not yet found Him. We are invited to extend our hearts to them so that they may also see the goodness of the Lord and experience the fullness of life walking with us to the kingdom of God.

MONDAY

"My mother and brothers are those who hear the Word of God"

Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see Him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd. Someone told Him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you".

He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice." **(Luke 8: 19-21)**

God entrusts to us the biggest gift and task that He can give, that is to bring His beloved children to His kingdom. Our life is destined to be the light for multitudes that they may see in our life the word of God.

Are you willing to accept the task and gift that God is giving to you?

Do you see the people that need us in order that they can go closer to God? Are the words of God visible in your life?

TUESDAY

"...for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the Gospel"

Even if you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the Gospel. **(1 Corinthians 4:15)**

When they crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. "You have asked a difficult thing", Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours –otherwise, it will not". **(2 Kings 2:9-10)**

We have brothers and sisters who are begging for the gift that we received from God through the people who became mother and father to us in faith. We may not hear them asking for it in words but we can hear it through their sufferings, brokenness, hopelessness and longing for happiness. They too deserve the grace that we have. The fullness of life can be theirs too if we own the responsibility to be a father to them, willing to provide their needs in spirit.

How can I be a father/mother to others?

WEDNESDAY

"My children, I am going through the pain of giving birth to you all over again, until Christ is formed in you."

My dear children! Once again, just like a mother in childbirth, I feel the same kind of pain for you until Christ's nature is formed in you. **(Galatians 4:19)**

The first apostles experienced sacrifices and sufferings in spreading the Word of God. Likewise, we also experienced attacks of our weaknesses and miserable forces to hold us from reaching out to our neighbors. Let us not be enslaved by these temptations. We are encouraged to be persistent and to have perseverance in sharing the Word until Christ is visible in them.

How can I overcome the challenges in sharing the gospel to the people entrusted by God to me?

THURSDAY

"We were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God but our lives as well"

You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed – God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, were delighted to share with you not only the gospel but our lives as well. Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy,

righteous and blameless we are among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory. And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

(1 Thessalonians 2:5-13)

Paternity and maternity imply to give our own lives. Everyday, aware or unaware, we are sharing our lives to our co-workers, classmates, friends and neighbors. Doing what is right and just in whatever work we have is a way of sharing the word of God. Some people may not read the Word but they read our lives.

Is my performance in school or in workplace reflects the word of God? In what way I can share the Word of God in the kind of work that I have?

FRIDAY

“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide”

“Sing barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who never in labor; because more are the children of the

desolate woman than of her who has a husband” says the Lord. Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities. “Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood. For your Maker is your husband- the Lord Almighty is his name_ the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. **(Isaiah 54:1-5)**

Paternity and maternity is the most proper thing of our being. It is the maturity of our affectivity.

God gives us the possibility to be father and mother, in which exist the maximum development of our affectivity and the greatest maturity of the person, because it gives and gives: is offered and begins to love what is lost at the roots, freely and sacrificially but with the joy of the Gospel . “ (Jaime Bonnet in Familiares de Dios page 323)

Only when we identify ourselves as mother and father in faith of the children of God, we can enlarge our hearts and extend our love and care for them.

In what way I can enlarge the tent I lived in?

Who are the concrete people that I need to accommodate in my tent?

SATURDAY

“Father and Mother for generations”

“O Lord of hosts, if you look with pity on the hardship of your servant, if you remember me and do not forget me, if you give your handmaid a male child, I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life. No razor shall ever touch his head.”

(Read the whole passage - 1 Samuel 1: 1-12)

Having no children threatens the continuation of our line.

Paternity and maternity in our faith is a continuation of our charism. We are encouraged to be fruitful and not to be barren. The children that we nurture in faith are blessings to our Verbum Dei family as it indicates growth in the family. The more people we reach out the more people will continue to spread the charism.

Am I propagating the charism or I just keep it myself?

SUNDAY READINGS

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-3

Psalms: Psalm 145:8-9, 15-16, 17-18

Second Reading: Romans 8:35, 37-39

Gospel Reading: Matthew 14:13-21

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

“All your children will be disciples of the Lord”.

Isaiah 54:13

July 28 - August 3, 2014



Objective of the week:

To deepen in the maternity and paternity as:

- prolongation of the charism
- part of our humanity and maturity in love