

INTRODUCTION

"It is better to give alms than to store up gold; for almsgiving saves one from death and expiates every sin. Those who regularly give alms shall enjoy a full life." (Tobit 12: 8-9) Almsgiving is a form of prayer because it is giving to God." It is a form of fasting because it demands sacrificial giving ----- giving till it hurts. 'Charity begins at home', but charity must not stop there because for the disciples of Christ, "home" is as big as the world. It is an expression of our gratitude for all that God has given us. It opens our hearts to the realization that God blesses those we serve.

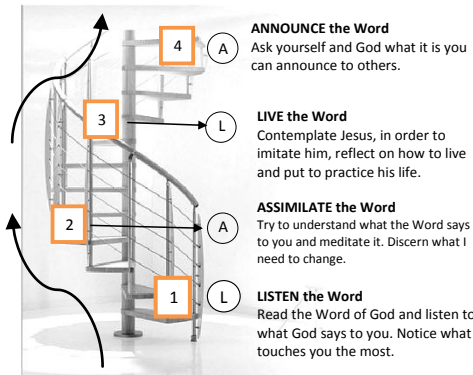
Are you living high? If so, are you giving high? It's a good question to ask ourselves during Lent. We need to give to God to whom we meet in our neighbor. As God gave himself entirely to us, so we give ourselves entirely to Him. In the Eucharist, HE holds nothing back. HE gives us HIS body, blood, soul and divinity ----- everything HE has. That is the giving we need to imitate.

Look around, see those who are in need, and ask God to take away those obstacles and distractions that keep us from being generous with them. What can you do this Lenten Season to reach out and help others? Be creative this Lent, you are not limited, because the Love of God is not limited.

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

"The real Christ of today"

"These things were only shadows of what was to come, whereas the reality is the person of Christ." **(Colossians 2:17)**

"As he traveled along and was approaching Damascus, a light from the sky suddenly flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me? And he asked "Who are you Lord?" The voice replied, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city, there you will be told what you are to do." **(Acts 9:3-6)**

Do you know what the title Christ means? If so, keep on following HIM. Plant your roots in Christ and let HIM be the foundation for your life. Be strong in your faith, be grateful and allow Christ to work on your daily humble conversion. Conversion is to move from self-centered independence to dependence on the Lord and interdependence with fellow Verbum Dei disciples. St. Athanasius, the Great once said of Jesus that "He became what we

are, so that He might make us what He is." "Today, our challenge is not so much atheism as the need to respond adequately to many people's thirst for God, lest they try to satisfy it with alienating solutions or with a disembodied Jesus who demands nothing of us with regard to others." (Evangelii Gaudium # 89)

TUESDAY

"The call to charity"

"When you give something to the poor, do not have it trumpeted before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets in order to be praised by the people. I assure you, they have been already paid in full. If you give something to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your gift remains really secret. Your Father who sees what is kept secret, will reward you." **(Matthew 6:2-4)**

As the Lord showers you with blessing from heaven, increase not your standard of living but rather your standard of giving. The goal of helping others is to bring honor and glory to the Lord, not to develop a name for ourselves. Our sharing should be likened to a distribution center for the needy wherein we are privileged to be the distribution agent. God will always remember our small acts of kindness and generosity. Have you done an act of charity today? What motivates your involvement in the liturgical life and the charity work of the Verbum Dei family?

WEDNESDAY

"My body is in your hands, save me by your love"

"Then a leper came forward. He greeted him respectfully and said, "Sir if you want to, you can make me clean."

(Matthew 8:2)

"The husband is the head of his wife, as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of whom He is also the Savior. And as the church submits to Christ, so let a wife submit in everything to her husband. As for you husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. He washed her and made her holy by baptism in the word. As he wanted a radiant church without stain or wrinkle or any blemish, but holy and blameless he himself had to prepare and present her to himself. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they love their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. And no one has ever hated his body; he feeds and takes care of it. That is just what Christ does for the church, because we are part of his body. Scripture says: Because of this a man shall leave his father and mother to be united with his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a very great mystery, and I refer To Christ and the Church." **(Ephesians 5:23-32)**

The leper is a symbol of corruption of man by sin. But if we seek God with faith, humility and in prayer, our Lord who is so merciful and loving will bring us closer to him in his body, the Church. Christ finds us in our sins and HE takes charge of us, He gives HIS life to purify us. "Do the ecclesial structures of the church enable us to experience being part of one body? A body which acknowledges and cares for its weakest, poorest and most insignificant members? Or do we take refuge in a universal love that would embrace the whole world,

while failing to see the Lazarus sitting before our closed doors?" (Pope Francis)

THURSDAY

"He needs my total response to heal the suffering members of His body."

"After they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? He answered, 'Yes Lord, you know that I love you! And Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

(John 21: 15)

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory with all his angels, he will sit on the throne of Glory. All the nations will be brought before him, and as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, so will he do with them, placing the sheep on his right and the goats, so will he do with them, placing the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. The King will say to those on his right: 'Come, blessed of my Father! Take possession of the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me into your house. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you went to see me.'" Then the upright will ask him: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food; thirsty and give you drink, or a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to see you?' The King will answer, 'Truly, I say to you: whenever you did this to one of the least, to my brothers, you did it to me.'" **(Matthew 25: 31-40)**

Jesus came not to be served but to serve. He is the perfect King who loves

us so deeply. We, who are baptized into His Kingship, exercise it when we love as he loved, when we serve as he served. These works of love call us to solidarity and service. They challenge us to recognize Christ in one another. Do you wish to honor Christ's body? Then do not neglect HIM when you see HIM naked or hungry. "Am I my brother's keeper?" This lent, ponder on this question.

FRIDAY

He needs my total response to make them "Lifegivers"

"As for his gift, to some he gave to be apostles, to others prophets, or even evangelists, or pastor and teacher so he prepared those who belong to him for the ministry, in order to build up the Body of Christ, until we are all united in the same faith and knowledge of the son of God. Thus we shall become the perfect Man, upon reaching maturity and sharing the fullness of Christ. Then no longer shall we be like children tossed about by any wave or wind of doctrine, and deceive by the cunning of men who drag them along into error. Rather, with sincere love, we shall grow in every way towards him who is the head, Christ. From him comes the growth of the whole body to which a network of joints gives order and cohesion, taking into account and making use of the function of each one. So the body builds itself in love.

(Ephesians 4:11-16)

Jesus invites us to become a mature community/family, capable of being led by the truth, and of building itself up through love. There is fullness in Christ, and a measure of that fullness given in the counsel of God to every

believer. The Christians' growth tends to the glory of Christ. Are you using your gift for the spiritual good of others? Are you aware of the gift of grace given to you in order to be a life giver?

SATURDAY

"I am thirsty for your love"

"May they all be one as you Father are in me and I am in you. May they be one in us, so the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the Glory you have given me, that they may be one as we are one. I in them and you in me. Thus they shall reach perfection in unity and the world shall know that you have sent me and that I have loved them just as you loved me. Father, since you have given them to me, I want them to be with me where I am and see the Glory you gave me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world."

(John 17:21-24)

Jesus prayed that all believers might be as one body under one head. As a Verbum Dei disciple, endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. It is not enough that Christ is preached. It is necessary for the world to see in its midst the church, one and united. Pray that we shall be a witness to the truth, love and the mercy of God. Today, ponder on what prevents you from coming to Jesus (who thirsts for your love)?

SUNDAY READINGS

5th Sunday of Lent

1st Reading: Jeremiah 31: 31-34

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 51

2nd Reading: Hebrews 5:7-9

Gospel: John 12:20-33

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"When I was thirsty..."
(Almsgiving)

March 16-22, 2015

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

To understand the necessity of being in communion with the **intentionality** of God's plan: Salvation of all humanity through the apostles that contemplate and listen to the "*I thirst*" of Jesus and transmit the same intention to others.



Objective of the week:

To pray on the theme of the Easter Encounter 'I thirst' and to live out the Lenten practice of almsgiving as apostles who is united in the thirst of Jesus in His Mystical Body.