

INTRODUCTION

It is so wonderful that we have experienced God's invitation last week – to be with Him in the great harvest at hand where He needs us to help Him. It's a great joy in our hearts to learn that God trusts our life in helping this big project of evangelization and to be one with Him as His children. As Jesus was praying in John 17:21 "I pray that they may all be one, Father", it is so wonderful that we are given the privilege to continue the work of Jesus on earth. We are lucky to be chosen. It is good to realize that being a Verbum Dei disciple is a beautiful gift from God wherein He gave us a congregation that is not only a community but a family who provides us the right venue to perform what the Church is telling us, that this year is for the Lay faithful; where we are able to perform our mission as lay faithful in the Church and in the whole world.

This week, God wants to show to us not only His trust, but His faithful love and care for our discipleship. This is where he wanted us to taste and see his goodness by caring so much in our process of being an apostle to him. He wants us to bear much fruit by clinging to his son, Jesus, with the promise of help of the Holy Spirit and Mama Mary as our companions. God wants us to learn to accept with open hearts and minds the sweet pain of the call to grow and a continual process of maturation of our following in order to always bear much fruit.

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)

MONDAY

Remain united to the real vine and be fruitful.

(Feast of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael)

"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

(John 15:4)

The Church exhorts all Christian faithful "to bear fruit in charity for the life of the world" (**OPTATAM TOTIUS no. 16**)

Do you see the faithfulness of Jesus as he has invited us to remain in him? In what way or ways can you be united with him as he unties himself to you always? Do you value the attitude of God giving importance to your life? Are you willing to give your life to Jesus in the evangelization?

TUESDAY

Be a branch made clean in order to bear fruit in plenty.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you." (**John 15:1-3**)

¹⁵ protect what your own hand has planted. ¹⁶ They have thrown it on the

fire like dung, the frown of your rebuke will destroy them. (**Psalm 80:15-16**)

Are you willing to submit yourself to our loving Father in heaven to be pruned or cleansed in order to bear much fruit in our discipleship? Do you have that gratefulness in heart to the diligence of our Father in heaven as our vinedresser, his ways of caring for us?

WEDNESDAY

Abide in Christ, your true vine, for apart from Him you can do nothing.
(Memorial of St. Therese of the Child Jesus)

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned."

(John 15:5-6)

57. The gospel image of the vine and the branches reveals to us another fundamental aspect of the lay faithful's life and mission: *the call to growth and a continual process of maturation, of always bearing much fruit.*

As a diligent vinedresser, the Father takes care of his vine. God's solicitude is so ardently called upon by Israel, that she prays: "Turn again, O God of hosts! / Look down from heaven, and see; / have regard for this vine, / the stock which your right hand has planted" (Ps 80:15-16). Jesus himself speaks of the Father's work: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away. and every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit" (**John 15:1-2**).

The vitality of the branches depends on their remaining attached to the vine, which is Jesus Christ: "*He who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing*" (**John 15:5**).

People are approached in liberty by God who calls everyone to grow, develop and bear fruit. A person cannot put off a response nor cast off personal responsibility in the matter. The solemn words of Jesus refer to this exalted and serious responsibility: "If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned" (**Jn 15:6**).

In this dialogue between God who offers his gifts, and the person who is called to exercise responsibility, there comes the possibility, indeed the necessity, of a total and ongoing formation of the lay faithful, as the Synod Fathers have rightly emphasized in much of their work. After having described Christian formation as "a continual process in the individual of maturation in faith and a likening to Christ, according to the will of the Father, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit", they have clearly affirmed that the formation of the lay faithful must be placed *among the priorities of a diocese*. It ought to be so placed within the *plan of pastoral action* that the efforts of the whole community (clergy, lay faithful and religious) converge on this goal" (**209**).

(Christifidelis Laici no. 57)

Are you willing to abide in Christ in order to function well as our life is a mission? Have you experienced great joy and happiness in effect of performing the "call to love" with no limits, as you abide

in Christ? Are you eager to bear much fruit in your discipleship? Do you see the importance of the Christian formation needed for our growth and maturation in faith?

THURSDAY

Be a healthy branch united to the real vine.

(Memorial of the Guardian Angels)

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”
(John 15:7-8)

“For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.”
(John 17:8)

“The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.”
(1 John 3:24)

66. The formation process is oriented toward the integral maturity of the person and of the VDMFa, taking into account the following fundamental dimensions: formation in the Verbum Dei charism, human and professional, spiritual, doctrinal, in communion in all their pastoral and apostolic spheres.
(Statutes of VDMFa no. 66)

Do you see the importance of your discipleship in the way Jesus sees it as very important? Do you recognize that the only true life of every person is to be united to the real vine who is Jesus? How important is your obedience to God? Do

you value integral maturity in your Christian life? Do you see the efforts of the Verbum Dei Missionary Family in leading us to this process of maturity? How deep are your roots in order to be connected to the vine? Is it deep enough to withstand drought?

FRIDAY

The greatest is LOVE, the kind of fruit that endures

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.”
(John 15:11-17)

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” ***(1 Corinthians 13:13)***

How do you keep your endurance to love, not according to your liking but as God is calling you to love one another? Do you believe that the only fruit of our life, which is eternal, is LOVE? Have you experienced the love of Jesus through your discipleship? His friendship? Is he your best friend?

SATURDAY

Be new and fresh like a good fruit that is to be served to all and to the whole world.

(Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi)

“And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.”
(Mark 2:22)

“Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.” ***(Colossians 3:9-10)***

“It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!” ***(Matthew 10:25)***

Are you ready to collaborate to the spiritual formations that the VD community is providing? Do you see the importance of renewal through formations as our way of becoming mature in our discipleship? Are you able to use all the means that the VD Community is providing us in order to become like Christ as our teacher and master in our discipleship? Do you see the newness in you in becoming fruitful? Are you willing to serve many people in order to enjoy the words of God through you?

SUNDAY READINGS

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Isaiah 5:1-7

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 80

2nd Reading: Philippians 4:6-9

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

“He prunes that it may bear more fruit”

(John 15:1-2)

September 29- October 5, 2014

Theme for the month:

Our Missionary intentionality in putting solid foundations (priority on formations)

General Objective of the month:

To value our formation as disciples of Christ so we can be apostles capable to respond to the call of the mission of evangelization in forming in others the life of Christ.



Objective of the week:

To realize the great desire of God for our growth and maturity as apostles in order that we may always bear much fruit.