

INTRODUCTION

Last week we prayed on knowing Jesus more as the one we are followed as disciples. This week we are to deepen on our awareness and live through the challenges that we face in this process of formation.

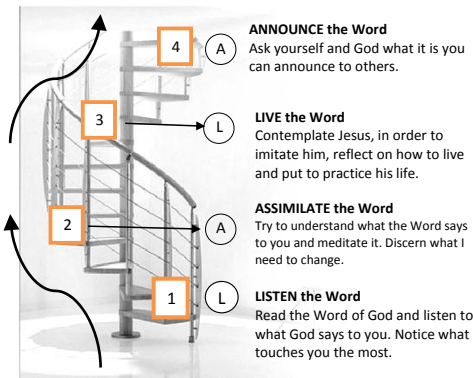
There is a labor that goes into Christ being formed in us. While that may seem like a challenge or that is going to be hard work, let us remember that this is a joint effort. We have a part in this process and the Holy Trinity is our partner in this growth process. Let us allow the power of God to change us rather than relying in our own capacity.

In forming Christ in us, we face a lot of challenges that we need to overcome but sometimes we only end up exhausted and frustrated because change seem to be so far from reality. This is what it is when we try to live for God in the strength of our flesh. The better way is to spend more time in God's Word and less in our head, or being influenced by the things of this world.

Becoming like Christ does not happen by accident and it does not happen by force. ***"The formation process has to be sufficiently gradual and systematic. At the same time, they need to be flexible and open enough to apply them to the diverse socio-cultural realities. (Statutes of the VDMFa 69)*** We are given free will by God to form His Son in us. This process has trials. Even Jesus had to endure difficulties, so we should not

be surprised when we do as well. If Jesus had conquered all His challenges, we too can do it if we fix our eyes on HIM.

DYNAMISM OF THE WORD



MONDAY

Wisdom From God Helps Us Cope Up With Trials and Pressures in Life

¹⁶ For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

(James 3:16-18)

The gospel is focusing us on how to live in peace as Christians in the midst of continuing ever present trials in this twisted world. Our struggles sometimes lead us to be tempted to even question God's presence, care and activity in our lives. We are devastated with daily pressures and frustrations. Wisdom from God and not the wisdom from the world

is what we need in this life to interact with our circumstances and with those around us. As disciple of Christ, we need positive attitude and appropriate actions in order to be formed Christ in us, in which only the wisdom from God drives these demands.

TUESDAY

Anyone who welcomes the little ones in the name of Jesus welcomes God himself

³⁰ They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, ³¹ because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise."

³² But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it. ³³ They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" ³⁴ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. ³⁵ Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all." ³⁶ He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." ***(Mark 9:30-37)***

In the mission, we are promoting the Word of God and Jesus. We are not promoting ourselves for others to appreciate. We should not compare ourselves to others but instead let us

compare ourselves to Jesus who is our model. Sometimes, this is one of the challenges in our following with Jesus. We sometimes have this competitive mentality. Like Jesus, let us try to think of how we can descend to the needy instead of thinking of going up. Our power must be used not to ascend and dominate but to descend and to serve.

WEDNESDAY

Poverty in Spirit Will Make Room For God's Provision

⁹ When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. ³ He told them: "Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. ⁴ Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. ⁵ If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." ⁶ So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere. ***(Luke 9:1-6)***

One of our struggles in our discipleship is sometimes how to handle power and authority, both spiritual and temporal. Jesus gave us power and authority to speak and act in His name, to heal and to speak the Word of God. Jesus teaches us to use it for the good of our neighbour. Jesus tells us to travel light or no provision. This is the "Poverty in spirit" which frees us from greed and preoccupation with possessions and makes room for God's provision. The Lord wants us to be dependent on Him and not

on ourselves. The Lord entrusts us with His gifts and talents that we can use to bring light to others. Are you ready to handle the power and authority which God wishes you to exercise in His behalf?

THURSDAY

Mercy is What Pleases Me Not Sacrifice

⁹ As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. ¹⁰ While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹² On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³ But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'¹⁴ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:9-13)

For Jesus, mercy is more important than legal purity. God has profound mercy, and is moved before the failures of his people. In following Jesus it requires breaking away from many things, and many times we fail, many times we turn our back from Jesus. But the good news is that, Jesus is not scandalized with our failures. He remains open to welcome us back. Our unworthiness is not enough reason not to continue forming Christ in us. He came for us, sinners, to save us and He did.

FRIDAY

Putting God's Word into Practice Makes Us Members of Jesus' Family

¹⁹ Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd. ²⁰ Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." ²¹ He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice." (Luke 8:19-21)

Sometimes our family helps us to live the Gospel and to participate in the community. Other times, the family prevents this. The concern for the problems in the family sometimes prevented us from being united in the community. Rather, in order that the kingdom of God could manifest anew in our community life, we have to go beyond, to pass the narrow limits of a small family and open ourselves to a large family towards the community. Jesus extends His family. To be with the family of Jesus, we need to listen to the Word of God and put it into practice. It is the Word of God that creates a new family around Jesus.

SATURDAY

To Focus on Jesus Is To Help Us Identify Our Blind Spots

⁴² "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. ⁴³ If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never

goes out. ⁴⁵ And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁶ ⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ where 'the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched.' (Mark 9:38-48)

How well do we know ourselves? Sometimes, unknowingly we are preoccupied with infighting and self-righteousness proclamations about others. Jesus returns the focus back to our own behaviours, the way we speak and live the good news, and the way we place obstacles in the way of that good news. These blind spots of ours become the stumbling blocks causing another to stumble. The things we hold dear, the things we think bring abundance and power can sometimes block us from widening the way for others to the gospel. Through the images of body, Jesus makes clear that stumbling blocks are not other people or things outside of us. They are part of us. If we are not careful enough in our discipleship, this cause others to stumble in their following. Putting our focus on Jesus will help us identify our blind spots and get ourselves in the way to practice the gospel thus causing others to do the same.

SUNDAY

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Numbers 11:25-29

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 19:8-14

2nd Reading: James 5:1-6

Gospel: Mark 9:38-48

Verbum Dei

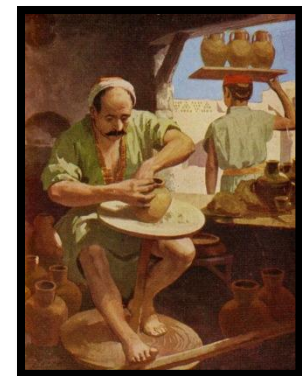
GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

Challenges we face in the process of forming apostles of Christ.

September 21-27, 2015

General Theme: "The goal of our life is to be Christ."

General Objective: To give emphasis on the process and formative way of becoming apostles in order that the disciples are made aware of where they are and what the Lord expects of each of them.



Objective of the week:

To be aware and live through the challenges that we face in this process of formation.