

Introduction

Liturgically, we are now in the last week of Advent. Many of us are attending the Misa de Gallo, with the deep desire to accompany Mary and Joseph on their journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem; a journey of around 100 miles walking, which took between 8 to 10 days.

This week we will be praying in a special way about the gift of spiritual motherhood. Let us continue to be with Mary and learn from her what is and how to live our discipleship with a motherly attitude as she had with Jesus and as she is with us. May she inspire us this week on our spiritual motherhood.

MONDAY

A gentle and firm person

Luke 2: 41-52

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover... After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem... After three days they found him in the temple courts, listening to the teachers and asking them questions... When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have

you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

Mary as a mother was gentle and firm in being assertive and in her faith in God's promises above all; in the way she educated Jesus and also on how she is a mother for us. With gentleness she expressed to Jesus her concerns for him and with gentleness, she kept all things in her heart, after Jesus' difficult response. Mary teaches us to be spiritual mothers by speaking with gentleness, even when our concerns for the way others live aren't understood or accepted. Mary was gentle and firm because she was rooted in the unconditional faith in God's promises.

TUESDAY

An attentive person

Luke 1: 39-45

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the

child you will bear!... Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

When God invites us all to deepen in our spiritual motherhood, he calls us to be attentive to the needs of others, being of our family, community, at the workplace... and especially of those who are like the lost sheep.

When we prepare our preaching or speak to others, but also when buying Christmas gifts, attending Christmas parties, let us ask Mother Mary to help us to be attentive to the needs of others, to give them words of encouragement and consolation, like she did with her cousin Elizabeth.

WEDNESDAY

A loving person

Col 3: 5-17

...Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another, if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

A mother is above all a person who loves each one of her children; in her differences she incarnates God's love in the way that each child can recognize he/she is loved. A motherly love that resembles that of God is also free of possessiveness and control; it fosters growth, not dependency. How is our love and relationship with those who God entrusts us?

Let's ask Mother Mary: how did she love Jesus and helping him and the disciples to grow in forgiveness, compassion, humility, and gentleness.

THURSDAY

A self-giving person

John 16: 21-22

A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born, she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

Another characteristic of spiritual maternity is that of a sacrificial love, capable of walking the extra mile, and even able to suffer in the joy of seeing the other growing in love, faith and hope.

In today's bible passage, Jesus compares his self-giving love as part of his spiritual motherhood towards his disciples and to us. I invite you to recall all those experiences of preaching, accompanying others in faith, or inviting others to faith activities. Do you believe God is grateful for your yes and all your efforts, despite sometimes of their ungratefulness? He knows how a sacrificial love is like, He knows the loneliness we can feel too. Let's unite our self-giving to Christ's. May all the seeds of His love that we try to sow in their hearts, produce fruit in due time.

FRIDAY

A simple person

Luke 1: 46-56

My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humility of his servant... His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts... and has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

Mary's life is a model of spiritual motherhood in the way she was,

lived and perceived the ways God works within us. This is portrayed in today's bible passage. Spiritual motherhood is a call to accompany God's work in our souls and in the souls of those God entrusts us, helping them to experience God's mercy, spiritual freedom and humility.

How does today's bible passage help us to recognize the work that God's Spirit has been doing within us and within those He asks us to care for?

SATURDAY

A trustworthy person

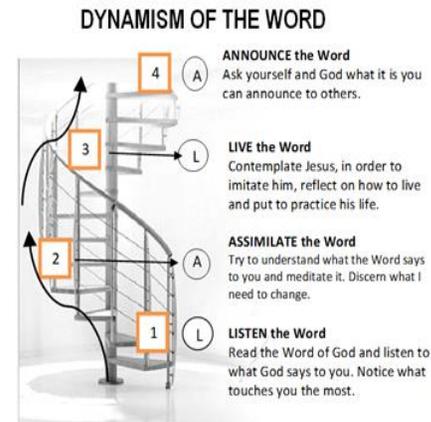
Luke 1: 57-66

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John."

Today's reading we see the attributes of Elizabeth as a mother, her love, mercy and faithfulness to God in naming her child John. As we pray this word, we can reflect on how trust is

such an important aspect in spiritual maternity. Trust often grows when there is caring, forgiveness and compassion. In spiritual maternity, trust also comes from one's faithfulness to God. We choose someone to be our SD not because of his/her perfection, but if we trust he/she can be understanding, merciful and can help us to grow in our love and faithfulness to God.

Let's ask God to help us to be a trustworthy person in our call to spiritual motherhood. And let's reflect on how we can develop relationships of trust with those whose faith may depend on ours.



4th Sunday of Advent

First Reading: 2 Sam 7:1-5,8b-12,14a,16

Psalm:Ps 89:2-5,27,29

Second Reading: Rom 16:25-27

Gospel:Lk.1:26-38

Verbum Dei

Guidelines for Prayer

December 18-24, 2017

*"Gentle like
a mother"*

General Objectives:

-To discover that living our mission God makes us part of his maternity and paternity; Children that is coming from the communion with God and they will be the new apostles that open the way to the Lord.

Objective of the week:

- to be like a mother: with gentleness, with special affection, sacrificial love and unselfish labor.