

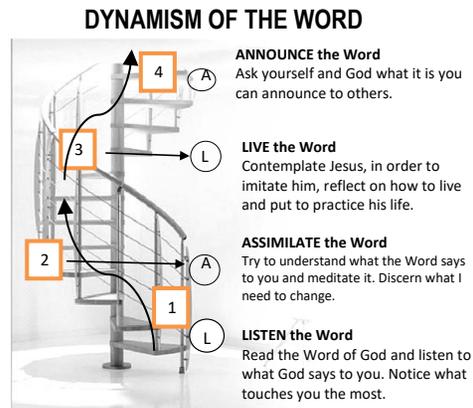
INTRODUCTION

How beautiful to realize the love of Jesus for us where He expressed it by journeying with us and giving us the assurance as He said "I will never abandon you! You are mine, you belong to me. I will be with you always, until the end of time".

This week we are invited again to fix our eyes on Jesus our Good Shepherd, to look at Him and be able to see in the eyes of faith and experience how He closely walks with us especially in our journey in living the new life he gave us from His resurrection. Jesus doesn't want us to go astray. He is even willing to lay down his life again and again just for us. He is the Good Shepherd who comes to find us always and approaches us with gentleness and firmness. Where? Through the voice of our conscience, through His words and through the people around us who guide us along to be in the right path.

Jesus always leads us to the right path and always open a way in front of our difficult situations. He even knows our limitations and weaknesses but how wonderful to note that he never tires in carrying us on His shoulders rather it is with so much joy as He found us again. What about us? There are sheep that Jesus entrusted to us: at home, in school, in our workplaces; people who are in some way under our authority. Jesus said "Feed my sheep". We can do it if we are close to Jesus as we follow Him for He is the one who will lead us on "How". It is also Jesus who will provide us what to feed as long as we always allow ourselves to be nourished by his words in order to be in the green pasture as St. Gregory the Great said, "Anyone who follows Him with an undivided heart is nourished in a pasture which is forever green." In this way, we can also lead the people to Jesus in order to enjoy the green pasture of His words of life and love. Remember we are also beautiful and

noble shepherds because we have been given a new life from that beautiful and noble shepherd who is Christ Jesus. Let us imitate Jesus the Good Shepherd. For Him there are no black sheeps. He loves the stray ones more for He leaves the 99 righteous to search for the lost one. Let us ask Jesus to help us to be more like Him by being close to Him. As Pope Benedict XVI stated: "Jesus is not only the shepherd but also the nourishment, the true pasture who gives his life for us.



MONDAY

**Jesus is the Good Shepherd
who nourishes us with His love**

The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack. In green pastures he makes me lie down; to still waters he leads me; he restores my soul. He guides me along right paths for the sake of his name. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me. You set a table before me in front of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Indeed, goodness and mercy will pursue me all the days of my life; I will dwell in the house of the LORD for endless days.

(Psalm 23)

How good is the Lord who nourishes us with His love and goodness through His self giving. But we can only avail all of His goodness and love if we allow ourselves to be close to Him. To follow Him not from a distance but to follow Him closely in order to personally experience all His goodness and mercy. In this way we can learn how to share these to others. Are you willing to follow Him closely? How close are you to Him?

TUESDAY

**JESUS is the Good Shepherd
willing to die for the sheep**

A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep.

(John 10:10-15)

It is beautiful to recognize the self giving of Jesus for us. To be thankful to Him that He always comes to us in order to give life. We are also invited to do the same. Are you now willing to share the new life that we receive from Jesus' resurrection? Who are these people in whom Jesus wants you to share? Are you now ready to do so? Jesus is so happy if we say our big YES to Him.

WEDNESDAY

**Jesus is the Good Shepherd
ready to serve with all humility**

So when he had washed their feet [and] put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. (John 13:12-15)

The service of Jesus for each one of us is so great. He serves us with all humility where he concretely showed us that love is greater than death. How wonderful if we can open ourselves constantly to Him in order that we can understand though not fully what he has done for us. Do you see the forgiving heart of Jesus for you? Who are the people that Jesus wanted you to forgive? Jesus sets us an example because He wanted us to be like Him. He wanted us to experience the real happiness that life can offer by becoming like Him: to be Christ for others.

THURSDAY

**Jesus is the Good Shepherd
assuming
all walks of life**

Now the apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles too had accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem the circumcised believers confronted him, saying, "You entered the house of uncircumcised people and ate with them." Peter began and explained it to them step by step, saying, "I was at prayer in the city of Joppa when in a trance I had a vision, something resembling a large sheet coming down, lowered from the sky by its four corners, and it came to me. Looking intently into it, I observed and saw the

four-legged animals of the earth, the wild beasts, the reptiles, and the birds of the sky. I also heard a voice say to me, 'Get up, Peter. Slaughter and eat.' But I said, 'Certainly not, sir, because nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

But a second time a voice from heaven answered, 'What God has made clean, you are not to call profane.' This happened three times, and then everything was drawn up again into the sky. Just then three men appeared at the house where we were, who had been sent to me from Caesarea. The Spirit told me to accompany them without discriminating. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. He related to us how he had seen [the] angel standing in his house, saying, 'Send someone to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter, who will speak words to you by which you and all your household will be saved.' As I began to speak, the holy Spirit fell upon them as it had upon us at the beginning, and I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water but you will be baptized with the holy Spirit.'^{d17} If then God gave them the same gift he gave to us when we came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to be able to hinder God? When they heard this, they stopped objecting and glorified God, saying, "God has then granted life-giving repentance to the Gentiles too." (Acts 11:1-18)

How wonderful to realize that Jesus never discriminates and not choosy whom to love. He accept everyone especially the poor and the lowly. Are you willing to reach out to others and bring the love of Christ to them?

FRIDAY

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who gives us a new life and wanting us to follow His footsteps

But what credit is there if you are patient when beaten for doing wrong? But if you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God.²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered* for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps. "He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth." When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not

threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

(1 Peter 2: 20-25)

Jesus is always leading us and inviting us to follow Him. To follow His ways of loving - a love that never gives up even to the point of death. A kind of death where we forget ourselves for the sake of others, showing the willingness to go out from one's own comforts just for the sake of Christ's love. Who and where are these people whom Christ is leading you to go? Are you willing to give up your own comforts in order to say Yes to the call of love Jesus has for us?

SATURDAY

Jesus is the Good Shepherd with a communitarian heart

At that time, as the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the holy Spirit, also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them. The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith

(Acts 6:1-7)

Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose because of Stephen went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but Jews. There were some Cypriots and Cyrenians among them, however, who came to Antioch and began to speak to the Greeks as well, proclaiming the Lord Jesus.²¹ The hand of the Lord was with them and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The news about them reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas [to go] to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord in firmness of heart, for he was a good man, filled with the holy Spirit and faith. And a large number of people was added to the Lord. Then he went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a large number of people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. (Acts 11: 19-26)

Jesus is now inviting us to imitate and follow His footsteps of being a Good Shepherd. He is now appealing to us for He needs us to be good shepherds to those who are now lost in the flock. How wonderful to realize that Jesus is placing us to His flock through the Verbum Dei Community. He doesn't want us to be astray, thus he takes care of us through the means that the VD Community is providing us. In this way we can be as community searching for those who are not yet in the flock. Are you now willing to embrace the mission in order to find the lost sheep?

5th SUNDAY of Easter

1st Reading – Acts 6:1-7
 Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 33
 2nd Reading – 1 Peter 2:4-9
 Gospel – John 14:1-12



Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

“ The Lord is my Shepherd”

May 8-14, 2017

General Theme:

Jesus himself drew near and walked along with them.” (Lk.24:15)

General Objective:

To teach the apostles to accompany the new people with their life and their words based on how Jesus accompanied his apostles after the resurrection.

Objective of the week:

To experience how Jesus closely walks with us in our journey of living the new life.