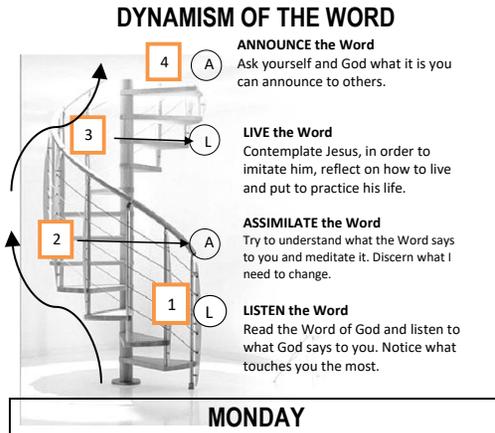


INTRODUCTION

Easter is the time we celebrate the victory of Christ over death. It is a victory because the love of God has triumphed over sin. His death has liberated us from the bondage of sin and brought us eternal life. It is very clear the love of the Father concretely demonstrated in Christ Jesus on His love without limits and which conquers everything. His great love is man's reason to love others for when man loves God, he imitates Him, making Him present in his daily life.

Pope Francis has invited us in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelium Gaudium* (Nos. 46, 49), "Let us go forth, then, let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ. Here I repeat for the entire Church what I have often said to the priests and laity of Buenos Aires: I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the center and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: "Give them something to eat" (Mk 6:37)"

Let us pray for one another so that we may become more sensitive to the situations and the needs of others. Let us not hesitate to find time to feed them the Word of God for them to experience the unlimited love of our God.



Out of Comfort Zone

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born² from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother's womb and be born again, can he?" Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind² blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. (Jn. 3:1-8)

In this Easter season, we experienced that we are born again in Christ. We renewed our faith; highly spirited because our heart is filled with the Holy Spirit. We have rekindled our faith and the Spirit has been prompting our hearts to share to our brothers and sisters. They are waiting for us. Let us go out of our comfort zone and announce to them what we have received from our encounter with the Risen Christ.

Through preaching, we sustain the rekindled flame of our faith.

*How do you keep your faith burning?
Are you willing to share the experience you have of the risen Christ?*

TUESDAY

Go and proclaim the gospel to every creature, not choosing who to evangelize

He said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents [with their hands], and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs. [And they reported all the instructions briefly to Peter's companions. Afterwards Jesus himself, through them, sent forth from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.] (Mk. 16:15-20)

Jesus showed his deep concern to all humanity. He left us the message of love to reach out to everyone without condition and always be available for them to heal their brokenness with the assurance that He is with us all the way. He invited us to proclaim his words for it does not only bring healing but it is truly eternal life.

Are you willing to heal the brokenness of others? Do you believe that the Word of God is capable of doing it? What do you see stops you to go and proclaim the Good News that can heal?

WEDNESDAY

Prefer light than darkness

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

(John 3:16-21)

The gifts we are receiving in this Easter Season must flourish and bear much fruits. We need not waste them by going back to our old ways and put everything in vain. As we have risen with Christ, we must live in his light. We shall invest our life for Christ unceasingly and be the guiding light to our brothers and sisters who are still living in the darkness. Let's help them open their eyes to the truth that they are the God's beloved children, and that God will always find a way to help them find the joy and the true meaning of their lives so that they may not feel vain and bitter. Giving light to others is our concrete expression of love and obedience to Him.

*Do you see the need to sustain your life with the risen Christ?
In what way you can help others live in the light of Christ?*

THURSDAY

Entrust everything to Him

The one who comes from above is above all. The one who is of the earth is earthly and

speaks of earthly things. But the one who comes from heaven [is above all]. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever does accept his testimony certifies that God is trustworthy. For the one whom God sent speaks the words of God. He does not ration his gift of the Spirit. The Father loves the Son and has given everything over to him. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him. (Jn. 3:31-36)

We who are already renewed by Christ must continue to live in Him and with Him. Sometimes temptation come along our way to test our faith and it is inevitable. We shall not allow it to hinder us from proclaiming God's words. Let us always bear in mind that we have the responsibility to make ourselves a good neighbour to others and actively serve them because they need it. We need dedication and perseverance until the very end as what Jesus did. Let us entrust everything to Him because this is the moment that He opens our hearts and share with us His embracing love.

*What do you do when your faith is being tested?
How do you persevere in your mission?*

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people recline." Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted. When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, "Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted." So they collected them, and filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves that had been more than they could eat. When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, "This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world." Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone. (Jn. 6:1-15)

Jesus encouraged us to do the mission. For Him nothing is impossible. Mission entails feeding our souls with the word of God in order to sustain our filial relationship with Him. With that, we can learn to love others without limits. Let us not waste the bread and fish that we have received. This would be enough to feed our brothers and sisters who are hungry and thirsty for Him. The more we give time to others, the stronger we become. So let's not hesitate to find time for them as it's the source of God's grace.

*What will you do with your loaves of bread and two fish?
Are you willing to have it multiplied by Him?*

the sea and coming near the boat, and they began to be afraid. But he said to them, "It is I. Do not be afraid." They wanted to take him into the boat, but the boat immediately arrived at the shore to which they were heading. (Jn. 6:16-21)

Jesus has shown us that He is a God who really cares. There are moments in our life that we experience darkness and feel all alone with our sufferings. Our self-sufficiency cannot solve our problem and ease its anguish. In times like these, we must not fear. We need to turn ourselves to Him and trust Him. He will never turn down our supplications. Let us not allow our problems to stop us from growing in our faith in Christ. Instead, let's cultivate it and continue to live with our risen Christ.

Being raised with Christ, how do you look at and face your own suffering and that of others?

3rd SUNDAY of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 2nd 14,22-33
Responsorial Psalm: Ps 16:1-2,5,7-11
2nd Reading: 1 Pet 1:17-21
Gospel: Luke 24:13-35



Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"LIVE AND LOVE WITHOUT LIMITS!"

April 24-30, 2017

General Theme:
Do as I have done...
Live and love without limits!

General Objective:
 -That the Verbum Dei Missionary Family be reliable and empowered apostles, living out their missionary identity in forming others to become apostles of Christ
 -That we learn from Jesus' life and love given without limits in accompanying others as we accompany him closely in the Passover to the resurrection
 -That Jesus' resurrection gives strength, power and grace for every apostle to live and love without limits in their very own fields of mission.

Objective of the week:

That this encounter with the Resurrected Christ brings us to live and love without limits even to the peripheries. The Resurrected Christ doesn't leave us the same. It brings us out of our comfort zone to a deeper step into faith.

FRIDAY

Your five loaves and two fish : enough to make a difference.

After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee [of Tiberias]. A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. The Jewish feast of Passover was near. When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?" He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little [bit]." One of his disciples,

SATURDAY

It is I. Do not be afraid.

When it was evening, his disciples went down to the sea, embarked in a boat, and went across the sea to Capernaum. It had already grown dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea was stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on