
**GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER**

**“Jesus grew both in body and in wisdom, gaining favour with God and people.”**

 **(Luke 2:52)**

 **Week III**
 January 20-26, 2020

 (Week of Prayer for

 Christian Unity – January 18-25)

**General Theme**:

Missionaries for all people

**General Objective:**

To enter in Jesus' spirit of openness and dialogue with all peoples and learn from him to be missionaries of communion for the world of today.

**Objective for this week**: to learn from Jesus how be patient in our process and that of others as we are being transformed to become the missionaries for all people.

 **INTRODUCTION**

 We just recently celebrated the sinulog but the shouts of “Pit Senyor” (short for Sangpit sa Senyor or plead to Sr. Santo Nino) speaks more profoundly as we continue to contemplate the life of Jesus this week. What shall we plead to Him? Miracles? Blessings? Wealth and Health? The bottom line for all these petitions is the asking for Joy. We will ask Jesus how to grow in wisdom and stature in favor with God and people as He did.

 Being formed as missionaries for all peoples, we need to undergo a process of transformation and this process should not make us weary. God could have sent a full-grown Christ but He chose for Him to grow, live, mature, and experience obscurity for three decades before starting His public ministry to be recognized as He truly is. Contemplating Jesus Christ, we will be able to understand that God has designed for us a dynamic existence, that we have stages and seasons of life, that everyday is an opportunity to grow and mature in body and soul and that every moment is an opportunity to renew and grow deeper in relationship with God and our neighbor. Wisdom is God’s gift that enables us to see Him at work in us and in the world. The ups and downs of our lives take on a deeper meaning when we seek and find God there working and gently forming us to be like Him. Living in this “efficiency-obsessed” world, it is so easy to lose track and become impatient of the ways of God and His timing. No wonder that many starts and ends the day miserably chasing the wind. Let us allow the Holy Spirit to transform us in all aspects of our being, to show us the dignity of ordinary life and labor and the sanctity of incremental growth and maturation so that we can be more grateful and hopeful.

**MONDAY**
 ***Jesus grew in stature***

*“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.” (***Hebrews 4:15)**

Incarnation of the Son of God “does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man" (***Catechism of the Catholic Church, 464).***

What was Jesus doing between his celebrated birth and public ministry? He was growing! He walked the unglamorous ordinary path of human growth and development. He had to learn to walk and talk. He may have scraped his knees, broke a finger or wrist. He must have also His sick days and experience awkwardness of adolescence. He learned how to interact with others and worked as a day laborer. He had his own share of experience of obscurity and uncertainty in life.

*As our body grow and age each day, how aware and grateful are we of our existence? All that we are and have are God’s provision to form us to be like Him. Do we also take care of our bodies as an expression of gratitude to its Maker?*

**TUESDAY**

***Jesus grew in Wisdom***

*“The child grew and became strong; he was full of wisdom, and God's blessings were upon him.”*

 *L****uke 2:40***

*“but he would withdraw to deserted places to pray.”* ***Luke 5:16***

Jesus grew also in wisdom and knowledge not because He had it all at once or always had it but He learnt it along the way. His human mind and heart developed through the painful steps of everyday living and challenges. He learned from the Scriptures, from Joseph and Mary, by observing in the daily life and by seeking and finding God in all circumstances.

*Is my mind and heart teachable and malleable? Am I learning for self-righteousness and sufficiency? Jesus, teach me to see beyond every difficulty or opportunity the growth in wisdom and knowledge that you want for me. May I use them to bring more people to an encounter with You.*

**WEDNESDAY**
 ***Jesus learned obedience***

*He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.* ***Luke 2:51***

*“In the days when he was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him,”*

 ***Hebrews 5:7-9***

*“Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work.”*

***John 4:34***

*The first end I propose in our daily life is to do the will of God; secondly, to do it in the manner He wills it, and thirdly, to do it because it is His will.* ***(St. Elizabeth Ann Seton)***

*5. “Listen, child” (Pr 1:8). First of all, obedience is an attitude of a son or daughter. It is that particular kind of listening that only a son or daughter can do in listening to his or her parent, because it is enlightened by the certainty that the parent has only good things to say and give to him or her. This is a listening, full of the trust, that makes a son or daughter accept the parent's will, sure that it will be for his or her own good.*

*This is most completely true in regard to God. In fact, we reach our fullness only to the extent that we place ourselves within the plan with which He has conceived us with a Father's love. Therefore, obedience is the only way human persons, intelligent and free beings, can have the disposition to fulfil themselves. As a matter of fact, when a human person says “no” to God, that person compromises the divine plan,*

 *diminishing him or herself and condemning him or herself to failure.[[1]](#footnote-1)*

Obedience was an essential aspect in the growth of Jesus in stature and wisdom. Obedience was not a sign of weakness but acceptance of our identity as children of God. We have a Father who loves us so much and who wants only the best for us.

*Jesus, how is the Father loving me today? Please help me to believe and experience that Your Father is my Father and that I can put my full confidence in His unfailing and everlasting love in the midst of my realities today*.

**THURSDAY**

***Being in the Father’s house***

*Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed.*

***Mk 1:35***

*“In those days he departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God.”*

***Luke 6:12***

*Didn’t you know that I had to be in my Father’s house?* ***Lk.2:49b***

*Thus, the real obedience of the believing person is adhering to the Word with which God reveals and communicates himself, and through which he renews his covenant of love every day. From that Word flowed life which continues to be transmitted every day. Therefore, every morning the believing person seeks a living and faithful contact with the Word which is proclaimed that day, meditating on it and holding it in his or her heart as a treasure, making of it the root of every action and the primary criterion of each choice, allowing him or herself to be edified by that Word. And at the end of the day placing him or herself before the Word, praising God as Simeon did for having seen the fulfilment of the eternal Word within the small events of the day (cf. Lk 2:27-32), and confiding to the strength of the Word whatever has remained unaccomplished. The Word, in fact, does not work only by day, but continuously, as the Lord teaches in the parable of the seed (cf. Mk 4:26-27).*

*The loving encounter with the Word shows one how to discover the way to life and the way through which God wishes to free his children, nourishes one's spiritual instincts for the things which are pleasing to God, conveys the sense and the taste for his will, gives peace and joy for staying faithful, making one sensitive and ready for all the expressions of obedience: to the Gospel (Rm 10:16; 2 Th 1:8), to the faith (Rm 1:5; 16:26; Acts 6:7), and to the truth (Gal 5:7; 1 Pt 1:22). [[2]](#footnote-2)*

Prayer is what sustains obedience and prepares us for its expressions. Jesus, give me thirst for the Word of God everyday, grace to be able to encounter you daily, wait for the Lord and put what I received from You into action.

 *Do the options I take in my life lead me towards God or away from Him? How is my option to pray?*

**FRIDAY**

***Gaining favour with God***

*“Don't forget what I teach you, my child. Always remember what I tell you to do. My teaching will give you a long and prosperous life. Never let go of loyalty and faithfulness. Tie them round your neck; write them on your heart. If you do this, both God and people will be pleased with you. Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the LORD in everything you do, and he will show you the right way. Never let yourself think that you are wiser than you are; simply obey the LORD and refuse to do wrong. If you do, it will be like good medicine, healing your wounds and easing your pains.”* ***Proverbs 3:1-8***

*“Happy the one who listens to me, attending daily at my gates, keeping watch at my doorposts; For whoever finds me finds life, and wins favor from the LORD;”* ***Proverbs 8:34-35***

*“And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.””****Mt 3:17***

Our daily humble transformation to be like Him gladdens the heart of the Father for we are living out who truly we are. Jesus, teach us to live in the truth, to stay faithful and loyal to the love of the Father in all circumstances and even in obscurity.

*In what way can I commit my life to love God more? What does He invites me to do? What prevents me from acting according to His ways?*

**SATURDAY
 *Gaining favour with people***

*“Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me everything I have done.””* ***John 4:39***

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God. Consider how he endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart.”* ***Hebrews 12:1-3***

The life we live in the truth of the Gospel brings forth freedom to others from their own fears and anxieties for the truth of His love has come to free them through our testimony of life. The best favour we can get from people is when they give themselves to Christ and bring other to Christ as well.

*With the way I treat people around me, is it bringing glory and honor to God*?

 **3rd SUNDAY in Ordinary Time**

1st Reading Is 8:23-9:3

Ps 27:1,4,13-14(1a)

2nd Reading 2Cor 1:10-13,17

Gospel Mt 4:12-23

1. ***Congregation For Institutes Of Consecrated Life And Societies Of Apostolic Life -The Service Of Authority And Obedience #5***

 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ***Ibid, #7*** [↑](#footnote-ref-2)