

INTRODUCTION

We have been reflecting on the Eucharist for a month. Why do we focus on this theme? What is its relation to our mission as apostles? According to Jaime, the Eucharist is a forge. It is similar to our following where we can experience heat and being hammered in order to become perfect in our growing to holiness. It is in the resistance of others that our foundation of faith is tested. With this resistance, we are invited to hold on to Jesus to receive him in the holy eucharist and ponder his divine presence in order to increase our faith and trust in him. This is the moment where we plead for God's mercy and compassion and to rely on him alone.

As difficulties come along the way, we are no longer in trouble for when we are weak, then we are strong, for God's grace is sufficient for us (2Cor. 12:10). Jesus doesn't want us to pull back but to go forward with strength to withstand our trials. Therefore, we should not allow these forces to interfere with our mission and our following with Christ.

MONDAY

**“Come to Me,
and I will transform you”**

Memorial of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.”

The eucharist is a yoke. The yoke that

Jesus gives us is his love; without this yoke of love, it is difficult to serve others. This yoke is found in the Eucharist which teaches us to love and to be available. It fills in the emptiness of our heart, it gives us strong foundation of our prayer, and it also urges us to be transformed to Christ. We are all reminded not only to receive Jesus in the Eucharistic celebration but also to accompany and listen to him in the Blessed Sacrament.

Let us ask Mother Mary whom we celebrate the feast in honor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel to help us listen deeply to Jesus in order to continue with our journey with her and Jesus each day.

Do I believe that visiting Jesus often in the Blessed Sacrament can help me become more eucharist to others? How can I maintain my time with the Lord from my hectic schedule?

TUESDAY

“The people are like sheep without a shepherd”

Mark 6:30-34

The apostles returned and met with Jesus, and told him all they had done and taught. There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his disciples didn't even have time to eat. So he said to them, “Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest for a while.” So they started out in a boat by themselves for a lonely place. Many people, however, saw them leave and knew at once who they were; so they went from all the towns and ran ahead by land

and arrived at the place ahead of Jesus and his disciples. When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw this large crowd, and his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began to teach them many things.

The Eucharist is the foundation of our mission. It forges our heart to become Christ's heart. Looking at our needy and lost brothers and sisters moves us to feel pity. It is definitely the love of Christ that manifests in our heart—an emotion that comes naturally to respond to their needs (their hunger and thirst for the truth and the love of Christ). It is by our being the eucharist that can help them find the real answers of what they long for. Let us be available for them especially those who do not yet know the tender compassion of God.

What is the foundation of my mission? How can I cooperate with the mission? How can I bring hope to my needy brothers and sisters?

WEDNESDAY

“I will give you a shepherd after my own heart”

Jeremiah 23:3-4

I will gather the rest of my people from the countries where I have scattered them, and I will bring them back to their homeland. They will have many children and increase in number. I will appoint rulers to take care of them. My people will no longer be afraid or terrified, and I will not punish them again. I, the Lord, have spoken.”

Saying yes to Jesus is not the answer in finding our quest for God, but it is truly God who quests for us more than what we do. He seeks us because he longs to summon all his lost children and thus he first seeks us to be the shepherds of his flock. It is in servanthood that we grow in wisdom, imitate his attributes, heed his voice and instructions. In giving ourselves, we grow in holiness and become more capable of serving as he calls us to serve.

Am I worthy to be called the shepherd of God's flock? How can I remain faithful to God's calling especially to the unlovable ones?

THURSDAY

The confusion of the sheep and the unfaithfulness of the shepherds

Ezekiel 34:2-6, 12

The Lord spoke to me. “Mortal man,” he said, “denounce the rulers of Israel. Prophesy to them, and tell them what I, the Sovereign Lord, say to them: you are doomed, you shepherds of Israel! You take care of yourselves, but never tend the sheep. You drink the milk, wear clothes made from the wool, and kill and eat the finest sheep. But you never tend the sheep. You have not taken care of the weak ones, healed those that are sick, bandaged those that are hurt, brought back those that wandered off, or looked for those that were lost. Instead, you treated them cruelly. Because the sheep had no shepherd, they were scattered, and wild animals killed and ate them. So my sheep wandered over the high hills and the mountains. They were scattered over the face of the earth, and no one

looked for them or tried to find them. In the same way as shepherds take care of their sheep that were scattered and are brought together again. I will bring them back from all the places where they were scattered on that dark, disastrous day.

To preach the kingdom of God is not easy because of our own weaknesses and brokenness. We need to take courage to pray, because sometimes, we tend to shift our attention from God to what is pleasing to our eyes, what satisfies our desires, and to what can answer to our daily needs. Unconsciously, we set aside our prayer and cling to something that can't bring benefit in us. However, as eucharist, there's always a test to assess the quality of our foundation of faith. In times like this, we must not forget to cling and trust God's mercy and compassion. We can ask Mama Mary to pray for us to keep our eyes fixed on her Son, Jesus, so that we can have the strength to continue giving ourselves to others.

*How do I build my foundation of prayer?
How strong is my foundation when at the
moment of discomfort?*

FRIDAY

“Making me into a sharp sword for all the nations”

Memorial of St. Apollinaris, bishop

Is. 49:2, 6

He made my words as sharp as a sword. With his own hand he protected me. He made me like an arrow, sharp and ready for use . . . The Lord said to me, “I have a greater task for you, my servant. Not only will you restore to greatness the people of Israel who have

survived, but I will also make you a light to the nations — so that all the world may be saved.”

In baptism we received the gift of becoming God's children. It is in this sacrament that he chose us to share his divine plan and confirmed in the Sacrament of Confirmation. In this sacrament, we received the Holy Spirit to strengthen our faith and accompany us in our field of mission of bringing the good news to everyone. With our sinfulness and unworthiness God calls us, which means that his love is far greater than our transgressions. It doesn't matter for him who we are but what really matters is the salvation of all his children. So, we should never be afraid of not being worthy to proclaim the Kingdom of God; as St. Paul says, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

SATURDAY

“Creating one new people in union with himself”

Memorial of St. Lawrence of Brindisi, priest and doctor of the Church

Eph. 2:13-18

But now, in union with Christ Jesus, you who used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies. He abolished the Jewish Law with its commandments and rules, in order to create out of the two races one new people in

union with himself, in this way making peace. By his death on the cross Christ destroyed their enmity; by means of the cross he united both races into one body and brought them back to God. So Christ came and preached the Good News of peace to all — to you Gentiles, who were far away from God, and to the Jews, who were near to him. It is through Christ that all of us, Jews and Gentiles, are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of the Father.

Jesus gives us the assurance that we belong to the Kingdom of God. His death and resurrection reveal his perfect expression of love. He demonstrates to us that God is not a distant God. He is too sensitive to the lost, the oppressed, the sick, the widows and orphans, etc. We who experienced God's unending love must teach also others how to love especially the unlovable ones. This is how we can make Jesus known to them—that God is so gracious to us. That we have been called to repentance, for there's eternal bliss that awaits us.

What is my response to the Lord when he calls me to love others the way he loves me? How can I sustain my love to Jesus especially to the unlovable ones? In what situation that I also become unlovable to others?

SUNDAY

16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

1st Reading – Jeremiah 23:1-6

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 23

2nd Reading – Ephesians 2:13-18

Gospel – Mark 6:30-34

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

Forging witnesses of the Eucharist

July 16-22, 2018

General Theme:

The Eucharist forms and transforms apostles

General Objective:

To renew constantly my identity as an apostle in the Eucharist
To follow the same steps of Jesus

Objective of the week:

To let Jesus in the Eucharist make us into his witnesses throughout the whole world