

Verbun Dea

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

Prepare a road for the Lord!

(Mt 3:3)

Week 4

August 24-30, 2020

General Theme: Heirs of a charism of the word with a prophetic character

General Objective: To learn from John the Baptist how he prepared the people to encounter the Messiah with his words and life.

Specific Objective: To have the zeal of an evangelizer like John the Baptist

INTRODUCTION

John the Baptist is "more than a prophet." (CCC 719) He is an evangelizer who not only preaches the Word of God but seeks to bring the people to sincerely repent and return to God. The Holy Spirit completes the work of "[making] ready a people prepared for the Lord." (CCC 718), restoring the divine likeness, prefiguring what a person can achieve with and in Christ.

John during his brief ministry, publicly rebuked unlawful marriage, preached with faith, dedication in the midst of persecution and suffering and humility as an evangelizer of Christ.

The call as an evangelizer of God can bring us to face trials and suffering. Some of which start within ourselves. So, we must be prepared to live by and speak up with the truths of faith and be firm to stand from what is wrong, evil and unjust. To live by faith is not something others can easily grasp and so we need perseverance and hope in Jesus as we prepare the way for His coming. Let us allow the Holy Spirit to renew in us our zeal in proclaiming the Word of

God in order to invite others to prepare the road for Him as well like all those who have gone ahead of us did.

MONDAY

(St. Bartholomew, Apostle) Call of Evangelization

John 1:6-8 A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

A renewal of preaching can offer believers, as well as the lukewarm and the non-practising, new joy in the faith and fruitfulness in the work of evangelization. The heart of its message will always be the same: the God who revealed his immense love in the crucified and risen Christ. God constantly renews his faithful ones, whatever their age... Saint Irenaeus writes: "By his coming, Christ brought with him all newness". With this newness he is always able to renew our lives and our communities, and even if the Christian message has known periods of darkness and ecclesial weakness, it will never grow old. Jesus can also break through the dull categories with which we would enclose him and he constantly amazes us by his divine

creativity. Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always "new". (Evangelii Gaudium 11)

John the Baptist's desire to bring others closer to Jesus through the gospel, shows us that his eagerness in the mission is truly rooted in Christ. Believing that through the Word of God, people will come to know Jesus, true source of fulfillment and joy in life, he testified to the light through His words and actions.

Do I bear witness to Christ as the light in my life and in my discipleship? How eager am I to share the truth of Christ's coming?

TUESDAY

Prepare God's way to his people

Matthew 11:7-10 As they were going off, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? Then what did you go out to see? Someone dressed in fine clothing? Those who wear fine clothing are in royal palaces. Then why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell

you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: 'Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.'

We too, like John the Baptist, are called to be evangelizers sent ahead to prepare God's way into the people's hearts. Many people since then have responded to be the voice of truth and justice and shouted in the desert of our society and moved the conscience of many so that they may not be compromised their faith. May we learn to stand up for what we truly believe as we bring others to know God more as a Father, a friend, and a constant companion even through the simplicity of our life.

What are my personal deserts that lead me towards Christ? From where I am now, in what way can I prepare God's way in my life to reach out to others?

WEDNESDAY

Preaching that announces and denounces

Matthew 3:7-10 When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell

you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

To evangelize is not an easy task, especially when the Word of God touches or challenges the moral of others. So, we must learn to place our confidence in God that we may not lose hope in the transforming power of the Word of God.

What is it that I preach/share to others? How am I leading them to a sincere loving relationship with God?

THURSDAY

(St. Monica)

Passion as a prophet

Mark 1:4-5 John [the] Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

John the Baptist proclaimed with passion the message of repentance. His passion challenges many to live for Christ. As prophets, we are called to have that same passion and to give courageous witness to the people around us as we continue

participating in the mission of preparing the road for our brothers and sisters towards God.

How ready am I to face the cost of being this prophet of today?

FRIDAY

(St. Augustine)

Embracing persecutions

Mark 6:18-19 John the Baptist kept telling Herod, "It isn't right for you to marry your brother's wife!" So Herodias held a grudge against John and wanted to kill him, but she could not because of Herod.

John the Baptist didn't waiver in condemning the adulterous union between Herod and Herodias. He spoke up and was not afraid to embrace the consequences of his actions. As John the Baptist went through sufferings and persecutions in his life, his faith remained firm in God. Our life as evangelizers doesn't free us from persecution or suffering. We can't expect recognition from others. Yet, Jesus assures us that even in our difficulties and struggles, we will never suffer alone. Our fulfillment will always be in Christ.

Has my personal struggles affected my faith? How can I be more of Christ and less of myself so that others might see God's glory?

SATURDAY

(Passion of John the Baptist)

Determination to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom

John 1:29-31 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel."

John the Baptist, inspired by the Holy Spirit, believes that someone will come and though he didn't fully know Jesus yet, he continued to prepare God's way to His people, for their hearts to turn back to God. As Jesus disciples, we have witnessed the work of God in our life. We have this personal encounter and friendship with Him through the Word of God, leading us to follow His path, His ways and not of the world as we hope for the coming of His kingdom.

How is my determination as an evangelizer? Do I seek to know God more, grow in faith and take part in the process of evangelization with the community in the Church?

22nd SUNDAY in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Jeremiah 20:7-9.

Psalms 63:2-9.

2nd Reading: Romans 12,1-2.

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-27

