



GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

PREPARE THE WAY THROUGH PRAYER & HUMILITY

Week 1
August 3-9, 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 learn from John the Baptist how to structure our life in reference to Christ.

INTRODUCTION

As we journey together with the people God has entrusted to us, how great that we are accompanied by a great prophet, John the Baptist, God's herald, from whom we can learn through his living example as we pray with Him this whole month. He is great before the Lord, and filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. He was chosen to fulfill a role in salvation history.

Luke 1:15-17 *for he will be great in the sight of [the] Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord."*

To live our life in reference to Christ begins when we open ourselves to God. Prayer brings us in contact with God and praying the word of God opens us to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit working in our life, guiding us by the will of the Father. It helps us see with eyes of faith even in the darkest realities that we face in the world of today.

Matthew 6:22-23 *"The lamp of the body is the eye. If your eye is sound, your whole body will be filled with light; but if your eye is*

bad, your whole body will be in darkness. And if the light in you is darkness, how great will the darkness be.

In one of the sermons of St. Augustine, he said *"What does prepare the way mean, if not "pray well"? What does prepare the way mean, if not "be humble in your thoughts"? We should take our lesson from John the Baptist. He is thought to be the Christ; he declares he is not what they think. He does not take advantage of their mistake to further his own glory. If he had said, "I am the Christ", you can imagine how readily he would have been believed, since they believed he was the Christ even before he spoke. But he did not say it; he acknowledged what he was. He pointed out clearly who he was; he humbled himself. He saw where his salvation lay. He understood that he was a lamp, and his fear was that it might be blown out by the wind of pride.*

We can see that John the Baptist knew who he was and who he was not. He is simply this person who points others to Jesus so that they too can have this encounter with Him.

Let us learn from John the Baptist how to put Christ as the reference of our prophetic identity and mission.

MONDAY

"Teach us to pray
as John taught his disciples"

Luke 11:1 *He was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."*

Matthew 7:7-11 *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him.*

John taught his disciples to pray for he understood that prayer brings the person in contact with God, therefore it is essential in discipleship as a prophet of God. The call to mission begins in prayer, in listening to what God is calling us to do, and where he is leading us to go.

How do I consider prayer in my relationship with God? What do I ask God in prayer? Am I open to what the Word of God is telling me in the particular situation I am now?

TUESDAY

(St. John Mary Vianney, Priest)

"You will be called prophet
of the Most High"

Luke 1:76-77 *And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.*

"Give yourselves fully to God. He will use you to accomplish great things on the condition that you believe much more in His love than in your own weakness."

(Saint Mother Teresa)

Each of us is given a prophetic identity as baptized Christian. God trusts us to be the John the Baptist of today. We may look at ourselves and feel our unworthiness before His call to us. Yet He calls us to go and direct people to Him. To be sent as a prophet to the people entails humility to learn to depend on Him, with what we can receive from Him in prayer.

Do I recognize the graces that God is giving me each day? What are the qualities that God is forming in me? Do I live out my prayer with humility?

WEDNESDAY

(The Dedication of the Basilica of
St. Mary Major)

"He must increase;
I must decrease"

John 3:27-30 *John answered and said, "No one can receive anything except what has been given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said [that] I am not the Messiah, but that I was sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens to him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. He must increase; I must decrease."*

John the Baptist was humble and didn't want to draw attention to himself. Humility is to live in the truth of who we are for God as we boldly make use of our talents and capacities to bring Jesus into our respective family, friends, workmates, etc. He reminds us that as a prophet sent to the people, what we receive from God is what we give to them. This is not something we can do with our own effort and knowledge but by the mercy of God. Thus, we need to remain connected with Him as the source of our creativity, joy and strength in the mission.

How do I regard myself in the mission? In what way can I allow God to increase more in the people I accompany?

THURSDAY

(Transfiguration of the Lord)

"Prepare the way of the Lord"

Is 40:3-5 *A voice proclaims: In the wilderness prepare the way of the*

Lord! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! Every valley shall be lifted up, every mountain and hill made low; The rugged land shall be a plain, the rough country, a broad valley. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

John humbly recognized that he was merely sent to prepare the way for Jesus. A prophet prepares God's way into the people's hearts. This doesn't mean for us to seek to please others, rather to follow the will of God and trust in the transforming power of His word. Preparing God's way into the people's hearts begins in us and in our lives.

Which aspect of my life do I perceive God is working in me right now? What is God inviting me to be hopeful or humble about?

FRIDAY

"Allow it now, for us to fulfill
all righteousness."

Mt 3:13-15 *Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."*

John showed us the value of obedience in doing the will of God. In our apostleship, there are moments where we find ourselves unworthy to do what God is asking of us. Yet in these realities God is forming us to become more capable to be in the mission. Each one is called to take part in the Body of Christ.

What particular situation do I find myself unworthy of what God is asking me to do? In what way is God forming me in these situations?

SATURDAY

"You have revealed them
to the childlike"

Mt.11:25-26 *At that time Jesus said in reply, "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.*

John the Baptist's life constantly points us to Jesus. So that through Jesus we may come to know the Father. In our apostleship and spiritual growth, one is never too old to learn. Each moment of prayer is a way for us to grow more to live as a child of God.

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Rdg: 1 Kings 19,9a.11-13a.

Psalms 85:9-14.

2nd Reading: Romans 9,1-5.

Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33.

