

INTRODUCTION

This week, the entire Church and people of God enter into the holiest of weeks—the climax and fullness of the life and love of Jesus. As we journeyed with him entering in his heart, thoughts, and perspective, we have come to understand a bit more his self-giving love. Yes, we commemorate his passion, death, and resurrection every single year, so we continue to celebrate with longing and desire that we be slowly transformed into him.

This week, we will accompany him more closely in his every gesture and word, his silence and gaze, his falling down and his getting up, his pain and his joy as he takes each step that led him to the cross and on to the resurrection so that we may discover his heart, mind and will anew.

We could sometimes limit our own capacities in living and loving by making our weaknesses and frailties an issue. Yet we can see in this week itself how Jesus had to endure extreme mental, emotional, psychological, and physical burden all at once *and* still remain living and loving with the same consistency and determination until the end. He broke down in his very self our excuses and justifications; he broke through in his own body our frailties and weaknesses. The one life that he lived so openly is for us to learn from and imitate in our own lives, relationships, struggles, and daily loving; as Henri Nouwen wrote, “When the imitation of Christ does not mean to live a life like Christ, but to live your life as authentically as Christ lived his,

then there are many ways and forms in which a man can be a Christian.”

In many cases today, our own people easily give up and give in to a lesser quality of living and loving because of the lack of the bold, existential and relevant testimony of the life of the apostle—someone who lives and loves up to the Easter morn. That is why this week, as *Verbum Dei* apostles and family, we are called and invited to look closely at Jesus because our understanding of his life and love is already a step closer for our people. Yes, life triumphs over death, love is stronger than death; our living and loving to the end can be the beginning for our people’s own journey.

DYNAMISM OF THE WORD



HOLY MONDAY

“I want to stay with you.”

“My time is almost up, but I want to be with you. Know that nothing could ever separate you from me. Stay with me now; I am here.”

John 12:1-8 Six days before the Passover, Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom he had raised from the dead. They gave a dinner for him there; Martha waited on them and Lazarus was among those at table. Mary

brought in a pound of very costly ointment, pure nard, and with it anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair; the house was full of the scent of the ointment. Then Judas Iscariot – one of his disciples, the man who was to betray him – said, ‘Why wasn’t this ointment sold for three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor?’ He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he was in charge of the common fund and used to help himself to the contributions. So Jesus said, ‘Leave her alone; she had to keep this scent for the day of my burial. You have the poor with you always, you will not always have me.’

Jesus’ hour is near. But how does he spend it? He spent it with his friends. He spent it in loving. He chose to be with his friends.

HOLY TUESDAY

“I don’t fear the end”

“I know that you are scared; I will be strong for you so that you can come back to me.”

John 13:21-30

While at supper with his disciples, Jesus was troubled in spirit and declared, ‘I tell you most solemnly, one of you will betray me.’ The disciples looked at one another, wondering which he meant. The disciple Jesus loved was reclining next to Jesus; Simon Peter signed to him and said, ‘Ask who it is he means’, so leaning back on Jesus’ breast he said, ‘Who is it, Lord?’ ‘It is the one’ replied Jesus ‘to whom I give the piece of bread that I shall dip in the dish.’ He dipped the piece of bread and gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. At that instant,

after Judas had taken the bread, Satan entered him. Jesus then said, ‘What you are going to do, do quickly.’ None of the others at table understood the reason he said this. Since Judas had charge of the common fund, some of them thought Jesus was telling him, ‘Buy what we need for the festival’, or telling him to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the piece of bread he went out. Night had fallen.

Knowing that they will betray him, deny him, Jesus still chose to come to their encounter.

HOLY WEDNESDAY

“I am here for you”

You may turn your back on me as if we are not friends, but I will always know who you are to me—my friend.”

Matthew 26:14-16,47-50

One of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?’ They paid him thirty silver pieces, and from that moment he looked for an opportunity to betray him. While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I shall kiss is the man; seize him.”

And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Hail, Master!” And he kissed him.

Jesus said to him, “Friend, why are you here?” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.

What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you? This love will not turn back even in betrayals. Love is stronger than death.

MAUNDY THURSDAY **“I do all this for you”**

“Understand that I love you and everything I am doing is for you to see your beauty and worth. You are the Father’s gift to me; you are mine.”

John 13:1-15

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

And during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand."

Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his

feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not every one of you."

For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "You are not all clean."

When he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

In the midst of a seeming failure, Jesus got up from the table and love those who were his own. He lived and loved without limits.

GOOD FRIDAY

“I thirst for your life and love”

“I will take the sour wine you give me for now because my love can turn this into a better wine that will quench the thirst of our people.”

John 19:28-30

After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), "I thirst."

A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

"I thirst!" I thirst for your life and love lived without limits

BLACK SATURDAY

The silence and coldness of the grave is not void of my presence and love for you. Death always gives birth to life. Stay with me and see Life dawning anew.”

Luke 23:50-56

Now there was a man named Joseph from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their purpose and deed, and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud, and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb, where no one had ever yet been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how his body was laid; then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

The stone rolled away. Death is not the last word, love is!

EASTER SUNDAY

“I am alive; love is stronger than death!”

First Reading: Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm: Ps 118

Second Reading: Colossians 3:1-4

Gospel: John 20:1-9

Verbon Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

“My love for you is to the very end”

(April 10-16, 2017)

Objective for the week:

To present this life and love without limits in the life of Jesus.

We will accompany Jesus in His Passion, Death and Resurrection and experience deeply how He lived and loved without limits those whom He has called. He lived with them and loved them to the very end.