

INTRODUCTION

God called us to be His apostles. He called us because He loves us so much that He wanted His love to be felt and be animated by us. Our positive response to him makes heaven rejoice because it is the way that his lost children will be home again. We must also be thankful to the Holy Spirit that gives us the grace to say “yes” to Him to fulfill Jesus’ mission of redemption.

Let us all remember this: One cannot proclaim the gospel of Jesus without the tangible witness of one’s life. Those who listen to us and observe us must be able to see in our actions what they hear from our lips, and so give glory to God! I am thinking now of some advice that Saint Francis of Assisi gave his brothers: preach the Gospel and, if necessary, use words. Preaching with your life, with your witness. (Pope Francis, 4/14/13)

The Church’s mission, then, is not to spread a religious ideology, much less to propose a lofty ethical teaching. Many movements throughout the world inspire high ideals or ways to live a meaningful life. Through the mission of the Church, Jesus Christ himself continues to evangelize and act; her mission thus makes present in history the *kairos*, the favourable time of salvation. Through the proclamation of the Gospel, the risen Jesus becomes our contemporary, so that those who welcome him with faith and love can experience the transforming power of his Spirit, who makes humanity and creation fruitful, even as the rain does with the earth. “His resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force” (Evangelii Gaudium, 276).

The Church’s mission is enlivened by a spirituality of constant exodus. We are challenged “to go forth from our comfort

zone in order to reach all the peripheries in need of the light of the Gospel.” (Evangelii Gaudium, 20). The Church’s mission impels us to undertake a constant pilgrimage across the various deserts of life, through the different experiences of hunger and thirst for truth and justice... [Pope’s message, *World Mission Sunday 2017 No. 3,6*]

Am I ready to proclaim the Good News through my words and actions? Am I willing to participate in the Church’s mission? Am I ready to go out of my comfort zone for the sake of the Gospel? Am I worthy to be called and to be sent to the mission?

Monday

“Let miracles happen”

Evangelii Gaudium No.24

An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others...An evangelizing community is always concerned with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient at the weeds. The sower, when he sees weeds sprouting among the grain does not grumble or overreact. He or she finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear. The disciple is ready to put his or her whole life on the line, even to accepting martyrdom, in bearing witness to Jesus Christ, yet the goal is not to make enemies but to see God’s word accepted and its capacity for liberation and renewal revealed.

God chose us to become His apostles; it is a great privilege that we received His invitation. We might be wondering why we have come across this community, what the wind brought us here in Verbum Dei, and why do we work hard in this community? Being where we are and what we are right now is

way beyond our wildest dream. If we try to examine our life closely why we landed here, it is because God had been calling us even before we met this community. He called us because He loves us more than we know. He already knew our heart’s desire, even before we recognize it. He already trusted us and believed in our capacity and our faithfulness to Him. Because of this, He keeps on finding ways and means to meet us. Let us be grateful to Him who has no doubt of trusting us as we say yes to Him. He is the first one who collaborates with us that we may become His instruments of His love and mercy, and we relatively help Jesus touch the lives of our brothers and sisters.

Am I proud and happy as one of God’s chosen ones? In what way am I grateful to His invitation?

Tuesday

(St. Ignatius of Antioch)

“Give from what we have”

2 Cor. 8:12

¹² If you are eager to give, God will accept your gift on the basis of what you have to give, not on what you don’t have.

As we say yes to God, we must be free from the bondage of materialism, pride, power, and selfishness because these hinder us from following Him. Our yes is a spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit, so this must be nurtured and be taken care of through our self-giving by sharing our personal encounter with Jesus, especially in times of difficulties and pressures. Being chosen and sent does not mean being smart, eloquent, and articulate, yet what is essential is the willingness of the heart to be molded by Christ.

How can I nurture this spiritual gift in my family, workplace, and community? What particular instance in my life

hinders me from working with the Holy Spirit? How do I overcome it?

Wednesday

“Experience the joy of bringing the Gospel”

Evangelii Gaudium No. 10.

The Gospel offers us the chance to live life on a higher plane, but with no less intensity: “Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others”. [4] When the Church summons Christians to take up the task of evangelization, she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfillment.

Being sent is a challenge to be faithful and obedient to the One who sent us in a way that we must speak boldly for Christ, who is the Way toward the real freedom and salvation. He who is the Truth--who makes us realize that everything on earth are just illusions and temporal; we seek and crave for meaning, yet it is only in Jesus that we can find the answer. We cannot seek for more if we have Him in our life, for He is the real joy and the ultimate passion of our soul.

Thursday

“Attract others to Christ through your life”

Evangelii Gaudium No. 10

Consequently, an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral! Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that “delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow... And may the world of our time, which is

searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ".[6]

Evangelii Gaudium No.14

Lastly, we cannot forget that evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him. Many of them are quietly seeking God, led by a yearning to see his face, even in countries of ancient Christian tradition. All of them have a right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone. Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, they should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet. It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but "by attraction".[13]

Our essential weapon to continue preaching the kingdom of God is to fix our eyes on Jesus. We must pray persistently and ask Jesus to inherit us His love, mercy, and compassion. When we preach, He must be the center of our preaching so that Jesus may be felt by them and the Holy Spirit may work in them. As much as possible, we must be mindful of our life in the way we think, speak, and act for we are bearers and animators of Christ.

How often do I pray with Word of God? Am I aware that I am one of God's chosen ones to be His gospel bearers?

Friday
"Allow God's light to shine"

Mt. 5: 14-16

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Our continual collaboration with Jesus will deepen our relationship with Him. The closer we get to Him the more we are transforming to be like Him. Our personal experiences with Jesus must be shared to inherit the light of Christ in them, for it is in witnessing that we can truly transmit His light as it brings essential benefits: the preachers--the more they are molded by Christ and the Holy Spirit becomes more active in them, the listeners--they find the truth in Christ and change their lives, God the Father--is happy and proud watching over his children working hard in His vineyard.

Saturday
"Do not worry the Holy Spirit will teach you"

Lk. 12:12

¹²for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say."

Col. 4:2-6

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the

mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should. Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.

Prayer is the best tool to keep us working in the Church's mission. In our prayer, let us just simply open our hearts to Jesus. We don't need to worry about what to do and what to say; what He wants from us is not our ability but our availability and willingness to be of service to Him, and all the rest will be provided for by the Holy Spirit. It is only the Holy Spirit that capacitates us to work and speak for Christ. All these gifts of wisdom, courage, fortitude, and the like are the gifts of the Holy Spirit that empower us because of our yes to Him. We should not underestimate the works of the Spirit that moves in us because these attributes are from Him. Remember, we can't do the mission without Him.

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
(22nd World Mission Sunday)

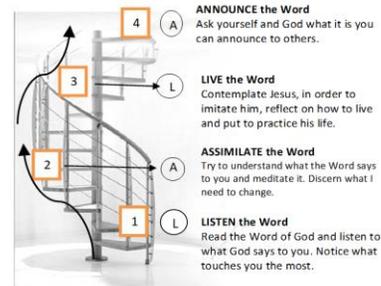
Readings: Isaiah 45:1,4-6

Psalms 96:1,3-5,7-10

1 Thes 1:1-5

Gospel: Mt.22:15-21

DYNAMISM OF THE WORD



Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

CALLED TO BE WITH HIM, AND SENT TO PREACH

(cf. Mk.3:13-14)

THEME:

**YOU ARE AN APOSTLE,
CHOSEN AND CALLED.** (cf. Rom 1:1)

General Objective:

To deepen and strengthen the identity of being an apostle today.

Objective for the week:

To strengthen the call to proclaim the Good News through our words and actions