

# Guidelines Sheet

July 1-5, 2024

The last weeks we have been preparing reflections about the “Four sources of spirituality” to be prayed and lived out in the VDMFa. The next two weeks we will emphasize the relevance of the Trinity, Eucharist, Mystical Body and Mary in our discipleship as members of the VDMFa.

**Where the term spirituality comes from?** The word spirituality comes from Latin “spiritus” which literally means “breath,” signifying Life. *The spirit is the breath that animates Life.*

**What is the meaning of spirituality?** **What is spirituality referred to?** According to the Oxford dictionary *spirituality is the quality of being concerned with religion or the human spirit*, not with physical existence or material world. It’s related with the experience or expression of the sacred, with the beliefs or experiences connected with the supernatural.

**What is the value of spirituality?** *Spirituality is the way in which a person understands and live life in view of her or his ultimate meaning, beliefs, and values.* It is the unifying and integrative aspect of the person’s life and, when lived intentionally, is experienced as a process of growth and

maturity. Spirituality is also linked to many important aspects of human behavior because spiritual people have positive relationships, higher self-esteem, are more optimistic. Spiritual people go beyond what they do or think or know intellectually and are centered on their own identity and goal as they follow a strong purpose in life.

**What can we say about spirituality in the Bible?** *Spirituality is understood to refer to the relationship between God and man that can be summed up under four headings: holiness, the gift of the Spirit, life in the Spirit and the discipline of the Spirit.*

Biblical spirituality means to be born of God (John 1:12-13; John 3:5-8; 1 John 4:7), be changed by the grace of Jesus Christ (Rom 12:1-2), surrendered and obedient to the Spirit, living according to the Spirit (Rom 8:4-11), and consequently empowered by the Spirit to draw others to find life in the Spirit.

Christian spiritual formation is the process of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ for the glory of God and for the sake of others (2 Cor 3:17-18). The focus of spiritual formation is the Holy Spirit, who guides the ongoing journey towards union with God.

After explaining about spirituality in general and in the Bible, **how can we connect it with the four sources of spirituality as our essential way to grow**

**and mature as committed disciples in the VDMFa?** Our four sources of spirituality are the solid ground where to build up our identity and mission (Mt 7: 24-25), they are also the fountain from where we drink the salvation first for us and for other people as well (Is 12:2-3). If the disciple doesn’t nourish himself or herself from these sources of spirituality he/she may be like a noisy gang or a clanging bell (1 Cor 13:1-3)

The two following weeks we will take some numbers from **IDENTITY AND MISSION OF THE VDMFa** for our daily food in the guidelines sheet. Why? Because this document is a “bedside book “for all the Verbum Dei members in the Family (Fraternidad, Lay Consacrated Missionaries and Missionary Disciples). Why does this document come into existence last 2019? Rodrigo Carrizo said: “The V Congress (2018) marked with clarity that our strength resides in our identity and made us recognize the need we have of a mission lived according to our own identity. It is for this reason that in this search to characterize our missionary identity, it has been necessary to offer some common guidelines to the different groups of the VDMFa, which can clarify, consolidate, and promote our charism and mission. In addition, these orientations which the document offers are very important and can help to give us unity and to walk together according to the breath of the Spirit”

The basis support to elaborate this document has been the Constitutions and Statutes of the Verbum Dei.

The document IMVDMFa emphasizes about *the baptismal consecration common to all of us* and reaffirms that “the focus is *to draw out the fullness of the baptismal consecration*” (IMVDMFa,70). We are talking about consecration, it means, to dedicate ourselves to God (Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit) and to develop our Christian identity with its rights and duties. The Verbum Dei spirituality is the forge where we are transformed or the potter’s house where to be molded as Christ’s disciples. In order to live our baptismal consecration to the full this document explicitly makes us aware of some relevant characteristic of our spirituality common also to all of us. We’ll have three reflections this week and three next week for us to read slowly, to pray on with calm and to assimilate it to grow and mature in our spiritual life as VDMFa.

## FIRST REFLECTION

### **FIDELITY TO THE CHARISM AS A GIFT FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE CHURCH**

**IMVDMFa 59** “The Verbum Dei spirituality is the specific way, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to live the Gospel in a manner appropriate to the Verbum Dei charism. Each person has

been created to live inhabited by the Trinity, to dialogue with God, and to abandon themselves to His Love and to live the fullness of their life in the call to be Christ.”

**The Second Vatican Council** affirms: “The dignity of man rest above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. The invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. Many however of our contemporaries either do not at all perceive or explicitly reject this intimate and vital bond of man to God.” (**G.S 19**)

**Constitutions VDMF 26** “To be Christ is the supreme ideal that, with all justice, we will present to all people in our preaching and apostolate. Such was the plan of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who chose us in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:3-6) and predestined us to reproduce the imagen of His Son (Rom 8:29).”

There are many charisms in the Catholic Church as a gift from the Holy Spirit. Each religious community has a specific way to live out its spirituality in accordance with its own charism.

Jaime Bonet, our founder, perceived the deep longing for God in each person. It was the reason why he devoted himself to prayer and preaching with the intentionality to connect everyone with God. *Do I perceive the longing for God in people near to me? In*

*what moments or situations do I realize that they are searching for God?*

**Jn 10:10** “I have come in order that you might have life- life in all its fullness”

**Jn 6:67-68** “Jesus asked the twelve disciples, ‘And you- would you also like to leave?’. Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life’

*Do I believe that they need to converse with Him? Our dedication to converse with the Trinity and to lead others to do the same depends on our conviction that everyone needs God’s presence and love to live the fullness of life.*

**Gal 2:19-20** “I have been put to death with Christ on his cross, so that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me”

*Am I convinced that the fullness of our lives is to be Christ? Nowadays, what are my concrete options to reproduce Jesus’ life? Do I believe that the best ideal or project in everybody’s life is to have the same thinking and feelings of Jesus?*

## SECOND REFLECTION

### **VERBUM DEI SPIRITUALITY IS CENTERED IN CHRIST**

**IMVDMFa, 60** “The Verbum Dei spirituality is deeply rooted in the personal experience of God’s love that leads us to love as he loved us; it is centered in Christ, the one sent by the Father, and is a way of identification with Him, by the power of the Holy Spirit, where our way of living, praying and carrying out the mission is determined.”

**IMVDMFa, 63.2** “Centered in the Word. The dynamism of the Word of God orients the way of life and of realizing the mission of the VDMFa.: to pray with the Word, assimilating it, living it out and creating communion around the Word, announcing the Gospel, celebrating the life that it generates, teaching others to do the same so that they too may participate actively in the evangelizing mission of the Church.”

Verbum Dei spirituality is centered in Christ. Verbum Dei spirituality is also centered in the Word of God. These two sentences are pointing out to the same goal: the identification with Christ’s life and mission.

Christ is the Word of God made flesh. The Word of God is Jesus Himself. To pray with the Word of God introduces us into the personal encounter with the person of Jesus who reveals us the Father’s love by the power of the Holy Spirit. If we don’t enter into an intimate relationship with Jesus through the Word of God we can’t discover and taste our identity as children of God the Father and as disciples of Jesus.

*How is my relationship with Jesus in my daily prayer? I can relate with him as a friend and to dialogue with him in an intimate and friendly way or I can be with him as a stranger in whom I have no confidence and trust. Do I allow him to direct me towards the goal of identification with him? Do I put myself into His hands to change me inwardly: style of life, options for him, inner thoughts, feelings...?*

**Heb 4:12** “The Word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It judges the desires and thoughts of the heart.” The Word of God is effective when we have an authentic encounter with Jesus, the friend who wants to transform us into his likeness. Only in His transformation we find the joy and peace we are looking for.

### THIRD REFLECTION

### **VERBUM DEI IS CHARACTERIZED BY A CONTEMPLATIVE-MISSIONARY SPIRITUALITY TO CARRY OUT OUR CHARISM**

**IMVDMFa, 63.1** “A contemplative-missionary spirituality. Our spirituality is not only in function of personal sanctification, but of the life of many and at the service of the whole Church of Christ and humanity. Our life necessarily acquired the fundamental spirituality of Jesus in his prayerful attitude as adorer of the Father and, from the Father, a gift and offering in favor of the whole humanity, guided by the

Holy Spirit. Our living dialogue with the Trinity will impel us to live a life of continuous prayer in all the areas in which we find ourselves.”

**IMVDMFa 61** “Our loving dialogue with the Trinity and our Mother Mary directs our gaze and focusses our entire life on being a response to the total Christ, freeing us from a self-centered or individualistic spirituality.”

**Verbum Dei Statutes 201** “Our spirituality is not only in function of our own sanctification, but of the life of many and for the service of Christ’s Church. We won’t be led by our individual likes or other people’s liking, neither will we be led by any uncertain wind of doctrine. We will be nurtured by the solid and sure food of the Word of God.”

**Verbum Dei Statutes 205** “Our life, centered in the Person, Life and Gospel of Christ, will assimilate the fundamental spirituality of Jesus in his prayerful attitude that makes of the Man-God a worshipper of the Father, and is sent by the Father to love all mankind.”

We can define the Verbum Dei spirituality as contemplative-missionary. These very important characteristics are like the two sides of the same coin. They are interconnected in a way that we can’t accept one and deny the other. According to the Verbum Dei charism it’s impossible to transmit Jesus’ love and teaching without contemplating him for a long time. Without

paying attention to Jesus, observing him carefully, listening to him patiently and following him closely the mission is a mere activity or duty that don't touch people's life for them to know him personally and to opt for him. *The effective mission comes out from affective prayer.*

**Acts 3: 3-6** "When he saw Peter and John going into the Temple, he begged them to give something to. They looked straight at him, and Peter said, 'Look at us'. So, he looked at them expecting to get something from them. But Peter said to him, 'I have no money at all but I give to you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth I order you to get up and walk'. God's experience rooted in us is what we can give or share to all.

*How prayer and mission are interconnected in my life as Verbum Dei disciple? Do I realize the importance of contemplative prayer in my following of Jesus? What do I need to become a more contemplative disciple of Christ?* For sure, all of us need to learn from Jesus and from each other about contemplation to carry out our specific mission to the fullness.