

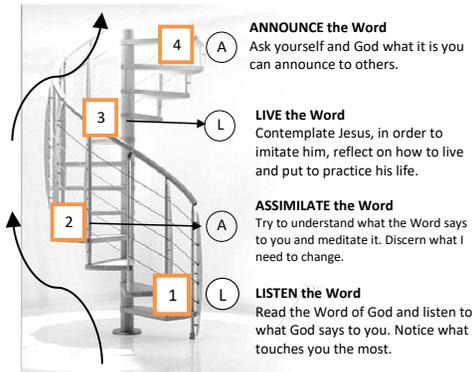
INTRODUCTION

Last week we are invited to do fasting as a means to follow Jesus as He showed us the way of compassion and sacrifice for us. As we go on in our Lenten journey, let us continue doing our sacrifices of fasting sincerely as our Christian duty to love and thus increasing the value of self-discipline for the Lord and for our sake.

This week we are invited again to take another means to show our love for the Lord in the form of Almsgiving. Jesus is teaching us about almsgiving in *Matthew 6:3* when He said; "But when you help the needy person, do it in such a way that even your closest friend will not know about it. Then it will be a private matter, and your father, who sees what you do in private will reward you." Also in the message of Pope Francis in his homily he said: Lent is a favorable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ. Each of us meets people like this every day. Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable. This acceptance, respect and love for our brothers in this moment of Lent helps us in our way of giving as Pope **Saint John Paul II** wrote "Nobody is so poor that he has nothing to give, and nobody is so rich that he has nothing to receive."

We are invited to give our lives like Jesus to help him bring back our brothers and sisters. It can be our time, our creativity, a listening ear, our good disposition, etc so that through us, Jesus can continue to touch the lives of others.

DYNAMISM OF THE WORD



MONDAY

GOD'S WILL FOR US IS TO OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS OF LOVE **Feast day of St. Joseph**

Mk 12: 29-31 Jesus replied, "The most important one is this: Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second most important commandment is this: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself. There is no other commandment more important than these two.

God knows each one of us inside and out and recognizes the longing of our hearts to experience real happiness in every moment. God gave the commandments for us to follow. As long as we are bound and obey the commandments he gave us, we have all the freedom we seek and can enjoy life to its fullness. The commandments do not only promote love to our God and ourselves but also love to our neighbors even to the least, the last

and the lost. Do you feel the freedom of obeying God's commandments?

TUESDAY

JESUS TEACHES SUPREME ALMSGIVING WHEN HE LAYS DOWN HIS LIFE FOR US

John 15:12-13 My commandment is this: Love one another just as I love you. The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to give his life for them.

Jesus gave everything even His very life just to love us the way our Father loves us all. This is the greatest challenge for us Christians: to love to the extent of being hurt just for the sake of our brothers and sisters (friends or enemies) We are blest that Jesus clearly set the example for us to follow. It may be difficult sometimes but it's never impossible. Are we starting to give our life for others?

WEDNESDAY

WHY GIVE LESS WHEN YOU CAN GIVE MORE?

Lk.21:1-4 "Jesus looked around and saw rich men dropping their gifts in the temple treasury, and he also saw a very poor widow dropping in two little copper coins. He said, "I tell you that this poor widow put in more than all the others. For the others offered their gifts from what they had to spare of their riches; but she, poor as she is gave all she had to live on."

Lk. 12:34 For your heart will always be where your riches are.

In this new moment of Lent, we are invited by Jesus at least to give a little bit

more than our usual giving, to extend a little further. It may feel strange and uncomfortable but soon the treasure and the joy of it will surely come. Jesus said that there is more joy in giving than in receiving. How are we in our outreach for others in need? How are we in giving our time, and sharing our talents, resources, kindness, forgiveness and love?

THURSDAY

ALMSGIVING IS RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Jn 4:15 "Sir", the woman said, "give me that water! Then I will never be thirsty again, nor will I have to come here to draw water."

1 Jn 3:16-18 This is how we know what love is: Christ gave his life for us. We too, then, ought to give our lives for our brothers. If a rich person sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against his brother, how can he claim that he loves God? My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action.

The invitation of Jesus to share the water to all the thirsty brothers and sisters grow intensely when we ourselves tasted it. Jesus opens our eyes to see and our heart to feel compassion to many of our brothers and sisters needing the same water that Jesus is offering. May this Lenten season increase our sensitivity and make us to respond to the needs of others that Jesus is letting us to recognize. How are we this time in our response to our brothers and sisters in need?

FRIDAY

URGE EVERYBODY TO PLEASE GOD AND NOT MEN IN OUR ACTS OF ALMSGIVING

1 Tim 2:1-4 First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, requests, and thanksgivings be offered to God for all people; for Kings and all others who are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life with all reverence toward God and with proper conduct. This is good and it pleases God our savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth.

Acts 3:2-6

And a man crippled from birth was carried and placed at the gate of the temple called "the Beautiful Gate" every day to beg for alms from the people who entered the temple.

When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. But Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." He paid attention to them, expecting to receive something from them. Peter said, "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, (rise and) walk."

Acts 4:17-20

But to keep this matter from spreading any further among the

people, let us warn these men never again to speak to anyone in the name of Jesus. So they called them back in and told them that under no condition were they to speak or to teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "You yourselves judge which is right in God's sight – to obey you or to obey God. For we cannot stop speaking of what we ourselves have seen and heard."

Sometimes we are tempt to self-praise in our almsgiving, thus we need to see our intention of giving. Is it for the love of God and of my brothers/sisters in need? We need to be sincere and clear in our intention. It may not be perfect in our perspective but God who sees it knows what is in our hearts.

SATURDAY

BE ALWAYS READY AND AVAILABLE TO DO THE WILL OF GOD (Feast day of Annunciation of Angel Gabriel to our Mother Mary)

Luke 1:26-38 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you

have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Our Mother Mary is a perfect example of someone who gives herself completely to God, trusting and having this faith in Him, as she said "Here I am", welcoming the will of God. How is your "Here I am" in doing His will? Let us ask her to help each one of us to strengthen our trust in God and in His Word. It is His will that we all be saved. Let us then have that practical concern for others, to be continuously a sign of hope for the entire humanity.

SUNDAY

4th Sunday of Lent

1st Reading: 1Sm 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A
Responsorial Psalm: Ps 23:1-3A, 3B-6
2nd Reading: Eph. 5:8-14
Gospel: John 9:1-41

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

*"MAY YOUR WILL
BE DONE!"*

March 20-26, 2017

General Theme: "I Will Bring Them Back To You"

General Objectives:

To take this Lenten season as the opportune time to encourage to bring our brothers and sisters back to the Father through the Word. The Word is a gift. Persons are gifts. (Cf. Pope's Lenten Message 2017)



Objective of the week:

To discover that the real almsgiving is in our availability, and in being one in doing His will