

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES SHEET

Responsibility & Fidelity : Characteristics of a True Apostle

Week 2

July 13-19, 2020

General Theme: CALLED TO FORM
AND JOURNEY WITH THE PEOPLE

General Objective: To be able to
journey with the people the Lord
entrusted to us and to form them as
apostles who will take our place.

Specific Objective:

To be seduced once again by the love
of God and his mission and be
emboldened to go beyond our human
imperfections through the virtues of
responsibility and fidelity to God
making us true apostles.

INTRODUCTION

How blessed are those chosen ones who shared in the same mission of Christ entrusted to them, of spreading the good news of salvation and in forming disciples for His Word to reach to all the ends of the earth. We, who participate in His mission bears responsibility in fulfilling the will of the One who called us personally by our name. It is said that when someone calls your name your inner senses would respond to this stimulus because your name is the sweetest sound of your ear. Basically, this is how Jesus calls us, our name sweetly with familiarity and sensitivity. He, who is sensitive to the beating of our hearts, knows us personally - our needs, desires, aspirations, etc. He knows that we have this so called, "response-ability" - the ability to respond and to assume the task he is entrusting to us. Jesus shows his full trust in us and assures us as we trust him in return. He is telling us not to fear for he will be with us all the way even in times of suffering and rejection. Not to fear as it is the tendency to withdraw our attention from God and to focus more on ourselves to preserve us from circumstances. Jesus assures us of the Holy Spirit to accompany and capacitate us in times of rejection. He advocates us to remain our fidelity in him through our

constant dialogue with him. *"I understand, dear Papa, that every dialogue with you implies a great responsibility. A response is necessary because on your part, each dialogue is proposal, revelation, self-giving, and a project of love".* (Fr. Jaime Bonet, Form Apostles").

A true apostle must be embodied with the aspirations of Christ to bring our brothers and sisters to the spirit of truth and discover their identity as children of God. For this, there's no power greater than an apostle seduced and in love with Christ. This personal experience of love of Christ is what transforms and enables us to go beyond our human imperfections and respond to God's appointment of us to form apostles with responsibility and fidelity.

MONDAY

A matter of love

A third time Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter became sad because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" and so he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you!" Jesus said to him, "Take care of my sheep." (Jn.21:17)

"My food," Jesus said to them, "is to obey the will of the one who sent me and to finish the work he gave me to do. (Jn. 4:34)

Many times, we are called by God to feed his flock. But sometimes, we fail to respond to this invitation because our heart and mind are much pre-occupied by our human desires. We are eventually unaware that when we are in trouble with someone in the family or in the neighborhood, it is the personal invitation of Jesus calling our name, and asked, "Do you love me? Feed my sheep."

In what concrete situation in your life that Jesus has reminded you to feed his sheep?

TUESDAY

I am God's choice

Now remember what you were, my friends, when God called you. From the human point of view few of you were wise or powerful or of high social standing. God purposely chose what the world considers nonsense in order to shame the wise, and he chose what the world considers weak in order to shame the powerful. (1 Cor. 1:26-27)

God chose each one of us. He does not discriminate our capabilities. He neither sets standards nor qualifications for us to become his disciples. It is just for us to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit on His invitation. As His disciples, we are privileged to respond to his call even if we think we are unworthy in the sight of

God. For him, everyone is worthy and capable of doing his mission. God wants us to experience how His love can work in us and how he can love his people through us.

Do you freely accept Jesus' invitation? What makes you feel unworthy of his calling? What do you think could fill in your unworthiness?

WEDNESDAY

His Grace is all I need

⁶ If I wanted to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be telling the truth. But I will not boast, because I do not want any of you to have a higher opinion of me than you have as a result of what you have seen me do and heard me say.⁷ But to keep me from being puffed up with pride because of the many wonderful things I saw, I was given a painful physical ailment, which acts as Satan's messenger to beat me and keep me from being proud.⁸ Three times I prayed to the Lord about this and asked him to take it away.⁹ But his answer was: "My grace is all you need, for my power is greatest when you are weak." I am most happy, then, to be proud of my weaknesses, in order to feel the protection of Christ's power over me.¹⁰ I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor.12:6-10)

It is evident that suffering is part of our discipleship. We have witnessed how the apostles suffered because of the gospel. God did not take away their sufferings for his grace is more powerful than the pains. Thus, we should not be

scared of persecutions for it is where we can experience the saving power of God in us.

As a disciple, do you allow yourself to be consumed by fear?

THURSDAY

Being convinced and in love with Christ

No means or method will ever achieve the strength, conviction and vitality of the direct, personal and living word of the apostle who is convinced and in love with Christ, truly humble, possessed by the Spirit, passionate for the glory of God and for the love of Mary, Mother of the Church. The intimate union of the apostle with Christ will make him/her feel vitally linked with all his/her brothers and sisters with bonds stronger than those of flesh and blood. In the heart of the Church and obedient to it, s/he will feel with it the fraternal heartbeat, healthy and sick, of all humankind without exception or discrimination; with Christ and like Him, s/he will give his/her life for the Church and for the faith of our brothers and sisters worldwide. (FMVDC#51)

We, as disciples of Christ must determine to fulfill the mission of the church and the objective of the community to form apostles. We cannot do the mission without prayer. It is in prayer where we can gain the grace of God to proclaim the gospel and to form apostles. The efficacy of our mission is measured by our constant communion with God and that, as a disciple, must be seduced by the love of God that is greater than our weaknesses, sinfulness

and frailties. It is his love that makes us worthy to do this task.

Through our prayer, we receive his wisdom, direction and strength to do what he desires for us.

How do I look at my discipleship? do I accept it with fidelity? How far have I gone in the mission?

FRIDAY

Sharing in His happiness

²¹ 'Well done, you good and faithful servant!' said his master. 'You have been faithful in managing small amounts, so I will put you in charge of large amounts. Come on in and share my happiness!' ²² Then the servant who had been given two thousand coins came in and said, 'You gave me two thousand coins, sir. Look! Here are another two thousand that I have earned.' ²³ 'Well done, you good and faithful servant!' said his master. 'You have been faithful in managing small amounts, so I will put you in charge of large amounts. Come on in and share my happiness!' (Mt. 25:21-23)

Discipleship entails responsibility and fidelity, that is why, we are encouraged to have spiritual nourishment to have perseverance in Christ. Let us always remember that we are bearers of light, carrying Jesus as the Light of the World to everyone, especially those who are downtrodden because of the fatal illness that we are facing today. Let us bring Christ to them who can only vindicate this pandemic of fear and anxiety. Only the gift of salvation can heal their negative feelings. We must hold on to our commitment with much

fidelity and love of God to get rid of these negative forces that pulls us out of the mission.

What are my challenges that keep me from doing the mission? What makes me persevere in the mission?

SATURDAY

Working on the dialogues of love

"Responsibility follows through from your dialogues of love, because responsibility receives the same impulse, impact and irresistible dynamic of your love. A love that is creator and creative, a love that is redemptive, liberating, a love that is sanctifying and transparent, your love that is always life. And for this reason, it is a vital responsibility in the dimension of love: of your universal, freely given, sacrificial love. Responsibility then, without any limits, in the direction and projection of love. It is the same response and responsibility of Jesus to the Father." (Fr. Jaime Bonet, "Form Apostles")

A dialogue with God through His word is our way of prayer. It is in our constant dialogue, our personal encounter with Him that can deepen our relationship, with Him also establishing a filial trust and confidence in us. It is a Father-and-child relationship, with the father personally knowing us, so familiar with our strengths and weaknesses, telling us to hold firmly as we shepherd together our brothers and sisters who are confused and hopeless because of this pandemic. God is waiting for them. Only through our availability to the Spirit can help them find a way back home. *How is His love growing in me?*