

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

"Unless you become like a little child, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven."
(Mt.18:3)

Week II

January 13-19, 2020

General Theme:

Missionaries for all people

General Objective:

To enter in Jesus' spirit of openness and dialogue with all peoples and learn from him to be missionaries of communion for the world of today.

Objective for this week: to learn from the child Jesus the attitudes that will form us as missionaries for all peoples

Introduction

"Unless you change and be like a little child, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God." This is Jesus' exhortation to the disciples. We can wonder why. The children during the time of Jesus is considered insignificant. They don't play any role in the society. Their voice is not heard nor they do have any rights to enjoy. And yet, here comes Jesus contrasting the view of his own society. Jesus must have seen something valuable in these little ones. He has a heart for them. He must have wanted the disciples to learn from them. What can we learn from a little child?

We are invited to become like little children, to strive to be childlike, teachable, humble, simple, and open to learn and live.

The feast of Sto. Nino in Cebu is fast approaching. We are celebrating the child Jesus, the incarnate God - the God who became human. He came as a baby, fragile and defenseless, needing the presence and support of Mary and Joseph, having to learn many things as he grew up. What could we learn from the child Jesus? Let us journey this week with the

child Jesus and learn from him this childlike attitude so we could better live our identity as missionary disciples. Let us enter into this daily conversion of being childlike so that humility and love can be a permanent part of who we are and called to be.

Monday

Dependence on God

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life. **Psalm 143:8**

It would have been impossible for Jesus to survive without the help of his parents, Mary and Joseph. Jesus came as a defenseless baby, needing to depend on his parents. This dependence on the care and support of Mary and Joseph made him as well to grow in depending on God.

In many moments we want to have control over everything in our life. How do we face our own defenselessness, our neediness, when we don't have control over things and situations? Help us Lord to depend on you in everything. Pit Senor!

Tuesday

The innocence of a child

*Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." **Matthew 19:14***

A child is quite carefree, capable to laugh, to love, to be kind, to cry, and to forgive. When you hurt a child, the child will cry. However, if you ask sorry to child, the child will simply play with you again.

How is our heart? Has the circumstances that come made it softer to welcome others, to forgive and start anew, to share kindness? Or has it grown old a bit and hardened? Help us child Jesus to learn from you. Pit Senor!

Wednesday

Trust of a child

Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? ²⁷ Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? ²⁸ Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow.

They do not work or spin. ²⁹ But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. ³⁰ If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith?

Matthew 6:26-30

A child can never doubt that his/her parents could abandon him/her. The child is confident of the love his/her parents has for him/her like the trust of Jesus to the Father.

Trust helps us to take radical road of self-emptying because we know and believe that God will never abandon us.

Do I have any concrete situation wherein I am invited to have more trust in Him? How do I take it? Help us, Lord to put our trust in you. Pit Senior!

Thursday

The humility of a child

He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and

favor before God and man.

Luke 2:51-52

This is a scene right after Mary and Joseph found Jesus. The parents didn't know that the boy Jesus stayed for three days in the Temple. The child Jesus has its own reasons of staying behind. However, his parents did not understand him. They were coming from another angle, from their concern and love for him. Jesus, in the end, did not insist on his way. It was necessary to go down with them. He went down with them and his obedience made him advance in wisdom, age and favour before God and man.

A person who is humble does not insist on his or her way but gives way for learning from others. When one is able to see his or her own incompleteness, he or she would give way for the other to complement him or her. At times this attitude of humility is hard to emulate, since it's quite common to be in control and self-sufficient. Lord, when pride and arrogance in me hinder me to see that others too can complement me, help me. Pit Senior!

Friday

The gentleness of a child that draws people in

With great tenderness, I will gather my people. Isaiah 54:7b

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child.

Luke 2:15-17

We are easily attracted by a child with the qualities inherent in them. We are all called to become like little children, letting go of our fears and resistance in trusting God. Let us be less complicated, and ask Jesus for the grace to have a child-like attitude. Grant Lord that we may strive to make ourselves a gift for others. Pit Senior!

How can I strive to be like a little child in the sight of God?

Saturday

The spirit of welcoming other children

Let the children come to me, do not prevent them. Mark 10:14a

Whoever welcomes me in my name one such child as this, welcomes me. Mt.18:5

Children in the time of Jesus does not literally mean the young ones, those of a particular age. They also mean the "little ones." The "little ones" are the ones that are needy, beggars, fragile, the poor.

When these "little ones" come to us, the needy people do we have that welcoming spirit? Or do we get easily irritated and perceive them as a burden? Lord, help us to not to see them as a subtraction of what we possess. Pit Senior!

Sunday

Feast of the child Jesus

1st Reading Is 9:1-6

Ps 97:1-6

2nd Reading Eph 1:3-18

Gospel Mt 18:1-14