

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

My Heart Goes Out to You

March 18-24, 2019

General Theme: God the Father

General Objective:

-To be led to the source of this love we're looking for and discover our genuine identity as a child of God.

Objective for the week: To discover Him as a Father who is touched by the situation of His people

INTRODUCTION

How blessed are we that we have a father whose love is genuine; a God whose relationship with us is so intimate that we even call him Father. It is our mission to change the wrong notion of our brothers and sisters about a God who sits on his throne, so powerful to command and punish his people in their mistakes. Let us refer to the catechism of Pope Francis last January 9, 2019 on how he introduced the Father to everyone.

“We can stay all the time in prayer with that word alone: ‘Father.’ And to feel that we have a father: not a master or a stepfather. No: a father,” he added. “The Christian addresses God by calling Him above all ‘Father’.”

Recalling the verse in Luke which says, “What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish?”(11:11), He invoked the experience of fathers and grandfathers, when their hungry children and grandchildren ask and cry for food: “You feed him what he asks for, for the good of him,” he said.

“With these words, Jesus makes us understand that God always answers, that no prayer will remain unheard.” He said adding, “Why? Because He is a Father, and He does not forget his children who suffer.”

God the father will always be there for His beloved children, Pope Francis said, with a reminder that the unconditional love of God is not limited by our own sense of guilt or unworthiness. “God is looking for you, even if you do not seek Him. God loves you even if you forget Him. God sees beauty in you even if you think you have squandered all your talents in vain,” Pope Francis said in his general audience Jan 16.

During this week, let us enter more into the feelings of our Father towards us and experience once again his unfailing love towards us, His children.

MONDAY

The Father seeks his children

Luke 15:4-5 ⁴ “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them—what do you do? You leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and go looking for the one that got lost until you find it. ⁵ When you find it, you are so happy that you put it on your shoulders ⁶ and carry it back home.

We can see how vast the love of God the Father is. His love covers the multitude of sinners. His heart goes out to the lost, for them to come home to him. He knows that a child without a father will have no direction and will surely lose his faith forever. It is so painful for him to see his children suffer for their wrong decisions. So he always does the

initiative just to find them who have gone astray. His joy cannot be measured when one sinner returns to him; his wide-open arms can't wait to embrace for his return.

How is your relationship with the Father?

What kind of life do you live if you don't listen to him?

TUESDAY

(Feast of St. Joseph)

The Father molds us in his heart

Luke 15:31 ³¹ ‘My son,’ the father answered, ‘you are always here with me, and everything I have is yours.’”

Some of us lost our biological fathers; others have a father in the family, but have less care and attention to his children for some reasons. We have nothing to worry about since we have a father who loves us more than they do. For those who lost their fathers, they should never feel alone for God the Father shall never abandon anyone.

All of us, his children are so dear to him; we have been carved into his heart. He would surely attend to our needs every time we call him. He is always there for us waiting and wanting to listen, guide, accompany, and speak to us. All we have to do is to open our heart to him.

Am I sensitive to God's blessings? Am I sensitive to his presence?

Have I been grateful to him?

WEDNESDAY

The Father never forgets his children

Is 49:14-16

But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me.”¹⁵ Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.¹⁶ See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

Our relationship with him is far beyond compare to biological parents. We are God’s children no matter how many times we fail to recognize him as our Father. As his children, we must act the way he wants us to act because deviating from his love is impossible for us to live our identity as his children. All he wanted from us is to love one another patterned from his love in order to have peace, unity, and understanding similar to our biological family that aims love peace and harmony among siblings.

How can I develop an intimate relationship with the Father? How can I grow in love with him?

THURSDAY

The Father constantly guides us

Isaiah 48:17 The holy God of Israel, the LORD who saves you, says:
“I am the LORD your God,

the one who wants to teach you for your own good and direct you in the way you should go.

We have received blessings from God every day of our lives from morning until night. Many times we go through hardships that almost crushed our faith and think that we can’t overcome them. It seemed that God left us alone. After all those times, we could ask ourselves now, how could I ever solve it? How could I surpass those trials? Yet with our own capacity, we can’t do it all alone because we are human and limited. God the Father is moved with pity as he watches us suffer. As our heart opens to his love, he then will give us the grace to cope with our problems. Sometimes we neglect to thank him for all the blessings we received because of abundance. Our Father has reminded us that everything was put in order because his love is greater than our sufferings.

To whom can I turn to when I am suffering? Did I submit myself to God, my Father?

FRIDAY

The Father’s heart opens to everyone

Matthew 7:7-11 ⁷ “Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks will receive, and anyone who seeks will find, and the door will be opened to those

who knock. ⁹ Would any of you who are fathers give your son a stone when he asks for bread? ¹⁰ Or would you give him a snake when he asks for a fish? ¹¹ As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

God never fails to remind us to turn to him not only when we need him but every day. He gives us the assurance of his love that he would grant us what we ask if it is in accordance to his will. When our journey seems so hard and rough, God wants us to call him for he knows that it is not easy to live as Christians as we are prone to temptations and even defeated before the powerful. Before their eyes, we are always the losers and they are the winners, but if we believe that the Father is on our side, we ask his Fatherly care and we can perceive that we are triumphant over them for we are able to conquer temptation and sin by doing good with the grace of God. Triumph in God does not mean power over our enemies, but it is to conquer sin with love.

To whom shall I turn to when I have a problem? How do I conquer my enemies? How do I accumulate triumphant life?

SATURDAY

The Father’s love never ends

Hosea 11:1-4-8 The Lord says, “When Israel was a child, I loved him and called him out of Egypt as my son. I drew them to me with affection and love. I picked them up and held them to my cheek; I bent down to them and fed them. “How can I give you up, Israel? How can I abandon you? Could I ever destroy you as I did Admah, or treat you as I did Zeboiim? My heart will not let me do it! My love for you is too strong.

Our Father reminds us how much he loves us even before we were born. He cannot afford to turn his back to many of his children who do wrong. His love for us is overflowing. He is extravagant of his love and we are spoiled, abusive, and hard-headed. We seem so ungrateful to him to the point that we hurt him, when His only desire for us is to live in intimacy with him so that we will live in harmony with Him forever.

Have I been faithful to my Father? How do I remain faithful to him? Am I willing to sacrifice for the love of my Father?

3rd SUNDAY of LENT

1st Reading Exo 3:1-15

Resp Psalm Ps 103:1-11

2nd Reading 1 Cor 10:1-12

Gospel: Lk.13:1-9

