

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

“Here I am, the Handmaid of the Lord”

November 26- Dec 2, 2018

General Theme:

MARY: the mother of God and mother of the Church

General Objective:

To experience the maternal love of Mary that urges us to do the mission. To know Mary as the model and example for all saints in the Church.

Objective of the week:

That God can count on our missionary availability like Mary to reach out to more of our brothers and sisters.

INTRODUCTION

We have been contemplating on the life of Mary, our Mother and our model in following Christ. It is important to ponder her life in order for us to deepen our knowledge, gain wisdom, and nurture our faith on how she concretely lived out her faith. She is the only apostle of Christ whose faith never wavered amidst many crises that squeezed her heart with too much pain and contradictions; yet, she successfully made them with her total surrender to God. She is indeed to be our model. She is not only the Mother of Christ, but she's also our mother who is ever ready to capacitate us to carry our crosses.

Fr. Jaime Bonet is right that we need to seek Mary's refuge because she plays very important role in our life as Verbum Dei. Fr. Jaime himself had witnessed how she molded his heart into an apostle of Christ and accompanied him all the way to his last breath, that without this woman in his life, he could never be able to sustain his dream of becoming a servant of God.

Mary is indispensable in our Christian life, in our vocation, and mission. Many are called, but few are the ones who truly persevere. Many follow externally, but in fact they have deserted the following of Christ. What are the efforts, sacrifices, and the investment of the whole life if

the first love of Jesus is abandoned? He continues looking at me firmly with the same love that was at the beginning. The failure and frustration for the person individually and for the Church has its explanation in the absence of the Mother. Without Mary, we live as orphans that are impossible to overcome. (FMVD Statutes 239)

Jesus is Mary's only Son, but her spiritual motherhood extends to all men whom indeed He came to save: "The Son whom she brought forth is He whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren, that is, the faithful in whose generation and formation she operates with a mother's love." (CCC 501)

Each one of us requires a true devotion to Mama Mary. A true devotion to her is not merely reciting her prayers, but to know her life more and more, love her, and imitate her virtues especially her humility and obedience to the will of God. In emulating her, we truly become the humble servants of God.

MONDAY

Mary, our guide

Lk. 21:1 - 4 Jesus looked around and saw rich people dropping their gifts in the Temple treasury, ²and he also saw a very poor widow dropping in two little copper coins. ³He said, "I tell you that this poor widow put in more than all the others. ⁴For 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."

To heed the invitation of Christ's salvific mission needs our availability not only in terms of money but our discernment. Even though we are much preoccupied with our career, professions, and all other concerns in life, we must find time to be with our God. God is so happy for us when we spare our time with Him; He really appreciates our effort despite our busyness.

Let us ask Mama Mary to teach us to be always available to the Lord in proclaiming His unfathomable love to everyone. We need a mother in our Christian journey because with her, she will lead us the way to her Son, Jesus Christ.

Have you given yourself a break with the Lord? How often do you give your time for Him? How is your disposition when you give your time with Him? Are you happy serving the Lord the way He does to you?

TUESDAY

Mary, our model

Heb. 10: 5 - 7 For this reason, when Christ was about to come into the world, he said to God:

"You do not want sacrifices and offerings, but you have prepared a body for me. ⁶You are not pleased with animals burned whole on the altar or with sacrifices to take away sins. ⁷Then I said, 'Here I am, to do your will, O God, just as it is written of me in the book of the Law.'"

We must be grateful to Mama Mary who sets us good examples on how to become apostles. She was very submissive to God; she forgot all her worries which turned out into trust and confidence in the Lord. Her “yes” to God makes her total surrender and assurance, that God would never abandon her and that God would make everything organized. Her total surrender to Him has gone far up to our modern time that all of us have enjoyed the benefit of redemption.

*How is your relationship with Mary?
Do you consider her as your mother?
How often do you call her?*

WEDNESDAY

Mary's Yes

Lk. 5: 3 – 6 Jesus got into one of the boats—it belonged to Simon—and asked him to push off a little from the shore. Jesus sat in the boat and taught the crowd.⁴When he finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Push the boat out further to the deep water, and you and your partners let down your nets for a catch.”

⁵“Master,” Simon answered, “we worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I will let down the nets.”⁶They let them down and caught such a large number of fish that the nets were about to break.

There is a parallelism of attitude between Mary at the annunciation and the apostles when they had an empty catch. During the annunciation, Mary asked the angel “how could this be?” Since her heart was filled with faith in

God, it would be easy for her to understand the words of the angel and obeyed God. With her yes, Mary does not only become the mother of Jesus, but become the mother of us all. However, the apostles told Jesus about their empty catch the whole night. Since their hearts were filled with trust and confidence with the Lord, they obeyed what Jesus had told them and caught plenty of fish. They didn't catch only nets of fish, but became fishers of men.

*In what situation in life I heed the invitation of the Lord?
Did it also bear fruits?*

THURSDAY

Mary, our companion

Lk. 1: 36 – 37 ³⁶Remember your relative Elizabeth. It is said that she cannot have children, but she herself is now six months pregnant, even though she is very old.³⁷For there is nothing that God cannot do.”

We are all reminded to have a total trust in the Lord. As His disciples, we must be filled with His love, trust, and confidence. To sustain our relationship with Him, we need Mother Mary to accompany us, especially in times of confusions and when life seems so lifeless and meaningless. We must seek refuge in her and trust in her motherly care and protection. She always intercedes for us and gives us the grace of patience and understanding with all those conflicts and confusions. She has been ever willing

to teach us about her life's experiences on how she bore them from the annunciation until Christ's resurrection.

What virtue of Mary have you emulated? How often do you seek refuge with her?

FRIDAY

Mary's availability

Mt. 4: 19 – 22 Jesus said to them, “Come with me, and I will teach you to catch people.”²⁰At once they left their nets and went with him.²¹He went on and saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat with their father Zebedee, getting their nets ready. Jesus called them,²²and at once they left the boat and their father, and went with him.

Lk. 1: 39 – 41 Soon afterward Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea.⁴⁰She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby moved within her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

The best way of keeping ourselves in love with God is to become a servant of all. It is in self-giving that keeps the fire of love burning and show our real identity as children of God.

In what way have you nurtured your love to Jesus? Have you been living your identity as a child of God?

SATURDAY

Mary, our protector

Lk. 21: 34 – 38 “Be careful not to let yourselves become occupied with too much feasting and drinking and with the worries of this life, or that Day may suddenly catch you³⁵like a trap. For it will come upon all people everywhere on earth.³⁶Be on watch and pray always that you will have the strength to go safely through all those things that will happen and to stand before the Son of Man.”³⁷Jesus spent those days teaching in the Temple, and when evening came, he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives.³⁸Early each morning all the people went to the Temple to listen to him.

Temptation is an occasion for us to commit sin and disobey God. It averts our eyes from God and tends us to become insensitive and blind to see His goodness and mercy. In moment like this, we need Mary, our Mother in faith, to help us to be strong in temptations. She is ever ready to rescue us from the snares of the evil forces.

What is the significance of Mary to your life? Why do you consider her your strength and guide?

SUNDAY

1st Sunday of Advent

1st Reading – Jer 33:14-16

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 25

2nd Reading – 1 Thes 12-4:2

Gospel – Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

