

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

WATCH WHAT YOU DO! (Lk 17:3)

(Oct 14-20, 2019)

General Theme: Breaking of Love: Sin and its Consequences

General Objective:

To discover that sin is a breakdown of love of self, of others and ultimately a 'no' to God's Life and Love, to the one who loves us most in life, and has given all to us. Sin has serious consequences in us, in others and in the Body of Christ. That seeing Christ crucified may provoke our conversion to Love, a change of heart.

Objective of the week:

To realize the effects and consequences of sin in others and in the world.

INTRODUCTION

God has loved us ever since the world began. He created us with much care and respect. He even created us from His own image and likeness. He gave us the gift of free will to choose what is right and what is wrong. This is the greatest gift that we have that His other creations don't have—the ability to decide what is pleasing to God and what's not. Sometimes, because of temptations, we make wrong decisions that we never thought would corrode our spiritual life and ruin our relationship with God; and we are committing multiple sins unmindful that we are slowly taking steps away from God. We become insensitive and apathetic to the needs of our brothers and sisters making ourselves little gods over them. This is what's happening to our world today. We have certainly become unaware of our mistakes that it seems natural thing for us to do.

Pope Francis is calling us to work in the mission to give the real treasure to each one of his children. God never takes back His gift of life. From eternity, He has destined His children to share in His divine and eternal life (cf. Eph. 1:3-6; from Vatican, 9 June 2019, Solemnity of Pentecost).

Let us ask Mama Mary who is our model in the mission to accompany us all the time. She was fully involved in the mission of Jesus, a mission that became her own at the foot of the cross: the mission of cooperating, as Mother of the Church, in bringing new sons and daughters of God to birth in the Spirit and in faith (from Vatican, 9 June 2019, Solemnity of Pentecost).

MONDAY

Washing our hands of responsibility for the other

Genesis 4:6-10

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why that scowl on your face? If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling; but because you have done evil, sin is crouching at your door. It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it." Then Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out in the fields." When they were out in the fields, Cain turned on his brother and killed him. The Lord asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He answered, "I don't know. Am I supposed to take care of my brother?" Then the Lord said, "Why have you done this terrible thing? Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground, like a voice calling for revenge.

Temptation is always present as long as we live. By our capacity alone, we are vulnerable to sin; therefore, we should not give in to temptation for it bears sin. It affects our conscience making us less attentive to hear the voice of God, and even leading us to be indifferent to others. This means that we really need the grace of God to fight against it through prayer. It is for us not to continuously wash our hands for neglecting the fact that we are also responsible of the other.

How do I look at the other and see them as someone I am responsible of?

TUESDAY

Losing patience in God's ways

Genesis 16:1-6

Abram's wife Sarai had not borne him any children. But she had an Egyptian slave woman named Hagar, and so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Why don't you sleep with my slave? Perhaps she can have a child for me." Abram agreed with what Sarai said. So she gave Hagar to him to be his concubine. (This happened after Abram had lived in Canaan for ten years.) Abram had intercourse with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When she found out that she was pregnant, she became proud and despised Sarai. Then Sarai said to Abram, "It's your fault that Hagar despises me. I myself gave her to you, and ever since she found out that she was pregnant, she has despised me. May the Lord judge which of us is right, you or me!" Abram answered, "Very well, she is your slave and under your control; do whatever you want with her." Then Sarai treated Hagar so cruelly that she ran away.

Being too ambitious separates us from God. We tend to make excuses from prayer just for the sake of our dreams and our achievements and glory at the expense of sacrificing our relationship with God whom we should be giving priority. Our negligence to Him can truly disconnect us from Him and makes us prone to keep on doing wrong.

What shall I give focus in my life this time? Does it bring me to sin or eternal life?

WEDNESDAY

Beware of your actions

Galatians 5:19-21

What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies and they fight; they become jealous, angry, and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; they are envious, get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these. I warn you now as I have before: those who do these things will not possess the Kingdom of God.

Sometimes, we are impulsive with our decisions. We are unaware that it's a subtle way to sin. Fighting, envy, ambition, greed, vices, etc. are products of being distant from God. We make ourselves our own gods believing that with our decisions and actions, we can control everything. If we won't care to pause and listen to God, then we will surely lose the Kingdom of Heaven forever. Before it's too late, think twice and ponder especially seeing the effect it can bring to others.

How often do I assess my relationship with others? What kind of influence am I giving to others?

THURSDAY

Not enabling to manage one's passion

2 Samuel 11:2-17, 26-27

One day, late in the afternoon, David got up from his nap and went to the palace roof. As he walked around up there, he saw a woman

taking a bath in her house. She was very beautiful. So he sent a messenger to find out who she was, and learned that she was Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite. David sent messengers to get her; they brought her to him and he made love to her. (She had just finished her monthly ritual of purification.) Then she went back home. Afterward she discovered that she was pregnant and sent a message to David to tell him. David then sent a message to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent him to David. When Uriah arrived, David asked him if Joab and the troops were well, and how the fighting was going. 8 Then he said to Uriah, "Go on home and rest a while." Uriah left, and David had a present sent to his home. But Uriah did not go home; instead he slept at the palace gate with the king's guards. When David heard that Uriah had not gone home, he asked him, "You have just returned after a long absence; why didn't you go home?" Uriah answered, "The men of Israel and Judah are away in battle, and the Covenant Box is with them; my commander Joab and his officers are camping out in the open. How could I go home, eat and drink, and sleep with my wife? By all that's sacred, I swear that I could never do such a thing!" So David said, "Then stay here the rest of the day, and tomorrow I'll send you back." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. David invited him to supper and got him drunk. But again that night Uriah did not go home; instead he slept on his blanket in the palace guardroom. The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by Uriah. He wrote: "Put Uriah in the front line, where the fighting is heaviest, then retreat and let him be killed." So while Joab was besieging the city, he sent Uriah to a place

where he knew the enemy was strong. The enemy troops came out of the city and fought Joab's forces; some of David's officers were killed, and so was Uriah. When Bathsheba heard that her husband had been killed, she mourned for him. When the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to the palace; she became his wife and bore him a son. But the Lord was not pleased with what David had done.

When we start to focus on "our self", we tend to close our hearts for others; our conscience shuts down and we become insensitive to the grace of God that we are enjoying. We forget that we are His beloved children. Let us pray unceasingly even when we are in the spiritual dryness; all the more we need to cling to Him because God needs us to fulfill the mission.

Am I aware of the consequences that my wrong actions can bring to others? Do I realize of the chain of sins being created in what I have committed?

FRIDAY

Abuse of Power

John 19:10-11

Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Remember, I have the authority to set you free and also to have you crucified." Jesus answered, "You have authority over me only because it was given to you by God. So the man who handed me over to you is guilty of a worse sin."

We see the consequence of Pilate's option, in listening more to the opinion of others, in favoring more prestige and power than the voice of his own deep conscience.

How do I see the effect of the decisions I take in the lives of others?

SATURDAY

Make the right choice

Luke 17:1-3

Jesus said to his disciples, "Things that make people fall into sin are bound to happen, but how terrible for the one who makes them happen! It would be better for him if a large millstone were tied around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. So watch what you do! "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.

God has given us the gift of free will to choose what is right from wrong. Actions that are not pleasing to God bring death and result to eternal damnation. Actions that breed love bring us eternal life and gain eternal bliss in heaven. The choice is ours to make. Let us empower our identity as children of God to make the right choice.

How do I use my gift of free will? Am I using it for the glory of God or for my own glory?

29th SUNDAY in Ordinary Time

1st Reading – Exodus 17:8-13

Responsorial Psalm – Ps 121

2nd Reading – 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2

Gospel – Luke 18:1-8