

THE FORGE

in our daily life

PATRIS MEI
“YOUR WORD
is light to my
PATH”

6

Ordinary Time II

THE NATURE OF THE STAGE

The experience of fire in the symbolism of the Forge refers to the experience of God's love, maternally mediated by the immaculate Heart of Mary, and by the action of the Holy Spirit pouring into us the gift of love.

The fire warms, cleanses, softens, glows. Our Fr. Founder often uses this symbol to speak of love and missionary zeal. The "men of God" have always their face glowing with fire, like Moses.

The *Patris Mei* stage expresses the relationship of Claret with God the Father. It condenses the experience of God's love that warms the cold iron and prepares it to receive a new shape. It is, in short, a call to be "in my Father's business" (cf. *Lk* 2:49).

- 1 The search for God
(*Advent*)
- 2 The incarnation of God
(*Christmas*)
- 3 The God of the Kingdom
(*Ordinary Time I*)
- 4 The fatherhood of God
(*Lent*)
- 5 The God of life
(*Easter*)
- 6 The Word of God as the source of life
(*Ordinary Time II*)
- 7 Faith as an answer to the love of God
(*Ordinary Time III*)
- 8 Prayer as our encounter with God
(*Ordinary Time IV*)
- 9 The Claretian experience of God
(*Ordinary Time V*)

To help individuals, communities, Provinces and Delegations to be consciously aware of their present reality, rekindling their experience of Fire and missionary zeal following the methodology of the Forge.

OBJECTIVES OF "PATRIS MEI" STAGE

- Moving from superficial attitudes to deeper attitudes.
- Growing up in the experience of the love of God as a foundation of our missionary lives.
- Studying the issue of the images of God that underpin our behaviour, and the experience of the God of Jesus as a profound experience of grace.
- Developing, theoretically and practically, the experience of prayer.
- Understanding more deeply the Claretian dimension of the experience of God as Father.

QUID PRODEST - 2011

PATRIS MEI - 2012

CARITAS CHRISTI - 2013

SPIRITUS DOMINI – 2014

1. Introduction

After the celebration of Pentecost, you are once again back to the *ordinary time* of the liturgical year, inspired by the fire of God's love burning in the Apostles who were anointed by the spirit of the Risen Lord.

For us Claretians, the ordinary time of the liturgical year is a great opportunity to live our charism with the quality of the "prophecy of everyday life" as we learn to live the ups and downs of everyday life in the fire of God's love. In this period which marks the action of the Spirit in the Church, you are invited to feel with the Church and nourish yourself from her spiritual treasures. In this month we shall turn our special attention to one of the most cherished treasures of the church: the Word of God, "the very heart of Christian life." (*Verbum Domini* 3)

Your spiritual journey through the stage of *Patris Mei* takes you to encounter the Father's love for you and lets you be on fire with God's love. It is this love story that the whole Bible narrates and shares with you. As in the case of the disciples of Emmaus, when distressed and discouraged human hearts listen to the words of the Lord, they begin to glow again with Love: "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Lk 24:32). The word of God proclaimed and listened to in the Spirit of the risen Lord kindles the fire of God's love in the human heart. Thus God's self communication reaches the destination and bears abundant fruit (cf. Mt 13:8) in the Church and in the world.

Exercise 1: The gift of the Word

A written or spoken word is a vehicle of communication and helps the receiver to participate in the reality of the sender. The gift of language creates order out of the chaos of unnamed things by representing them through the spoken and written word.

1. Imagine yourself without the faculty of speech and hearing in the midst of your loved ones (or recall one of your experiences in a mission where you could not speak the language of the place). How is it for you to imagine yourself unable to communicate? How wonderful is the gift of language which enables you to exchange messages with others, even though you may, at times, suffer from communication failures.

2. Notice the following factors in any communication.

The source (sender) - content - medium - destination (recipient).

A communication is complete when the receiver gets the message correctly and sends an adequate response to the sender which reaches him. In the event of self-communication the sender and the message are identified. Communication of invisible deeper realities such as love, care, compassion etc. Seek visible and tangible symbols such as a gesture or a gift as the medium of communication. Besides, communication requires that the communicating parties share an area of communicative commonality.

3. Write your reflections on the following questions in your notebook.

- How do these principles of communication apply to God's self-communication?
- What do they tell you about the event of God becoming one among us in the person of Jesus?
- How does incarnation of the Word of God make sense to you as God's most intimate self communication to us humans?



2. Reflection

The Word of God, a symphony

During this stage of *Patris Mei*, you are invited to open yourself to the mystery of the Father's love that envelops your whole being and the entire creation. God makes himself known to us as a mystery of infinite love in which the Father utters His Word in the Holy Spirit (cf. VD 6). This Word "through whom all things were made" (Jn 1:3) became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (cf. Jn 1:14). As a recipient in this communication chain, you need to tune your faculties for listening, receiving and serving the Word. Your

Claretian vocation will come alive in the measure the Word of God finds its dwelling in you. The Immaculate Heart of Mary is perhaps the most fertile ground of the seed of the Word. A son of the Heart of Mary would naturally learn from the mother how to receive, contemplate and serve the Word.

First of all, let us look at the term "Word of God" used with different meanings. How do you make sense of these various meanings?

The symphony of the Word

The synod on the Word of God (2010) chose the analogy of the **symphony of the word** to refer to the different ways we speak of "the word of God", a single word expressed in multiple ways: "a polyphonic hymn" (VD 7). Word of God as God's self communication takes on a number of different meanings and we need to see them all within the horizon of God's self-communication as Love.

The eternal Word of God made flesh: The person of Jesus Christ is the Word spoken by the Father. Fundamentally everything that we refer to as "word of God" takes us to the mystery of Christ, the eternal Word of God, made flesh, the one savior and mediator between God and humanity (VD 8). Every other nuance of the expression "word of God" derives its meaning in relation to the mystery of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word.

Creation as word of God: Creation is born of the logos and is invited to partake, in Christ, in the divine life. Every creature is a word of God, since it proclaims God" (Bonaventure).

The Creation of man: Created in "the image and likeness of God" (Gn 1:27), humans testify to the goodness of God and are invited to share in the divine life. The other is a parable of God for you.

History of Salvation: The entire Old Testament is the story of God communicating with his people. "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets" (Heb 1:1). Incarnation is the culmination of this self-communication of God, "but in these last days he has spoken to us by a son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world" (Heb 1:1-2). God's self-communication in love reaches its fullness in the event of Jesus of Nazareth. Now the word has a face which we can see. Jesus' entire life, culminating



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in the Paschal mystery, communicates God's abiding love. The risen Word is the light of the world, illuminating the path that we walk. Living with him and in him, we can live in the light.

Sacred Scripture as the word of God

Sacred Scripture make sense in the measure it takes us to encounter the person of Jesus, the Word of the Father. "Through all the words of sacred scripture, God speaks only one single word, his one utterance, in whom he expresses completely" (*Catechism* 102). The Spirit of the risen Lord who gathers the people of God through the preaching of the word and breaking of the bread is the protagonist in the proclamation of the word of God. "Without the efficacious working of the "Spirit of Truth", the words of the Lord cannot be understood (VD 16)." Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written." (*Dei Verbum* 12.3)

In the same spirit, we savor the sacred scriptures from within the living tradition of the Church from which they emerged.

"In this symphony one finds, at a certain point, what would be called in musical terms a "solo" a theme entrusted to a single instrument or voice which is so important that the meaning of the entire work depends on it. This "solo" is Jesus... The Son of man recapitulates in himself earth and heaven, creation and creator, flesh and spirit. He is the center of the Cosmos and of History, for in him converge without confusion the author and his work." (VD 13)

Exercise 2: Perceiving Creation as God's word

This is an awareness meditation on creation as God's word of love for us.

1. Take a comfortable posture, preferably in a setting of nature (a garden, lake, mountain etc.) either at dawn or dusk. You may observe the sunrise or sunset and the effect it has on the creation. Observe keenly all that is happening around you without making any judgment but just enjoying them as they take place. Slowly close your eyes and become aware of the presence of the risen Lord in whom you live, move and have your being.

2. Now listen to sound of creation that surrounds you: chirping of birds, plants swaying in the wind, laughter or cry of children, vehicles speeding up. Just be present to the sounds without thinking about them. Now observe your heart beat... the rhythm of life in you. Now synchronize the music of nature with the beating of your heart and feel the single orchestra of thanksgiving to the Lord of creation. Stay like this for some time listening to the word of God spoken in creation. You may even give words to the music such as the name of Jesus or any sentiment that arises in you.

3. Make a note of your experience in your notebook.



The Word of God in the life of Claret

Claret's life is a beautiful example of the deepest communication between God who speaks and responds to the seeking of the human heart, and the seeker finding the "words of eternal life" (*Jn* 6:68) in Christ. It was the experience of the Word of God in the life of the founder that evoked his missionary response and shaped his whole life. Claret's constant contact with the Holy Scriptures kept him attuned to the will of God and guided his steps amidst very turbulent times in his life.

It was through the scriptures that Claret's vocation as an apostolic missionary became clear to him. The Word of God which he contemplated in his heart conformed him to the life style of Jesus, the apostles and the prophets. He would say, "what moved and stimulated me most was reading the Holy Bible, to which I have always been very strongly attracted" (*Aut* 113). The Word of God set his heart on fire with love. Biblical texts have enlightened Claret at different moments of his life.

Claret was an untiring preacher of the Word in which he found the answer for the ills of the world. "Man needs someone to help him understand his being, to instruct him in his duties, to guide him in virtue, to renew his heart, to restore him to his dignity, and to some extent, his rights, and all this done through the Word. The Word has been, is and will always be the queen of the world" (*Aut* 449). The ministry of the Word is the "most exalted and invincible of all ministries because it has overcome the world..." (*Aut* 452). The power of Claret's preaching was none other than the power of the Word of God.

You may also have experiences of coming alive in difficult moments by the power of the Word of God. Here is an exercise to be in touch with those passages of the Bible that have touched you at different stages of your life.



Exercise 3: The Word of God in my life

The Word of God in Claret's life

"There were passages that impressed me so deeply that I seemed to hear a voice telling me the message that I was reading" (*Aut* 114).

The Word of God in my life

Make a list of the passages of the Bible that have moved you very much.

Origin of his call: *Mt* 16:26 (cf. *Aut* 68-70).

Ordination to diaconate: *Eph* 6:12 (cf. *Aut* 101, 113-119, 687).

Discovery of his apostolic mission (cf. *Aut* 120).
Is 41:8-17; *Ez* 3:17-19; *Lk* 4:18; *Lk* 2:48-49; *Lk* 9:58.

As Apostolic Missionary. Focus on Jesus life: *Jn* 20:21;
Mt 10:5-15; 11:28-29; *Mk* 16:15; *Acts* 5:41; *Is* 6:8.

Founding the Congregation: *Ps* 23.

As Archbishop. Focus on pastoral texts: *1Tim* 4:16;
3:2-4; *2 Cor* 5:14; *1 Kings* 3:7-14; *Ez* 3:17-19; *2 Tim* 4:1-5.

In the Palace and in exile. Focus on Paschal mystery of Christ: *Jn* 18:11; *Gal* 2:20; 6:14; *2 Tim* 2:10; *Col* 1:24;
Jn 14:23 (cf. *Aut* 762, 658, 679, 694, 698, 742, 752, 754, 756, 798).

Texts that inspired your vocation

Texts that moved you during formation

Texts that inspired you during final profession and/or ordination

Texts that consoled you during difficult times

Texts that give meaning to your life

Your most preferred biblical texts



The Claretians and the Word of God

Your own vocational growth and missionary experience may have convinced you of the place of the word of God in your life and mission as a Claretian. Our Constitutions affirm that “the ministry of the word, through which we communicate the total mystery of Christ to humanity is our special calling among the people of God” (CC 46) The “source of our missionary vitality is, as it was for our Founder, the word which is received in our heart, witnessed to in our own existence and transmitted to all human being mainly the poor and the humble, through the manifold keys of human language” (*Servants of the Word*, introduction). Love for the word of God is our family trait.

“Our Founder’s practice of the daily and *vocational* reading of the Bible, and our acceptance of it as God’s Word for us today, must be family traits that allow us to give constant proof that we are hearers-servants of the Word” (SW 14). It is the word of God that heats us up in the Furnace of the Father’s Love.

The XXI General Chapter made a profound reflection on our identity as servants of the word and invited us to make the study of the Bible one of our central concerns (cf. SW 14.1). The Congregation initiated the *Word Mission project* which

lasted six years. Perhaps you have nourished yourself deeply from that spiritual itinerary through the scriptures. It was an effort to allow ourselves to be questioned by the Word of God to overcome mediocrity in our life style and retrieve the evangelical radicalism of our charism (cf. SW 13.1).

Our Claretian community finds its meaning in the light of the Word of God. “Without the primacy of the Word, the Claretian community would lose its reason for being”. Moreover, “if the Word dwells in our community, as it did in Mary’s heart, our community will not lead a life that is divided or set in its ways; it will never be insensitive to God’s crying out to us in others; nor will it serve any kind of idols. It will be a good soil that bears abundant fruit” (SW 7). The last General Chapter invited us to transform our communities, formation houses and apostolates into “schools of the Word” (MFL 59.1). First of all, we need to train ourselves to be listeners in order to transform ourselves into “schools of the Word” which draws people to come and listen to the word of God.



Exercise 4: “Schools of the Word”?

As a group your community or apostolic team is transmitting some values to those around them with or without your awareness. Primarily what you cherish as important in your heart are the values that are transmitted to others. Much more than the words spoken by mouth, the lived values are more powerfully communicated. Check out the primary concerns that guide your life as well as that of your community:

- 1. Predominant concerns:** community goals, ministry, finance, sex, inadequacy, personal success, spirituality, acceptance, failures?
- 2. Most often spoken subject at table:** politics, gossip, finance, failures, faith, ministry, spirituality, philosophy?
- 3. What makes you easily disturbed:** financial loss, rejection, failure, concerns of ministry, relationship tensions?
- 4. What do people consult you about mostly:** God, prayer, finance, relationships, spirituality?
- 5. Topics most discussed and shared in intimate relationships:** love, politics, pains, relationship issues, struggles of life, spirituality, faith, behavior of others.

This exercise is just to help you become aware of the frequent thoughts that rise in you. It is predominantly your thoughts that create what you experience. How present is the word of God in your thinking pattern?

“

Praying and meditating on the word of God is not time lost from the care of souls, but a condition enabling us to remain in contact with the Lord, and so be able to speak first hand of Him to others.” (Benedict XVI)

Listeners and Servants of the Word

The Word and the Eucharist form the forge in the Church where the heart of a missionary is set on fire. The first condition on the part of the recipient of the Word is the capacity for listening. Hence we must grow in our capacity for listening: to open up our deepest inner core—our heart, to educate our capacity for inner silence, to center our attention and take stock of reality without deforming it. Growing in this capacity for listening leads the missionary to the state of being “contemplatives in action” and authentic hearers and servants of the Word (Word Mission I, p.20). Authentic listening includes turning one’s heart in the faith of the Church together

with one’s community and join in the mission of the Church to proclaim the word of God.

The Word received, contemplated and treasured in the heart is the celebration of one’s intimacy with the Risen Lord. “If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with

him” (*Jn 14:23*). It is from this intimacy initiated and nurtured by the Spirit of the risen Lord that the mission to proclaim the word of God to all peoples springs.

Your growth in the capacity for listening to the Word and its effective proclamation requires deeper contact with the Word of God as proposed by the Church and the Congregation (cf. *SW 14-16; VD 52-59*):

- Practice of the daily and “vocational reading” of the Bible like the Founder.
- Meaningful celebration of the Word of God in liturgy especially in the Eucharist.

- Adequate preparation of the homily and sharing of the Word of God.

- Personal encounters especially with the poorest and the most suffering.

- Listening to the Word of God in personal prayer, in the events of history, in cultures and in the life of the people, in their silences and in their outcries.

When they become part of your daily life, the word becomes light to your path.

Exercise 5: Your life in the Spirit

Each person develops a repertoire of personal habits that integrate chosen action steps into ones personal life. What are some of your habits that help you to draw constant spiritual nourishment from the Word of God. Check the following:

Daily reading of the Bible:	very regular	mostly	often	rarely	never
Study of the Bible:	very regular	mostly	often	rarely	never
Office of the Readings:	very regular	mostly	often	rarely	never
Homily preparation:	very regular	mostly	often	rarely	never
Participation in Bible related programs (seminars, courses, talks):	very regular	mostly	often	rarely	never

The transforming power of the Word

The word of God brings about the transformation of the preacher as well as the listener when they are open to God’s mysterious guidance. Indeed, “the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (*Heb 4:12*).

Church history attests to numerous saints such as Antony of Egypt, Augustine of Hippo, Ignatius of Loyola whose turning point in life was the contact with the Word of God.

Claret himself was shaken out of his spiritual slumber by hearing the word of God during his student days in Barcelona. As a missionary, Claret found tremendous power in the word of God which fueled his preaching and brought about the transformation in the lives of people. There are so many instances of dramatic change in the lives of

notorious people after listening to the preaching of Claret.

Claret imitated Jesus’ style of teaching, “from the very beginning, the style I aimed at was that of the Gospel: simple and clear. To achieve this aim, I made use of comparisons, likenesses, and examples from history and experience, most of them from scripture.” (*Aut 297*). The message of love that the word of God carries is transformative and is central to our struggle for justice and peace. The General Chapter of 1991 states, “Although our forces may be small, when the Word takes power of us and we are docile to it, it acts mightily within those who hear it and fulfill it” (*SW 10*). It is with this conviction that we promote “initiatives that open up pathways for the Kingdom of God through the proclamation of faith, the living of the Gospel, the defense of life, justice, solidarity and peace”, and “opt preferentially

to accompany those living in situations of want or oppression, and those who are living in unbelief or have lost a sense of meaning in life” (SW 10.1,2).

Without being warmed by the word of God, a Claretian remains a lifeless scarecrow in the vineyard of the Lord.

Keeping the Word in the heart like Mary

There is no better place than the heart of Mary for the Word of God to find the most fertile soil to bear fruit. We look at Mary to learn how to ponder the word of God in our hearts and do the will of the Father. Mary’s *fiat* is the most perfect faith response to the word of God. It is marvelous to see how the simple village girl of Nazareth opened herself to the Spirit of God and let her whole life and its future be shaped by the word of God. Her





obedience is the fruit of a genuine “listening”. Listening and proclamation go hand in hand in her way of responding to the Word. Her proclamation of the magnificat is a clear witness of her awareness of the Father’s love and presence in her life. Her magnificat shows how she is imbued with the word of God. (For a meditation of Mary’s relation with the Word of God, **see Appendix 3**). She truly fits the description of Jesus for his mother, “Whoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister, and mother” (*Mk 3:35*).

Looking at the heart of Mary, her sons learn the art of pondering the word of God. “As we contemplate in the Mother of God a life totally shaped by the word, we realize that we too are called to enter into the mystery of faith whereby Christ comes to dwell in our lives” (*VD 28*).

3. Guidelines for the community meeting

As this period covers almost two months, it would be useful to have two different moments in community to deepen our experience of The Forge.

1. Sharing our experience of the Word

Begin the meeting in a context of reflection and prayer. It would be appropriate to have the word of God enthroned in a suitable place with candles lit on both sides.

The leader takes the word of God and reads *Lk 24:13-35*

- After a reflective silence, the members share experiences of the word of God which have illumined their lives in different moments of life (cf. **exercise 3**).
- Discuss in community how you can promote the service of the word of God in your community and in the context of your ministry.

2. *Lectio Divina* in community

Take the parable of the sower (cf. *Mt 13:1-9*) or any other suitable passage from the Bible.

4. Guidelines for the “lectio divina”

The liturgy of this time

The liturgy of this period offers you ample opportunities to deepen your relationship with the word of God. The following are the important liturgical moments:

May 31, Thursday: *Visitation of the BVM:*

Mary's encounter with the word of God.

June 3, Sunday: *Holy Trinity.* The origin of the Word

June 10, Sunday: *Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.* The word made flesh and dwelt among us.

June 15, Friday: *Sacred Heart of Jesus.* The Word reaching out to us.

June 16, Saturday: *Immaculate Heart of Mary.* Most perfect response to the Word.

June 24, Sunday: *Nativity of John the Baptist.* The prophetic power of the Word.

June 29, Friday: *Peter and Paul, Apostles.* Men shaped by the Word.

July 3, Tuesday: *Thomas, Apostle.* Touching and believing the risen Word.

The themes of the Sundays offer rich reflections on the word as seed sown in the field and the power of Jesus words that bring healing and wholeness. Finally the miracle of the multiplication of bread introduce the mystery of the word and bread, the gift of the Eucharist.

Monday 28th May 2012

- 1Pe 1:3-9
- Mk 10:17-27

Our attachment to anything created can be a great obstacle to follow Christ and to live in the presence of God. They divert our attention from the Lord and make us lose the true treasure in the kingdom of God. To follow Jesus in the spirit of poverty means, fixing our gaze on him and establishing intimacy with him. Can you surrender yourself totally to Jesus today?

Tuesday 29th May 2012

- 1Pe 1:10-16
- Mk 10:28-31

How do the words of Jesus ring true in our own vocational journey? We have so many Claretian brothers, sisters and houses around the world and we feel a beautiful communion that is universal. Vocation indeed is convocation! It is the foretaste of eternal heavenly life. Then you should be able to say from your heart with St. Peter, "Lord we have left everything to follow you", an experience of *Patris Mei*?

Wednesday 30th May 2012

- 1Pe 1:18-25
- Mk 10:32-45

Jesus leads the disciples on the way of the cross but they remain confused. While Jesus has fixed his eyes on the wood of the cross, the disciples fix them on the wood of the chair. Jesus explains that discipleship is not exercising authority over others but sacrificing one's life for them. Lord, help me to challenge my desire to be served and to offer myself as a sacrifice for others in my day to day life.

Thursday 31st May 2012. The Visitation of the Virgin Mary

- Rom 12:9-16
- Lk 1:39-56

Mary understands her vocation as a call to serve humanity and therefore rushes to help her cousin. She does not keep her vocation as a personal privilege but sees in it the elevation of the lowly, the poor and the marginalized. From being a village girl she becomes the cosmic mother. When you think of your vocation to be a Claretian, does your heart sing such a *Magnificat* of gratitude?

Friday 1st June 2012

- 1Pe 4:7-13
- Mc 11:11-26

The fig tree may have a season to bear fruit but a life centered on the presence of God has to bear fruit always. The life giving waters flows from the temple of God to make human hearts bear good fruits. But when we do not recognize his real presence among us we make this world a market place. Only a deep faith can recognize the presence of God in our life context and worship him. How often are you conscious of God's presence in your daily life?

Saturday 2nd June 2012

- Jude 17:20b-25
- Mk 11:27-33

Jesus did not possess any official status to perform such a public act as he did in the cleansing of the Temple, which made the leaders question his authority. We know that his authority came from his intimate union with the Father. True communion with God's will renders one authoritative and his life becomes prophetic. As Claretians we share in the prophetic vocation of Jesus. How courageous are you when faced with injustices and ungodliness in your own mission contexts?

Sunday 3rd June 2012. The Most Holy Trinity

- Dt 4:32-34; 39-40
- Sal 34
- Rm 8:14-17
- Mt 28:16-20

The communion that exists within the Trinity is the model for our religious community life. This love and communion was the "*Patris Mei*" of Jesus. He was in deep love with the Father in the Holy Spirit and therefore always fulfilled his Father's will. In Jesus we have access to the same Father and Spirit. Our communion with the Trinity should enable us to seek always God's will and live in fellowship with the community members.
Lord Jesus, keep me united with you and the Father in the Spirit.

Monday 4th June 2012

- 2 Pe 1:2-7
- Mk 12:1-12

The parable of the tenants highlights the fact that the life and the vocation we have received from the Lord are not for our ownership and use. They are given to us in order to bear fruit and to share with others. The tenants, instead of being dutiful, are violent in their approach to usurp the ownership of the property. Sometimes are you not tempted to make use of the community's personal and other resources for your own selfish gain? Are you sincerely dutiful in carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to you?

Tuesday 5th June 2012

- 2 Pe 3:12-15a, 17-18
- Mk 12:13-17

The tax paid to the Roman emperor was highly unpopular with the Jews, because for them God was their only supreme ruler. The Pharisees and the Herodians try to trap Jesus with their question whether it is proper to pay him taxes or not. Jesus' clever answer reminds them that they pay taxes to the emperor once in a year but they should offer themselves continuously to God. Even a trivial act of paying of taxes should remind us of our duties to God.

Wednesday 6th June 2012

- 2 Tim 1:1-3, 6-12
- Mk 12:18-27

Human beings share in the breath of the living God and so they are destined to eternal life. God is called the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob because they are still living with him. We are privileged to live in Jesus and our human body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and therefore we are destined for resurrection. As we participate daily in the Eucharist we already have the heavenly life within us. Do you consciously live this heavenly dimension?

Thursday 7th June 2012

- 2 Tim 2:8-15
- Mk 12:28-34

Loving God with our entire being means keeping him always in our thoughts. This should be our "Patris Mei" experience. When our every thought contains him, our whole being would be saturated by his presence. Then all our activities would be geared towards doing his will. From this proceeds love of neighbor who is made according to God's own image and likeness. The Eucharistic presence puts us in touch with God and our neighbors. Do you realize the importance of this fire in us for a fruitful ministry?

Friday 8th June 2012

- 2 Tim 3:10-17
- Mk 12:35-37

The Jews expected a mere human son of David to be the Messiah but Jesus corrects this view by pointing to the scripture that David himself called the Messiah "the Lord" and therefore he is superior to him. They failed to see in Jesus the messianic power and seek the salvation he gives. Sometimes it is fashionable to see in Jesus merely an enlightened human *guru*. Certainly he is much more, the Son of God. What about you? Is Jesus a powerful presence in you?

Saturday 9th June 2012

- 2 Tim 4:1-8
- Mk 12:38-44

Jesus contrasts the true inner righteousness of the poor widow with the façade of righteousness of the teachers of the law. They put into the temple treasury something out of their abundance but she, all she had to live on. One involves little sacrifice and the other total sacrifice. Religious acts should lead one to intimacy with the Lord and transformation of the self and they are not mere shows. Lord, help me to love you sincerely out of my emptiness.

Sunday 10th June 2012. The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

- Ex 24:3-8
- Heb 9:11-15
- Mk 14:12-18, 22-26

The old covenant was sealed by the blood of the bulls which was poured on the outside of the people and largely remained unfulfilled. On the contrary, the blood of the new covenant is consumed inside and efficaciously works from the interior of the heart towards transformation and fulfillment. By receiving the Eucharistic body and blood we have the real incarnational presence of Jesus within us. Are you conscious of this and live and work in the real presence as St. Clare did?

Monday 11th June 2012. Feast of St. Barnabas

- Hch 11:21b-26; 13:1-3
 - Mt 10:7-13
- Jesus sends out his disciples on mission with the message of peace. The nearness of the kingdom of God shows itself in the miraculous acts of healing, raising of the dead and demons being cast out. First of all, we as missionaries must possess the inner peace of Christ to share it with others. Our founder St. Claret strictly followed the missionary poverty and simplicity and brought the peace of Christ to many. Are you convinced of the evangelical simplicity and poverty?

Tuesday 12th June 2012

- 1 Re 17,7-16
 - Mt 5,13-16
- Salt and light have one quality in common. Salt spreads into food and light penetrates into the darkness. Similarly, our good Christian deeds should spread far and wide and penetrate into human hearts so that Christ is proclaimed through them. The world today needs desperately the Christian values of love, peace, nonviolence etc. to preserve life in the planet. All our missionary endeavors should aim at spreading these values. What should you do to be salt and light in your own mission context?

Wednesday 13th June 2012

- 1 Re 18:20-39
 - Mt 5:17-19
- Jesus fulfilled the law in giving it its full meaning. He emphasized its underlying principles and total commitment to it rather than external acknowledgement and obedience. Christian righteousness springs from the interiorization of the gospel values and establishing a gospel culture. Our missionary life and activities should flow from the Word of God well contemplated in our hearts. How much importance do you give to the reading and contemplation of the Word of God?

Thursday 14th June 2012

- 1 Re 18:41-46
 - Mt 5:20-26
- Jesus invites us to be peaceful by avoiding anger and by being reconciled with one another. Anger and ill feelings harbored in the heart disrupt our inner peace and are source of illnesses. The capacity to forgive others generously and seek forgiveness from others is a great blessing. Today the world is tired of conflicts, wars and violence everywhere. It longs for peace and reconciliation. As ministers of the Word we are agents of peace and reconciliation. Are you in reality so?

Friday 15th June 2012. The Sacred Heart of Jesus

- Hos 11:1, 3-4, 8c-9
 - Eph 3:8-12, 14-19
 - Jn 19:31-37
- The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the symbol of love. He demonstrated his sacrificial love on the cross for our salvation. His heart was pierced in fulfillment of the scriptures. The wounds of Jesus, distinct marks of Christian faith, tell the story of God's passionate love for us. The text, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced" invites us to fix our gaze on the crucified Jesus in order to enter deeply into the mystery of his love. A Claretian glories on the cross of Christ and is urged by the love of Christ. How about you?

Saturday 16th June 2012. The Immaculate Heart of Mary

- Is 61:9-11
 - Lk 2:41-51
- It is said that before she conceived Christ in her womb Mary conceived him in her heart which was full of love for him. In the symbol of the forge, the fire represents the experience of God's love through the maternal mediation of the Immaculate Heart. She was aflame with love because her heart was contemplating Christ the Word. What are the obstacles that you face today to give your heart fully to Jesus the Word and to be on fire with God's love?

Sunday 17th June 2012. 11th Sunday of Ordinary Time

- Ex 17:22-24
 - 2Cor 5:6-10
 - Mk 4:26-34
- The parable of the growing seed highlights the fruit bearing power of the Gospel message. The kingdom of God in the eyes of the world had a very insignificant beginning by the despised band of Jesus and his twelve disciples, but its significance is realized by all in the world now. Are you sometimes discouraged by our humble origin as a Congregation in comparison with other more famous ones? Or do you feel inferior to others in any way? As Mother Theresa puts it, "Being more faithful is more important than being successful".

Monday 18th June 2012

- 1 Kings 21:1-16
- Mt 5:38-42

To be a disciple of Christ means to be generous and patient. It is all the more so in the face of wicked behavior. When we resist the temptation to give back in the same coin to the offender we stop multiplying evil and grow in patience. It is this insight which led Mahatma Gandhi to follow the principle of nonviolence. To practice such a generosity one should have a strong will and positive thinking. Don't you think that this is the way a missionary should be?

Tuesday 19th June 2012

- 1 Kings 21:17-29
- Mt 5:43-48

Jesus invites us to practice Christian love which has no bounds. Just as the sun and rain are universal in reach, we are called upon to be in a communion of love with everyone. That is the style of God. Before such a love, all walls are broken and all barriers are removed. A Claretian missionary should have a universal heart to love everyone especially the poor and the marginalized. Can you joyfully say that your love is for all?

Wednesday 20th June 2012

- 2 Kings 2:1, 6-14
- Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

Prayer, giving alms and fasting are the three acts of Jewish righteousness. Prayer establishes communion with God, giving alms builds up communion with humans and fasting helps in integration of different aspects of the self. Therefore such acts should not be performed as public show. It is perhaps difficult to do good without being noticed by others. But the real joy consists in only being noticed by God in secret. Lord, help me to live and act being conscious of your presence in me.

Thursday 21st June 2012

- Sir 48:1-14
- Mt 6:7-15

The prayer "Our Father" teaches us an inner attitude of faith and love of God. The value of prayer does not lie in the quantity of words but in the quality of lifting our minds and hearts to our loving Father, who is always waiting for us to share his time with us. True prayer consists in continuous awareness of the caring presence of God in and around us and our acknowledgment of the same through our good deeds. How close are you to your heavenly Father?

Friday 22nd June 2012

- 2 Kings 11:1-4, 9-18, 20
- Mt 6:19-23

God and his reign are the true treasure. One who has realized a deep intimacy with God has found it out. Jesus invites us to fix our gaze on God and see him continuously in our day to day life. It is the only way to keep our hearts in him and to walk in his light. No possession on earth will be able to secure our future. God is our only future and therefore it is wise to cut all ties with the world and follow him closely. Lord, keep me always in the light of your presence.

Saturday 23rd June 2012

- 2 Chr 24:17-25
- Mt 6:24-34

A person of faith need not have worries because he knows that the protecting presence of God is with him. Only those who are not in touch with God worry about the past and future. This robs us of our only riches, that is, the present "Now". The past is dead and the future is a fantasy and the only real time is the present moment. God is encountered in the "Now". The flowers and the birds teach us this lesson. If you can live in the present moment fully you can accomplish a lot more. Stop living in the past or in the future.

Sunday 24th June 2012. Nativity of John the Baptist

- Is 49:1-6
- Acts 13:22-26
- Lk 1:57-66, 80

God has a particular plan for every child that is born on earth. His hand is on the child to bring his plan to fruition for the good of the cosmos. Therefore childbirth is a cause of global joy, which can be seen in the birth of John the Baptist: throughout the hill country of Judea his birth was talked about. John the Baptist accomplished the purpose for which he was born. Your birth in this world also has a purpose to accomplish. Are you progressing towards that?

Monday 25th June 2012

- 2 Kings 17:5-8, 13-15-18
- Mt 7:1-5

Jesus asks us not to judge others. It is a good advice. The human mind has the habit of judging others often on false pretexts which prevents us from establishing deep communion with others. Judging others restricts our inner freedom and our inner world becomes small. Every action of others is open for multiple interpretations and we must acknowledge it. It is not wise to try to restrict the other with our skewed perspectives. Lord, help us to be open to our brothers and sisters. *estros hermanos y hermanas!*

Tuesday 26th June 2012

- 2 Kings 19,9-11, 14-21, 31-36
- Mt 7:6, 12-14

We know that the golden rule positively put in the mouth of Jesus is found in a negative form in ethical teachings of many religions. Christian conduct is doing good and not simply avoiding evil. It is the narrow and the difficult gate to life. Without waiting for others to do good for us, we joyfully do the same for them. There should be no limit for our good works. This generosity is the only way to rout the evil in this world.

Wednesday 27th June 2012

- 2 Kings 22:8-13; 23,1-3
- Mt 7:15-20

False prophets are people who were not sent by God and are not in communion with him. A prophet sees the world with the eyes of God and feels with the heart of God. Both share the same “pathos”. In such persons the fruits of good work would abound. A prophet always keeps the good of the people in sight and renounces selfish gains. St. Claret was a genuine prophet and we have received the same prophetic vocation. Are you serious in imitating the prophetic traits?

Thursday 28th June 2012

- 2 Kings 24:8-17
- Mt 7:21-29

The word of God is the rock on which we should build our lives on. The word of God will stand for ever and everything else will be destroyed. When we read, meditate and contemplate the Word, our whole life is shaped by God’s will. In the life of St. Claret it is the Word of God which guided his vocational journey. When we carry out in our lives the demands of the gospel we will have the inner strength to face all troubles and crises. We will not be shaken at any eventualities. Lord, help me to base my life on your Word.

Friday 29th June 2012. Peter and Paul, Apostles

- Acts 12:1-11
- Ps 33
- 2 Tim 4:6-8, 17-18
- Mt 16:13-19

Peter’s faith in Jesus as the Messiah is the rock on which the Church is built. Jesus declares him blessed because God the Father himself has revealed it to him. With this confession he assumes a new name and a new role as the head of the Church. The two keys probably points out to two doors, one for the Jews and another for the Gentiles to enter. The Church continues to be built up on your own faith. When you live your faith fully you are a blessing to many.

Saturday 30th June 2012

- Lam 2:2, 10-14, 18-19
- Mt 8:5-17

Jesus is wonderstruck at the faith of the centurion who seems to have understood his Messianic authority, who can send out his word to heal. Even though he was a man of authority, he demonstrates his humility while professing his faith in Jesus. Faith grows in humble hearts. The one who experiences the presence of God remains humble before him. The presumptuous and the arrogant are shallow in faith. Lord, increase my faith.

Sunday 1st July 2012. 13th Sunday of Ordinary Time

- Wis 1:13-15 - 2,23-24
- 2 Cor 8:7, 9, 13-15
- Mc 5:21-43

Jairus and the woman who was subject to bleeding come as a lesson for us to have deeper faith in Jesus. The power of healing which is operative in Jesus is available for anyone who has faith. But there are forces close to us aimed at weakening our faith as the men reported to Jairus “your daughter is dead”. The reply of Jesus “Don’t be afraid; just believe” encourages him to believe that Jesus would raise her up. Very often fears serve as a villain in our life of faith. What are your fears? And how do you get rid of them?

Monday 2nd July 2012

- Am 2:6-10
- Mt 8:18-22

Jesus insists that his disciples would imitate him as an itinerant missionary without any attachment to any one place or people. Second, they should work fast as there is not much time left to bring more people into the Kingdom of God. Therefore he admonishes the one whose father has died to leave him to the spiritually dead to do the last rites for him and demands that he follow him immediately. A missionary should be totally detached to be active in his mission.

Tuesday 3rd July 2012. St. Thomas, Apostle

- Eph 2:19-22
- Jn 20:24-29

St. Thomas has the distinction of experiencing the Risen Lord by touching his marks in his hands and the side and he said, "My Lord and my God!" This is an expression of his personal belief in him, whereas, the other disciples could only say, "We have seen the Lord!" which is merely a statement of fact. Our faith should spring from the intimate contact with the risen Christ. Daily we encounter him in the celebration of the Eucharist. Has your contact with him become intimate?

Wednesday 4th July 2012

- Am 5:14-15, 21-24
- Mt 8:28-34

The inhabitants of Gadarenes were more concerned about their financial loss as their pigs perished in the sea. They were not reflective of the recovery of the demon possessed man and the return of the demons to the abyss. In order to avoid further losses they ask Jesus to quit their territory. Jesus' presence could have restored to them the true riches and they would have received fullness of life. Do you sometimes choose a temporal benefit in place of Jesus and his kingdom?

Thursday 5th July 2012

- Am 7:10-17
- Mt 9:1-8

Jesus effects a holistic healing to the paralytic; he forgives his sins and restores spiritual healing and then his physical paralysis is cured. The crowd is astonished to see how God's saving power is made manifest among people. It leads all people to praise God. St. Clare, our founder, during his mission preaching used to accomplish such integral healing. One must be filled with the presence of God to perform such feats. Lord, fill me with the power of healing to be of help to your people.

Friday 6th July 2012

- Am 8:4-6, 9-12
- Mt 9:9-13

A self righteous man does not realize his need for conversion but an admitted sinner does. Therefore Jesus says that he has come not to call the righteous but sinners. Matthew who used to sit at the custom-house is found now walking behind Jesus - a total change of lifestyle. The more we want to change the more mercy we will receive from the Lord. Jesus is the spiritual doctor who can heal all our inner illnesses. Only thing we should do is to surrender to him totally.

Saturday 7th July 2012

- Am 9:11-15
- Mt 9:14-17

Fasting is a sign of mourning and so in the presence of the bridegroom Jesus his disciples did not fast, because being in his presence is the greatest joy of life. The band of disciples represents here his bride, the Church. Therefore to be joyful a disciple should be filled with his presence always. For this he should keep Jesus in his thoughts. All that he says and does should spring from his presence. In the Eucharist this bridegroom Jesus comes into your heart. Do you live and work in his presence?

Sunday 8th July 2012. 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time

- Ez 2:2-52
- 1 Cor 12:7-10
- Mk 6:1-6

Jesus is rejected in his hometown. Too much familiarity breeds contempt. Probably his own kinsmen would have expected him to be a carpenter, his ancestral profession rather than being a preacher. They were not open to see God's hand operating in Jesus in a powerful way. When one is closed in his perspectives he will not be able to be in communion with all the good unfolding in the world. Negative thinking will block his vision. Let us develop positive thinking.

Monday 9th July 2012

- Hos 2:16, 17c-18, 21-22
- Mt 9:18-26

Deep faith accomplishes the impossible. The ruler believes that his dead daughter would live again by the mere touch of Jesus. The woman subject to bleeding is unclean according to Jews but dares to enter into the crowd to touch Jesus; she had the faith that God would cure her through him. Misfortunes and illnesses are the moments in which we should show our deep faith in God. Lord! Make us grow in faith to face the hard moments valiantly.

Tuesday 10th July 2012

- Hos 8:4-7, 11-13
- Mt 9:32-38

Jesus reflects the compassion of the Father. The Hebrew word for compassion is connected to the mother's womb. It is a motherly feeling coming from the depth of her being. Jesus the missionary was moved by this feeling that he could not keep quiet at the suffering of the people and therefore performs many acts of healing. A missionary should possess this feeling in order to be active and committed in the mission field. Let compassion rule our hearts!

Wednesday 11th July 2012

- Hos 10:1-3, 7-8, 12
- Mt 10:1-7

An apostolic missionary has the authority of Jesus. He calls and empowers him as he did with the twelve. He is to bear witness to Jesus and his kingdom before the people. He lives as a community with the other disciples giving expression to the local church. Today the world expects from the Church authentic witness of gospel values. The scandalous life of some of its ministers wounds the Church. Let us live like St. Clare as authentic apostolic missionaries.

Thursday 12th July 2012

- Hos 11:1-4, 8e-9
- Mt 10:7-15

The kingdom of God is the real reigning presence of God come closer to humans in the person and ministry of Jesus. The disciples proclaim this through their missionary activities. They reach people's houses and announce its nearness, which is proved by the miraculous activities that accompany their preaching. They carry with them the peace of Christ to share it with the people. As missionaries we are called upon to spread this peace wherever it is lacking. Lord, fill me with your peace.

Friday 13th July 2012

- Hos 14:2-10
- Mt 10:16-23

Suffering and at times martyrdom are part and parcel of discipleship. It flows from the reality of the cross. Jesus expects us to be crafty as snakes and to flee if possible in the wake of persecutions, if not to submit to them as innocent doves with a call to endurance. The Spirit of the Lord takes charge of the situation and we are called upon only to be conscious of his presence. Lord helps us to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil!

Saturday 14th July 2012

- Is 6:1-8
- Mt 10:24-33

Jesus and his chosen disciples stand preeminently together in the context of persecutions. If Jesus suffers hostility and rejection, so must his disciples be prepared for the same. But we are assured of divine care and providence, because in the eyes of God we are precious. He takes care of our minute details and therefore we don't have to panic but bear witness to him. You know life has its own struggles to undergo, but we confidentially sail through them with full trust in the providence of God.

Sunday 15th July 2012. 15th Sunday of Ordinary Time

- Am 7:12-15
- Eph 1:3-14;
- Mk 6:7-13

Jesus shares his mission with his disciples. They should proclaim the reign of God and perform healings as the master does. Since it was the one mission of Christ in which they were participating, he was present in their activities. Therefore they must trust in his providence for their daily needs and should not be frightened in any situation. They should be always aware that the Lord of the mission is with them and they perform the mission of the Lord. What is your approach? Sometimes are you tempted to consider all that you do as your own?

Monday 16th July 2012

- Is 1:10-17
- Mt 10:34 - 11,1

We know that Jesus is the prince of peace and he came to bring peace between believer and God and peace between humans. But the inevitable result of Christ's coming is conflict between Christ and the antichrist, between light and darkness, between God's children and the children of this world. This conflict can occur even between members of the same family. Real peace would definitely expose the opposite in the world and one should be ready to face it. Let us have the peace of Christ and spread it everywhere!

Tuesday 17th July 2012

- Is 7:1-9
- Mt 11:20-24

The cities of Galilee were especially privileged. Jesus lived and moved there and most of his miracles were done there. The greater the revelation, the greater is the accountability. They are accordingly more culpable than those who, though very wicked, had less clear evidence of the will of God. They were surprisingly not open to the powerful presence of God in Jesus right at the center of their lives. The same thing can happen to you and me. Routine liturgy ... routine ministries... but no transformation!

Wednesday 18th July 2012

- Is 10:5-7, 13b-16
- Mt 11:25-27

God chooses to reveal the mystery of the kingdom of God to the childlike, the unpretentious, and the open-handed who most often wait upon God and his provision. On the contrary, the wise are often sadly tripped up by their very wisdom and are self satisfied. The childlike do not build walls around them and therefore they are in touch with the divine realities. Do you have blocks in your personality that keep you closed to God and fellow beings?

Thursday 19th July 2012

- Is 26:7-9, 12, 16-19
- Mt 11:28-30

Normally Jesus says, "Follow me" but here "Come to me" just as a teacher gathers his pupils in front of him for instruction. His heart is the school from which the pupils would learn humility, which is our submissiveness before God and meekness which is the same in front of our fellow men. It is similar to the twin love commandments of love of God and neighbor. Humility is the fruit of a deep God experience and meekness springs from the respect we have for others. Lord! Help us to learn humility and meekness!

Friday 20th July 2012

- Is 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8
- Mt 12:1-8

The religious restrictions elaborated by human beings into stiff codes of conduct often paradoxically fight against the purposes of God. It is particularly grave when insistence on the letter of the law results in the neglect of genuine human need and thus hinders the expression of love. Any law that is not based on love cannot give life. In the name of spirituality very often legalism is practiced in our contexts. Let our behaviors spring from the depth of love.

Saturday 21st July 2012

- Mic 2:1-5
- Mt 12:14-21

The essence of Jesus' ministry lies not in power but in sacrificial service expressed through humility, meekness, and gentleness. The one who was uniquely related to God as his chosen and beloved, upon whom the Spirit singularly rested, came also as a servant who was ultimately to die, in agreement with Isaiah's Servant Song. The more we move closer to God, the least we become among God's people. May it happen to you and me!

Sunday 22nd July 2012. 16th Sunday of Ordinary Time

- Jer 23:1-6
- Eph 2:13-18
- Mk 6:30-34

The apostles were probably tired and exhausted after a long missionary journey. Jesus invites them to a lonely place to rest and reflect on their work, primarily to thank the heavenly Father for the success of their mission. A missionary's vitality springs from his communion with the author of the mission and therefore it should be his habit to pause and pray even amidst hectic work. Lord! Give me a heart always connected to your heart!

Monday 23th July 2012

- Mic 6:1-4, 6-8
- Mt 12:38-42

The Pharisees wanted to see a spectacular miracle done by Jesus preferably in the sky as a proof that he was the Messiah. But he cites two signs from the history of the people of Israel pointing out the fact that the people of Nineveh and the Queen of the South were more open to the activities of God on earth than the present generation. When God has become Immanuel in Jesus, the greatest sign of salvation, one should keep his eyes wide open to see the hand of God operating in human history.

Tuesday 24th July 2012

- Mic 7:14-15, 18-20
- Mt 12:46-50

The greatest joy for a human being lies in the capacity to do the will of God always. In the kingdom of God it redefines basic relationships. Jesus here repudiates neither his family nor Israel. But he draws attention to the existence of a new family centered on obedience to the will of the Father. This family, later to be called “the church,” represents the new reality of the kingdom on earth. Can you say you are an integral part of this family?

Wednesday 25th July 2012

- 2 Cor 4:7-15
- Mt 20:20-28

For human nature, the greatest good appears to be that which serves the self, i.e., honor, position, glory, and prestige. It is the perspective that dominates the world. But the kingdom brought by Jesus defines greatness in an entirely opposite way in terms of servanthood. This way is foreign to the world and to human nature. Yet it is the way of Jesus, and it is thus to be the way of his disciples.

Thursday 26th July 2012

- Jer 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13
- Mt 13:10-17

For those who have responded positively to Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom, the parables convey further insight and knowledge, while for those who have rejected Jesus and his message, the parables have the effect of only darkening the subject further. Thus belief and commitment lead to further knowledge; unbelief leads to further ignorance. Let us keep our eyes and ears open to see and understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God more fully.

Friday 27th July 2012

- Jer 3:14-17
- Mt 13:18-23

The word of the kingdom when received fully and without reservation results in an unqualified, constant, and abundantly fruitful discipleship. The responsiveness to the message of the kingdom depends on the type of soil i.e. human heart. The stones and thistles represent the different types of blocks that prevent the Word of God to germinate, grow and bear fruit. A servant of the Word should first live the Word of God and then preach it in order to bear abundant fruits.

Saturday 28th July 2012

- Jer 7:1-11
- Mt 13:24-30

The people of the kingdom live side by side with the people of the evil one. Good and evil will always be found together in persons and institutions. The presence of evil is not an excuse for the good ones not to bear fruit but it is all the more reason to bear abundant fruit to outsmart the weeds. This state of affairs is to remain so until the full maturity of the wheat, when finally the wheat would be separated from the weeds. Lord! Give us the courage to face the evils lurking at our doors.

Sunday 29th July 2012. 17th Sunday of Ordinary Time

- 2 Kings 4:42-44
- Eph 4:1-6
- Jn 6:1-15

Jesus shows concern for the hunger of the people and supplies food for them. He is the good shepherd who takes care of the sheep leading them to fresh pastures to satisfy them. The crowd seated for the meal is the image of the Kingdom when Jesus will unite all of humanity in the fraternal banquet of God. When we are in the company of Jesus we are always filled by the bread of the Word and of the Eucharist. Let us be nourished by these twin blessings.

Monday 30th July 2012

- Jer 13:1-11
- Mt 13:31-35

The parables of the seed and yeast convey the message that the reign of God spreads and expands fast everywhere. Internally it permeates all areas of human life and transforms them like the yeast and externally the message goes far and wide in all directions covering all nations. Jesus invites us today to submit ourselves to the transforming message of the kingdom and experience growth in our spiritual and religious life.

Tuesday 31st July 2012

- Jer 14,17-22
- Mt 13,36- 43

Jesus assures us in the parable that evil would one day be destroyed and the righteous who withstood the onslaught of evil would be triumphant. Till then one must be patient with the realities of evil around us. This can result in a confusing situation, especially when the wicked seem to prosper and the righteous suffer. But the ambiguity of the present situation is a temporary one, and with the end of the age it too will be brought to an end. Till then perseverance in doing good is the only way!



5. Texts for further study

Appendix I: From the Dogmatic Constitution “*Dei Verbum*”

21. The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since, especially in the sacred liturgy, she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from the table both of God's word and of Christ's body. She has always maintained them, and continues to do so, together with sacred tradition, as the supreme rule of faith, since, as inspired by God and committed once and for all to writing, they impart the word of God Himself without change, and make the voice of the Holy Spirit resound in the words of the prophets and Apostles. Therefore, like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated

by Sacred Scripture. For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life. Consequently these words are perfectly applicable to Sacred Scripture: “For the word of God is living and active” (Heb. 4:12) and “it has power to build you up and give you your heritage among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32; see 1 Thess. 2:13).

Anexo II: Catechism of the Catholic Church (111-117)

111. The Second Vatican Council indicates three criteria for interpreting Scripture in accordance with the Spirit who inspired it.

112. Be especially attentive “to the content and unity of the whole Scripture”. Different as the books which compose it may be, Scripture is a unity by reason of the unity of God's plan, of which Christ Jesus is the center and heart, open since his Passover.

The phrase “heart of Christ” can refer to Sacred Scripture, which makes known his heart, closed before the Passion, as the Scripture was obscure. But the Scripture has been opened since the Passion; since those who from then on have understood it, consider and discern in what way the prophecies must be interpreted.

113 2. Read the Scripture within “the living Tradition of the whole Church”. According to a saying of the Fathers, Sacred Scripture is written principally in the Church's heart rather than in documents and records, for the Church carries in her Tradition the living memorial of God's Word, and it is the Holy Spirit who gives her the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture (“... according to the spiritual meaning which the Spirit grants to the Church”).

114 3. Be attentive to the analogy of faith. By “analogy of faith” we mean the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation.

The senses of Scripture

115. According to an ancient tradition, one can distinguish between two senses of Scripture: the literal and the spiritual, the latter being subdivided into the allegorical, moral and anagogical senses. The profound concordance of the four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church.

116. The literal sense is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation: “All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal.”

117. The *spiritual sense*. Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs.

1. *the allegorical sense*. We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ's victory and also of Christian Baptism.

2. *the moral sense*. the events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written “for our instruction”.

3. *the anagogical sense* (Greek: *anagoge*, “leading”). We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Appendix III: Apostolic Exhortation “*Verbum Domini*” (Benedict XVI)

Here I would like to mention Mary’s familiarity with the word of God. This is clearly evident in the Magnificat. There we see in some sense how she identifies with the word, enters into it; in this marvellous canticle of faith, the Virgin sings the praises of the Lord in his own words: “The Magnificat – a portrait, so to speak, of her soul – is entirely woven from threads of Holy Scripture, threads drawn from the word of God. Here we see how completely at home Mary is with the word of God, with ease she moves in and out of it. She speaks and thinks with the word of God; the word of God becomes her word, and her word issues from the word of God. Here we see how her thoughts are attuned to the thoughts of God, how her will is one with the will of God. Since Mary is completely imbued with the word of God, she is able to become the Mother of the Word Incarnate”.

Furthermore, in looking to the Mother of God, we see how God’s activity in the world always engages our freedom, because through faith the divine word transforms us. Our apostolic and pastoral work can never be effective unless we learn from Mary how to be shaped by the working of God within us: “devout and loving attention to the figure of Mary as the model and archetype of the Church’s faith is of capital importance for bringing about in our day a concrete paradigm shift in the Church’s relation with the word, both in prayerful listening and in generous commitment to mission and proclamation”.

Appendix IV: Apostolic Exhortation “*Verbum Domini*” (Benedict XVI)

124. I remind all of you that our personal and communal relationship with God depends on our growing familiarity with the word of God. I turn to everyone, including those who have distanced from the faith and his Word. To everyone the Lord says: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev 3:20). May every day of our lives thus be shaped by a renewed encounter with Christ, the Word of the Father made flesh: he stands at the beginning and the end, and “in him all things hold together”(Col 1:17). Let us be silent in order to hear

the Lord’s Word and to meditate upon it, so that by the working of the Holy Spirit it may remain in our hearts and speak to us all the days of our lives. In this way the Church will always be renewed and rejuvenated, thanks to the word of the Lord which remains for ever (cf. 1 Pet 1:25; Is 40:8). Thus we too will enter into the great nuptial dialogue which concludes Sacred Scripture: “The Spirit and the bride say: ‘Come’. And let everyone who hears say: ‘Come!’ ”

Appendix V: St. Augustin

The Word of God then is set forth before all men; let them who can, procure it, and they can who have a godly will. For in That Word is peace; and “peace on earth is to men of good will.” So then whoso will procure it, let him give himself. This is as it were the price of the Word, if so it may in any way be said, when he that gives doth not lose himself, and gains the Word for which he gives himself, and gains himself too in the Word to whom he gives himself. And what gives he to the Word? Not ought that is any other’s than His, for whom he gives himself; but what by the Same Word was made, that is given back to Him to be remade; “All things were made by Him.” If all things, then, of course man too. If the heaven, and earth, and sea, and all things that are therein, if the whole creation; of course more manifestly he, who being made after the image of God by the Word was made man.

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The Forge in Our Daily Life

PATRIS MEI - 2012

“

The ministry of the word, through which we communicate the total mystery of Christ to humanity is our special calling among the people of God.”

(Constitutions 46)