

CALLED BY THE

Spirit



OFFICE OF MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND

4- Week Journal

The Gospel of Mark

Called by the Spirit

The Gospel of Mark

*Created by the Stewardship Office of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland
UPDATED, 2021, by the Office of Missionary Discipleship
The Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio*

*Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible
with Revised New Testament and Revised Psalms c 1991, 1986, 1970
Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington D.C. and are used by
permission of the copyright owner.*

*Permission is given to duplicate with acknowledgement given to the Diocese
of Cleveland, Ohio. For a free PDF file, please contact:*

*Office of Missionary Discipleship
Diocese of Cleveland
1404 East 9th Street
Cleveland, OH 44114
216-696-6525 Ext. 2552
dioceseofcleveland.org/discipleship*

Discovering the Spirit Within

A Disciple's Prayer and Discernment Journal

The Gospel of Mark

Name:

Date:

Discovering the Spirit Within

This discernment journal was created to assist you in a prayerful, scriptural and experiential process to continue to discern your charisms and calling in life, to become intentional disciples for Jesus Christ.

“The Gospel tells us that when the first disciples went forth to preach, ‘the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message.’ (Mk 16:20) The same thing happens today. We are invited to discover this, to experience it. Christ, risen and glorified, is the wellspring of our hope, and he will not deprive us of the help we need to carry out our mission which he has entrusted to us.” (Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*, 275)

We are all missionary disciples; our spiritual gifts help us to be God’s servants in this world. “When we live out a spirituality of drawing nearer to others and seeking out their welfare, our hearts are opened wide to the Lord’s greatest and most beautiful gifts. Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God.” (Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*, 272)

May you find the spirit of God within you and a place in the world around you to share the gifts given to you in Baptism, sealed in Confirmation and renewed through the Eucharist.

Secretariat for Parish Life and Development
Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio

Using the Discernment Journal

This discernment journal was designed for you. Please make it your own and include it as a regular practice in discerning your spiritual gifts. Set aside a few minutes each day to read and reflect on the prayers, scriptures and questions.

Discernment of one's spiritual gifts is a life-long journey. This journal is intended to be one resource used along the way.

Feel the presence of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit within you as you prayerfully discern what God is calling you to. May you come to know in your life how you are being called to love and serve God.

Week 1 Prayer

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty
Creator of heaven and earth

I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
And born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day, he rose again.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and live everlasting.

Amen.

Week 1 Reflection

One of the scribes said to Jesus, ‘You are right in saying, God is one and there is no other than he.’ And ‘to love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself’ is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus says that he answered with understanding, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” -*Mark 12:32-34*

Unlike the scribes and apostles, we cannot speak with Jesus face to face. Yet we can still have a personal relationship with him, be called by faith to believe in him and be his disciple. We can talk to Jesus every day. We can imitate the Jesus Mark so simply and profoundly portrays in his gospel as God and man. We are invited to consider who Jesus is, to strive to know him more intimately through the words of scripture and to learn to love and respond as he did.

As disciples, may we continue to grow in love. May we always and everywhere express God’s love so completely and passionately that like Jesus we spend the rest of our lives giving our love and ourselves away.

In *Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis describes this well, “In union with Jesus, we seek what he seeks and we love what he loves. In the end, what we are seeking is the glory of the Father; we live and act “for the praise of his glorious grace” (Eph 1:6). (EG, 267)

This week may you hear Jesus say to you, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.”

Jesus increase my faith, fill me with your love and wisdom. Help me to know and imitate you.

Week 1 Day 1

Jesus Christ: Son

A wise son makes his father glad. -*Proverbs 10:1*

Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." -*Mark 1:9-11*

How does this passage speak to the love shared between the Father and the Son?

What phrase from this scripture passage is speaking to you and why?

As missionary disciples, we are also called to share the love of Christ with others. How do you show love for others while using your spiritual gifts?

"Blessed be God"

Week 1 Day 2

Jesus Christ: The Holy One

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the just man runs to it and is safe. -*Proverbs 18:10*

In their synagogue was a young man with an unclean spirit; he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!” Jesus commanded the spirit, “Be quiet, and come out of the man!”

The evil spirit shook the man hard, gave a loud scream and came out of him. The people were all so amazed they started saying to each other, “What is this? Some kind of new teaching? This man has authority to give orders to evil spirits, and they obey him!” And so the news about Jesus spread quickly everywhere in the region of Galilee. -*Mark 1:23-28*

The unclean spirits recognize Jesus as the *Holy One of God* in the passage above. What does it mean to be “Holy”? Why is this important for Christians?

How do your spiritual gifts help you live a life of holiness?

“Blessed be his Holy Name”

Week 1 Day 3

Jesus Christ: A man with a purpose

He who finds me finds life, and wins favor from the Lord. -*Proverbs 8:35*

Jesus rose very early before dawn and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, “Everyone is looking for you.” He told them, “Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose I have come.” So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.” -*Mark 1:35-39*

In the gospels, Jesus frequently “goes off” to pray as he travels from one village to another. Why is prayer so important in living out our Christian lives?

How does prayer help you to discern your spiritual gifts?

What advice do you have for someone who wants to nurture an active prayer life?

“Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.”

Week 1 Day 4

Jesus Christ: Son of God

Who has gone up to heaven and come down again – who has cupped the wind in his hands? Who has bound up the waters in a cloak – who has marked out all the ends of the earth? What is his name, what is his son's name if you know it? *-Proverbs 30:4*

Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" *-Mark 15:37-39*

The proclamation, "Truly this man was the Son of God" by the centurion is a statement of faith that professes a recognition of Jesus's relationship with God. Jesus, in his ministry, life, death, and resurrection reveals the self-giving, transformative, and creative nature of God, who makes all things new (cf. Revelations 21:5). Jesus says in Matthew 11:27, "No one knows the Father except the Son." In and through Jesus, as the son, we encounter the ennobling and saving presence of God with us.

In your day-to-day life, how do you nurture your relationship with Jesus Christ? What advice can you give to someone who is yearning to deepen their relationship with Jesus?

How are you called to use your gifts to reveal God to others?

As you use your spiritual gifts today, prayerfully consider them an inheritance for God's family.

"Blessed be the Name of Jesus."

Week 1 Day 5

Jesus Christ: Source of life

To my words be attentive, to my sayings incline your ear; let them not slip out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them, to man's whole being they are health. With closest custody, guard your heart, for in it are the sources of life. -*Proverbs 4:20-23*

A cloud came, casting a shadow over Peter, James, and John; then from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." -*Mark 9:7*

How do you hear God speak in your life? How does this inspire who you are and what you do?

What "distractions" clutter and even muffle the voice of God in your life? What can you do to suppress those things that distract you from hearing God?

Allow extra time to find quiet space today to just listen.

"Blessed be his most Sacred Heart."

Week 1 Day 6

Jesus Christ: Servant and Savior

He who obeys me dwells in security, in peace, without fear of harm. -*Proverbs 1:33*

Jesus said to the Apostles, “The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” -*Mark 10:45*

How does Jesus bring peace into our lives?

In what ways do you use your spiritual gifts to live a servant’s life?

“Blessed be his most precious blood. Blessed be Jesus in the most holy sacrament of the altar.”

Week 1 Day 7

Jesus Christ: Wise counselor

The Lord gives wisdom, from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He has counsel in store for the upright, he is the shield of those who walk honestly, guarding the paths of justice, protecting the way of his pious ones. -*Proverbs 2:6-8*

Jesus came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands!” -*Mark 6:1-2*

In Mark 6: 1-2, the people marvel at Jesus’s wisdom. Why do you think they were so surprised at Jesus and what can this episode teach us about our own call to make disciples and preach the Gospel?

How does the Holy Spirit inspire wisdom in your life? Where do you look for wisdom when you need inspiration or guidance?

Consider where your wisdom has come from in knowing how to use your spiritual gifts.

“Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.”

Week 1 Discovering the Spirit Within

My Identity – My Calling

“The Holy Spirit also enriches the entire evangelizing church with different charisms. These gifts are meant to renew and build up the church.” (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 130)

What does it mean to be an *evangelizing church*?

How have you seen different charisms at work in your church community and by members of the church outside the church community?

Who can you affirm today in the use of their spiritual gifts to build up the church?

How do you see your spiritual gifts fitting together with other's charisms in building up the church?

Week 2 Prayer

Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things.

I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.

Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

Week 2 Reflection

Jesus began to teach by the sea, “Hear this! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep. And when the sun rose, it was scorched and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it and it produced not grain. And some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit. It came up and grew and yielded thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.” He added, “Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear.”
-Mark 4:1, 3-9

We know that good soil and seeds are necessary to produce fruit. From the perspective of discipleship, we can look at the soil of our lives. The seeds represent our charisms, they are planted within us at Baptism and God needs us to use in order for our lives to produce the fruitfulness he desires.

We need to keep the soil in our lives rich, fertile, and ready to receive God’s holy seeds.

This week we focus on how to grow in holiness by reflecting on how sin takes root in our lives and can separate us from God’s will and from others. It undermines our ability to use our spiritual gifts for others. We will pray using select verses from the seven penitential psalms. Throughout history countless holy men and women have prayed these psalms in repentance and as penance for sins. May we like these holy men and women, repent, pray without ceasing, strive to hear God’s voice, grow in holiness, and yield a hundredfold.

Bless me Lord with true contrition, honest sorrow, and deep gratitude. “Show me the path I should walk, for to you I entrust my life.” -Psalm 143:8

Week 2 Day 1

Repent

He who loves correction loves knowledge. -*Proverbs 12:1*

John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. -*Mark 1:4*

How has your sin separated you from your friends or those you love?

How can sin distort how you understand and share your charism to build God's Kingdom?

How do you understand repentance and why is this important in our faith walk?

*"Out of the depths I call to you,
Lord; Lord hear my cry." -Psalm 130:1*

Week 2 Day 2

Believe

Keep my words and treasure my commands. Keep my commands and live, my teaching as the apple of your eye; bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart.

-Proverbs 7:1-3

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." *-Mark 1:14-15*

How do you understand the phrase, "The Kingdom of God is at hand"?

How has using your charisms caused you to feel a sense of fulfillment? Can you think of a time in your life when you experienced this?

"I said, 'I confess my faults to the Lord,' and you took away the guilt of my sin." -Psalm 32:5

Week 2 Day 3

Come

Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed! Forsake foolishness that you may live; advance in the way of understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied and the years of your life increased. *-Proverbs 9:5-6, 11*

As Jesus passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Come after me and I will make you fishers of men.” Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. *-Mark 1:16-18*

What do you think caused Simon and Andrew to “abandon their nets” and follow Jesus when he called? In what ways can you relate to Simon and Andrew?

Describe a time you felt the Holy Spirit empower you to be an evangelizing “fisher of men”? What was challenging? What was rewarding?

“Come quickly to help me, my Lord and my salvation!” -Psalm 38:23

Week 2 Day 4

Rest

Receive my words, and the years of your life shall be many. On the way of wisdom I direct you, I lead you on straightforward paths. When you walk, your step will not be impeded, and should you run, you will not stumble. Hold fast to instruction, never let her go; keep her, for she is your life. *-Proverbs 4:10-13*

After Herod beheaded John the Baptist the apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. *-Mark 6:30-32*

Who encourages you to rest when you grow weary? In what ways do you recognize the Holy Spirit working in that person?

How does rest lead to being able to share your spiritual gifts?

“Turn, Lord, save my life; in your mercy rescue me.” -Psalm 6:5

Week 2 Day 5

Accept

All the ways of a man may be right in his own eyes, but it is the Lord who proves hearts. To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. -*Proverbs 21:2-3*

Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.” -*Mark 10:15*

What does it mean to accept the kingdom of God like a child?

How can you have the spirit of a child in sharing your gifts?

“Lord, hear my prayer; in your faithfulness listen to my pleading, answer me in your justice.” -Psalm 143:1

Week 2 Day 6

Serve

He who confers benefits will be amply enriched, and he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. -*Proverbs 11:25*

Jesus told the disciples: “Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen I say to you, will surely not lose his reward.” -*Mark 9:41*

Think about someone in your life who exemplifies selfless service. How does their example shape you? What lessons did you learn from them that you can impart to someone else?

How do you show thankfulness to God for receiving your ability to use your spiritual gifts to serve?

“May the children of your servants live on; may their descendants live in your presence.” -Psalm 102:29

Week 2 Day 7

Receive

From the fruit of his words a man has his fill of good things,
and the work of his hands comes back to reward him. -*Proverbs*
12:14

Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given
up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children
or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will
not receive a hundred times more now in the present age:
houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and
lands, with persecutions and eternal life in the age to come."
-*Mark 10:29-30*

What have you given up to follow Jesus?

What have you received in return?

What are you willing to give up so you can share your charisms with
others?

*"God in your goodness...wash away all my guilt;
from my sin cleanse me." -Psalm 51:3-4*

Week 2 Discovering the Spirit Within

My Identity – My Calling

“They (our charisms) are not an inheritance, safely secured and entrusted to a small group for safekeeping; rather they are gifts of the Spirit integrated into the body of the Church, drawn to the center which is Christ and then channeled into an evangelizing impulse.” (*Joy of the Gospel*, 130)

How do you keep the soil of your soul rich and fertile?
What are the thorns that you need to weed out so holy seeds can grow? How are you growing and tending your spiritual gifts?

How have you drawn closer to Christ by using your spiritual gifts?

Week 3

Prayer for Healing

Lord, you invite all who are burdened to come to you.
Allow your healing hand to heal me.
Touch my soul with your compassion for others.
Touch my heart with your courage and infinite love for all.
Touch my mind with your wisdom, that my mouth may always
proclaim your praise.
Teach me to reach out to you in my need,
and help me to lead others to you by my example.
Most loving heart of Jesus,
bring me health in body and spirit
that I may serve you with all my strength.
Touch gently this life which you have created,
now and forever.

Amen.

Week 3 Reflection

Jesus said to the Apostles, “Have faith in God. Amen, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it shall be done for him. Therefore, I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours. When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance, so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your transgression.”

-Mark 11:22-25

As disciples, we place our faith and trust in God our Creator who formed each of us in God’s image and likeness. We belong to God.

This week we will reflect on many ways Jesus heals and touches us. We know that we need to encourage and support one another and to reach out to those who are in need of a healing presence. We are also aware sometimes we need to be healed and may need the help of others. We are true disciples when we ask God and others for help as we seek healing.

Gently touch me, Jesus. Heal my wounded soul and hold me close within your heart. Help me to be both a cheerful giver and gracious receiver of your healing love as it comes through the love and giftedness of others.

Week 3 Day 1

Jesus Be With Me

By wisdom is a house built, by understanding is it made firm; and by knowledge are its rooms filled with every precious and pleasing possession. -*Proverbs 24:3-4*

On leaving the synagogue Jesus entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her. He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them. When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons. -*Mark 1:29-32*

Jesus's very presence brought about healing for those who had faith that they could be healed. When he sent his disciples out on mission (Luke 10), they were also called to be present to bring about God's kingdom. Why is presence so important in our call as missionary disciples?

What would you say or ask of Jesus if he was present in your home?

*With a contrite heart and a humble spirit I come
before you Jesus, be with me today.*

Week 3 Day 2

Jesus Touch Me

Those who love me I also love, and those who seek me find me. -*Proverbs 8:17*

There was a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years. She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. She said, "If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured." Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. -*Mark 5:25-29*

The woman afflicted with hemorrhages had great faith that even a simple touch of Jesus's clothing could bring about healing. What challenges your faith at times? How can prayer strengthen our faith?

How can you use your gift to somehow bring about healing for someone in need?

I follow you with my whole heart and soul. Touch me Jesus.

Week 3 Day 3

Jesus Call Me

Let your eyes look straight ahead and your glance be directly forward. Survey the path for your feet, and let all you ways be sure. Turn neither to right nor to left, keep your foot far from evil.
-*Proverbs 4:25-27*

Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. On hearing that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus son of David, have pity on me." Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage; get up, he is calling you." He threw aside his cloak, sprang up and came to Jesus. Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see." Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you." Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way. -*Mark 10:46-47, 49-52*

How can you be courageous like Bartimaeus when Jesus called him? His desire to "see" motivated him to encounter Christ, despite his limitations. What does his example teach us in our own faith walk?

Who can you tell about the healing presence and love of Jesus today?

Jesus call me. Give me the courage to answer.

Week 3 Day 4

Jesus Forgive Me

Love covers all offenses. -*Proverbs 10:12*

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was at home. Many gathered together so that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door and he preached the word to them. They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven." -*Mark 2:1-5*

What do you need to bring to Christ in your own life to receive healing and forgiveness? Spend some time in prayer, recognizing the immense love Jesus has for you and confront those things in your life that need healing and forgiveness.

How do you help others in seeking forgiveness and receiving healing?

Jesus forgive me. Jesus heal me.

Week 3 Day 5

Jesus Teach Me

Instruct a wise man, and he becomes still wiser; teach a just man, and he advances in learning. -*Proverbs 9:9*

Jesus said to the paralytic, “That you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth.” He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.” He rose, picked up his mat at once and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.” -*Mark 2:10-12*

When Jesus healed and preached he spoke with great authority. His charge to the paralytic man was to return to his own life, now changed, to glorify the healing power of God and witness to the Gospel message. How does Jesus’s ability to teach and heal inspire you as a missionary disciple?

The people in this passage of Mark were astounded at what they witnessed. What has astounded you in your life of faith? How does that inspire you to witness to the Gospel?

Jesus, teach me to be like you.

Week 3 Day 6

Jesus Cleanse Me

Each man's ways are plain to the Lord's sight; all their paths he surveys. -*Proverbs 5:21*

A leper came to Jesus (and kneeling down) begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. -*Mark 1:40-42*

Why do you think the leper believed that Jesus could heal him? After he was healed, how do you think his presence and witness changed hearts?

Using your charisms as your guide, survey your life. What path is God guiding you on at this moment?

Jesus create in me a clean heart.

Week 3 Day 7

Jesus Heal Me

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence rely not; in all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. This will mean health for your flesh and vigor for your bones. -*Proverbs 3:5-8*

After making the crossing, they came to land at Gennesart and tied up there. As they were leaving the boat, people immediately recognized him. They scurried about the surrounding country and began to bring in the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. Whatever villages or towns or countryside he entered, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak; and as many as touched it were healed. -*Mark 6:53-56*

What does it mean to trust in the Lord with all your heart?

When using your charisms how can you trust in the Lord?

Jesus make me whole and holy.

Week 3 Discovering the Spirit Within

My Identity – My Calling

A sure sign of the authenticity of a charism is its ecclesial character, its ability to be integrated harmoniously into the life of God's holy and faithful people for the good of all. (*Joy of the Gospel*, 130)

Why did Jesus heal so many people?

What signs have you seen of the authenticity of your spiritual gifts as described by Pope Francis in *Joy of the Gospel*?

How has your faith moved mountains, changed circumstances or brought healing?

Week 4

Prayer for the Spread of the Gospel

God, our Father,
you will all men to be saved
and come to the knowledge of your truth.
Send workers into your great harvest
that the gospel may be preached to every creature.
Send workers into your great harvest
so that your people,
who gather together by the Word of Life
and strengthened by the power of the Sacraments
may advance in the way of salvation and love.

Amen.

Week 4 Reflection

Jesus looked at the rich man, loved him and said to him, “Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” -*Mark 10:21-23*

As disciples, we trust God and are compelled by love and compassion to go forth to share God’s message and make it known. We understand that we are accountable to God. We responsibly provide for our families, our communities, our faith, our universe and ourselves. We respond to the gospel message with gratitude and willingly commit ourselves and our spiritual gifts to God.

This final week we will reflect on spreading the Good News as we seek ways to share Jesus with others. Disciples know Jesus’ message of peace, love and joy can free humanity. We know that being a disciple is not always easy. We believe that when we live out the Gospel message we can overcome the darkness of sin. Our desire and passion is to become like Jesus and to further the kingdom of God.

Lord Jesus, give me wisdom. Give me the strength and courage to follow you. Bless the work of my hands and the path I follow. Come Lord Jesus. Amen.

Week 4 Day 1

Disciples care

The just man has a care for the rights of the poor. -*Proverbs 29:7*

When Jesus saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. By now it was already late and his disciples approached him and said, “This is a deserted place and it is already very late. Dismiss them so that they can go to the surrounding farms and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” He said to them in reply, “Give them some food yourselves.” -*Mark 6:34-37*

What kinds of hungers exist in your community (physical, social, emotional, psychological, spiritual)? Who are the disciples in your community who feed the hungry?

How do you recognize and care for those in need?

An intentional disciple cares for others.

Week 4 Day 2

Disciples sacrifice

Let your heart hold fast my words. Keep my commands, that you may live! Receive my words, and the years of your life shall be many. -*Proverbs 4:4,10*

Jesus summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life?” -*Mark 8:34-37*

What are the crosses you carry through life?

How do you understand the phrase, “deny yourself”?

What spiritual gifts do you share to lighten the load of another?

Disciples take up the cross.

Week 4 Day 3

Disciples Give

He who has compassion on the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his good deed. -*Proverbs 19:17*

Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, “Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood. -*Mark 12:41-44*

How is a disciple like the poor widow in this scripture?

“The gift of love is the gift of the power and capacity to love, and therefore, to give love with full effect is also to receive it. So love can only be kept by being given away, and it can only be given perfectly when it is also received” (Thomas Merton). As a missionary disciple, how can you more intentionally lovingly give of who you are for the ennobling edification of others?

Disciples give of themselves.

Week 4 Day 4

Disciples share

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all your produce; then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow. -*Proverbs 3:9-10*

Jesus said, “To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it? It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade.” -*Mark 4:30-32*

What branches have you seen come from using your spiritual gifts?

Share a story about a time when using your spiritual gifts made difference in someone’s life and nurtured your life.

Disciples share their giftedness.

Week 4 Day 5

Disciples witness

The truthful witness saves lives. -*Proverbs 14:25*

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint Jesus. On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, “Do not be afraid. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him. But go and tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you’” -*Mark 16:1, 5-7*

Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome were the first evangelizers after the Resurrection. What can missionary disciples learn from their example?

How is the life of a missionary disciple a “truthful witness” of the gospel?

Disciples go and tell the others.

Week 4 Day 6

Disciples proclaim

Entrust your works to the Lord, and your plans will succeed.

-Proverbs 16:3

Jesus said to them, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.” *-Mark 16:15*

How do you use your charisms to proclaim the gospel?

When you entrust your works to the Lord, what is the result? Can you share a story about a time when you entrusted your work to God?

Disciples proclaim the gospel in words and action.

Week 4 Day 7

Disciples go forth

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, established the heavens by understanding; by his knowledge the depths break open, and the clouds drop down dew...Let not those slip out of your sight; keep advice and counsel in view. So will they be life to your soul, and an adornment for your neck. Then you may securely go your way; your foot will never stumble. -*Proverbs 3: 19-23*

So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs. -*Mark 16:19-20*

How is the Lord working with you today?

What signs accompany your work?

How has knowing and using your spiritual gifts changed your life?

How has using your spiritual gifts better enabled you to share the gospel?

Disciples go forth to spread the Good News.

Week 4 Discovering the Spirit Within

My Identity – My Calling

To the extent that a charism is better directed to the heart of the Gospel, its exercise will be more ecclesial. It is in communion, even when this proves painful, that a charism is seen to be authentic and mysteriously fruitful. On the basis of her response to this challenge, the Church can be a model of peace in our world. (*Joy of the Gospel*, 130)

How have you directed your charism to the heart of the gospel?

Have you seen your charisms be used in a communal way in order to build up the Body of Christ?

How can you use your giftedness to deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ?

How does God work through you to be a model of peace in our world?

The People of God

It is not only through the Sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues, but, “allotting his gifts to everyone according as he wills” he distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank.

By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church, according to the words of the Apostle: “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit.”

These charisms, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church. (*Lumen Gentium*, 12)

Mission of the Church

The mission of the Church pertains to the salvation of men, which is to be achieved by belief in Christ and by his grace. The apostolate of the Church and of all its members is primarily designed to manifest Christ's message by words and deeds and to communicate his grace to the world. This is done mainly through the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, entrusted in a special way to the clergy, wherein the laity also have their very important roles to fulfill if they are to be "fellow workers for the truth" (3 John 8). It is especially on this level that the apostolate of the laity and the pastoral ministry are mutually complementary.

There are innumerable opportunities open to the laity for the exercise of their apostolate of evangelization and sanctification.

The very testimony of their Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have the power to draw men to belief and to God; for the Lord says, "Even so let your light shine before men in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). (*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 6)

Prayer for the New Evangelization

Pour forth your Holy Spirit to inspire me with these words from Holy Scripture.

Stir in my soul the desire to renew my faith and deepen my relationship with your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ so that I might truly believe in and live the Good News.

Open my heart to hear the Gospel and grant me the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others.

Pour out your Spirit, so that I might be strengthened to go forth and witness to the Gospel in my everyday life through my words and actions.

In moments of hesitation, remind me:

If not me, then who will proclaim the Gospel?

If not now, then when will the Gospel be proclaimed?

If not the truth of the Gospel, then what shall I proclaim?

God, our Father, I pray that through the Holy Spirit I might hear the call of the New Evangelization to deepen my faith, grow in confidence to proclaim the Gospel and boldly witness to the saving grace of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.