

*St. Hilary Stewardship
Prayer and Discernment Journal*

Volume 2



Dear Disciple,

This reflection journal is for you. The scripture passages, prayers and reflection questions are designed to help you take a deeper look at your gifts and discern new ways that you can use them for parish ministry, in your daily life and for your own spiritual growth. This year our focus is on discipleship and taking a deeper look at understanding what being a missionary disciple means. The Holy Spirit guides each one of us every day. Call on Him to center you and ask for the grace to see what you need to see, so that you can be who God created you to be for Him and for the world. Find a new way to say “Yes!”

St. Hilary Parish Stewardship Committee

St. Hilary Stewardship Prayer

Heavenly Father,
give us the grace through the Holy Spirit to
respond to the call of Christian Stewardship,
so that we may

Receive your gifts with a grateful heart,
Share them lovingly with others,
And **Return** them with abundance to you.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Mary, Our Model of Evangelization

(From Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel)

The interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization. We implore her maternal intercession that the Church may become a home for many peoples, a mother for all peoples, and that the way may be opened to the birth of a new world. It is the Risen Christ who tells us, with a power that fills us with confidence and unshakeable hope: “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5). With Mary we advance confidently towards the fulfillment of this promise, and to her we pray:

Mary, Virgin and Mother,
you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,
welcomed the word of life
in the depths of your humble faith:
as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,
help us to say our own “yes”
to the urgent call, as pressing as ever,
to proclaim the good news of Jesus.

Filled with Christ’s presence,
you brought joy to John the Baptist,
making him exult in the womb of his mother.
Brimming over with joy,
you sang of the great things done by God.
Standing at the foot of the cross
with unyielding faith,

you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection,
and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit
so that the evangelizing Church might be born.

Obtain for us now a new ardor born of the resurrection,
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life
which triumphs over death.
Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty
may reach every man and woman.

Virgin of listening and contemplation,
Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast,
pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are,
that she may never be closed in on herself
or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom.

Star of the new evangelization,
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,
service, ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of our world.

Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,
pray for us.
Amen. Alleluia!

*Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation
"Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel"
Frederick, MD: The Word Among Us Press, 2013, pages
199-201*

Paul, the Apostle to the Apostles

(From St. Paul by Pope Benedict XVI)

“Indeed, for the Apostle (Paul) “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:38)”. Page 10.

“For the time being, in this brief list of Paul’s journeys it suffices to note how dedicated he was to proclaiming the Gospel, sparing no energy, confronting a series of grave trials, of which he left us a list of the Second Letter to the Corinthians (cf. 11;21-28). Moreover, it is he who writes; “I do it all for the sake of the Gospel” (1 Cor 9;23), exercising with unreserved generosity what he called “anxiety for the Churches” (2Cor 11;28). We see a commitment that can only be explained by a soul truly fascinated by the light of the Gospel, in love with Christ, a soul sustained by profound conviction; it is necessary to bring Christ’s light to the world, to proclaim the Gospel to all of us. This seems to me to be what remains for us from this brief review of Saint Paul’s journeys: to see his passion for the Gospel and thereby grasp the greatness, the beauty, indeed the deep need of the Gospel for all of us.” Pages 19-20.

“Turning now to ourselves, let us ask what this means for us. It means that for us too Christianity is not a new philosophy or a new morality. We are only Christians if we encounter Christ. Of course, he does not show himself to us in this overwhelming, luminous way, as he did to Paul to make him the Apostle to all peoples. But we too can encounter Christ in reading Sacred Scripture, in prayer, in the liturgical life of the Church.

We can touch Christ's Heart and feel him touching ours. Only in this personal relationship with Christ, only in this encounter with the Risen One do we truly become Christians. And in this way our reason opens, all Christ's wisdom opens, as do all the riches of truth." Page 25.

"Therefore let us pray the Lord to illumine us, to grant us an encounter with his presence in our world, and thus to grant us a lively faith, an open heart and great love for all, which is capable of renewing the world." Page 25.

"In his (Paul's) Letters three principal characteristics of the true apostle appear. The first is to have "seen Jesus our Lord" (cf. I Cor 9:1), that is, to have had a life-changing encounter with him. ... The apostle is not made by himself but is made such by the Lord; consequently the apostle needs to relate constantly to the Lord. This is the first characteristic: to have seen the Lord, to have been called by him.

The second characteristic is "to have been sent", ... that is, as ambassador and bearer of a message. ... It is for this reason that Paul describes himself as an "apostle of Christ Jesus" (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1), that is, his delegate, placed totally at his service, even to the point that he also calls himself "a servant of Christ Jesus (Rm 1:1).

The third requisite is the task of "proclaiming the Gospel", with the consequent foundation of Churches. "...the title of "apostle" is not and cannot be honorary. It involves concretely and even dramatically the entire life of the person concerned." "...nothing can separate us from the love of God, and this love is the true

treasure of human life.” “This remains the mission of all Christ’s apostles in all times: to be his fellow workers in true joy.”” Pages 28-31.

“Jesus is alive now, he speaks to us now and lives for us. ... We must also learn to know Jesus, not from the human point of view, as a person of the past, but as our Lord and Brother, who is with us today and shows us how to live and how to die.” Page 48.

“The affirmation of Psalm 2:8 has come to pass; “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.” So, with the Resurrection begins the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ to all peoples – the Kingdom of Christ begins, this new Kingdom that knows no power other than that of truth and love.” Page 67.

“...but it is not enough to carry our faith in our heart, we must confess it and bear witness to it *with our mouths, with our lives*, thus making the truth of the Cross and the Resurrection *present in our history*. In this way the Christian *becomes part of that process* by which the first Adam, a creature of the earth and subject to corruption and death, is transformed into the last Adam, heavenly and incorruptible (cf. 1 Cor 15:20-22 and 42-49). “ Page 71.

“We walk by faith, not by sight, and even if we might rather leave the body to live with the Lord, what definitely matters, whether we are dwelling in the body or are far from it, is that we be pleasing to him (cf 2 Cor 5:7-9).” Page 76.

“...proclamation: the one who proclaims does not speak on his own behalf but is sent. He fits into a

structure of mission that begins with Jesus, sent by the Father, passes through the Apostles – the term “apostles” means “those who are sent” – and continues in the ministry, in the missions passed down by the Apostles.” Page 97.

“...the goal of missionary action is – we can say – the cosmic liturgy: that the peoples united in Christ, the world, may as such become the glory of God, an “acceptable [offering], sanctified by the Holy Spirit”.” Page 109.

“So it is of essential importance that in Paul, a persecutor converted by the presence of the Risen One, the Lord’s magnanimity is really shown to encourage us and lead us to hope and to have faith in the mercy of the Lord, who, notwithstanding ***our littleness, can do great things.***” Page 116.

“In faith the essential truth of who we are, who God is, and how we must live is made clear. And of this truth (the truth of faith), the Church is described as the “pillar and bulwark” (1 Tm 3/:15). In any case, she remains an open community of universal breadth who prays for everyone of every rank and order, so that all may know the truth: God “wants all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth”, because Christ Jesus “gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tm 2:4-5).” Page 121

Saint Paul by Pope Benedict XVI, Ignatius Press. July 2, 2008 – February 4, 2009. San Francisco. 2009.

Scripture

With joy you will draw water at the fountain of salvation, and say on that day: give thanks to the Lord, *acclaim his name; among the nations make known his deeds, proclaim how exalted is his name.* Sing praise to the Lord for his glorious achievement; *let this be known throughout all the earth.*
(*Isaiah 12:3-6.*)

The LORD is there to save us.
We shall play our music
In the house of the LORD
all the days of our life.
(*Isaiah 38:20*)

The grass withers, the flower wilts,
but the word of our God stands forever.”
(*Isaiah 40:8*)

Each one helps his neighbor,
one says to the other, “Courage!”
You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth
and summoned from its far-off places,
To whom I have said, You are my servant;
I chose you, I have not rejected you—
Do not fear: I am with you;
do not be anxious: I am your God.
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.
(*Isaiah 41:6, 9-10*)

You are my witnesses*—oracle of the LORD—
my servant whom I have chosen
To know and believe in me
and understand that I am he.
Before me no god was formed,
and after me there shall be none.

(Isaiah 43:10)

Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, “If
you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples,
and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you
free.”

(John 8:31-32)

I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I
have loved you, so you also should love one another.
This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you
have love for one another.

(John 13:35)

What a Disciple Must Do

(Maurice Blumberg – Being a Disciple of Christ)

A disciple must love Jesus even more than his immediate family.

(Luke 14:26)

A disciple requires self-denial, complete dedication, willing obedience. And total commitment – even unto death

(Luke 14:27)

A disciple surrenders everything for Jesus

(Luke 14:33)

A disciple remains true to Jesus' words and teachings.

(John 8:31)

A disciple loves others as Jesus has loved him.

(John 13:34-35)

The Path of Discipleship

“It is time for both the left and the right to admit that they have run out of imagination, that the categories of liberal and conservative are dysfunctional, and that what is needed is radicalism that leads beyond both the right and left. That radicalism that can be found in the gospel which is neither liberal nor conservative but fully compassionate.”

(Jim Wallis, page 43.)

“The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1816)

The Holy Longing, The Search for a Christian Spirituality

(Ronald Rolheiser)

“...and in each you have a certain path for discipleship spelled out.” (page 51)

“...we see that Jesus was prescribing four things as an essential praxis for a healthy spiritual life: a) Private prayer and private morality; b) social justice; c) mellowness of heart and spirit; and d) community as a constitutive element of true worship.

For Jesus, these four elements comprise the essentials, the non-negotiables, of Christian discipleship. These are not elements we may choose or not choose to incorporate within our spiritual lives. They comprise the essence of the spiritual life. They also supply its balance. Only when all four of these are present in our lives are we healthy, as Christians and as human beings.” (pages 53-54)

“The spiritual life is not just about “Jesus and I”.

“...Christianity is all about, a relationship with a real person.” (page 63)

“He (Jesus) teaches us clearly that God calls us, not just as individuals, but as a community and that how we relate to each other is just as important religiously as how we relate to God. Or, more accurately, how we relate to each other is part of how we relate to God. For Jesus, the two great commandments, to love God and love one’s neighbor, can never be separated.” (page 68).

“We are Christ’s body.” ... “The body of believers, like the Eucharist, is the Body of Christ in an organic way. It is not a corporation, but a body; not just a mystical reality, but a physical one; and not something that represents Christ, but something that is him.” ... “The word did not just become flesh and dwell among us – it became flesh and **continues** to dwell among us. We have to keep God present in the world in the same way as Jesus did.” ... “It is the core of Christian spirituality. If it is true that we are the Body of Christ, and it is, then God’s presence in the world today depends very much upon us. We have to keep God present in the world in the same way as Jesus did.” ... “The word that he spoke is not heard in our contemporary world unless manifested by the community. As God once acted through Christ, so he now acts through those who are conformed to the image of his Son and whose behaviour-pattern is in imitation of his.” Pages 80-81.

“As Jesus himself tells us: “In truth I tell you, whoever believes in me will perform the same works that I do myself and will perform even greater works.” Page 88.

“Your touch is Christ’s touch.” Page 89.

“The God of the incarnation lives in a family, a trinity, a community of shared existence. Hence, to say that God is love is to say that God is community, family, shared existence, and whoever shares his or her existence inside of family and community experiences God and has the very life of God flow through her or him.” Page 100.

“...when we shape our lives and our bodies in the way that Jesus shaped his, when we help him carry the incarnation forward, Spirituality, as we have already said, is not a law to be obeyed, but a presence to be seized, undergone, and given flesh to.” Page 107.

“When the Spirit descended on the disciples huddling together in fear, they were free to move out of their closed room into the world. As long as they were assembled in fear they did not yet form community. But when they had received the Spirit, they became a body of people who could stay in communion with each other even when they were as far from each other as Rome is from Jerusalem. Thus, when it is the Spirit of God and not fear that unites us in community, no distance of time or place can separate us. Henri Nouwen.” Page 116.

On my own, I don't know how to believe that I am a child or heir of God. It is being together in our wholeness, with the entire body of Christ, that makes it somehow easier to believe that we are beautiful. We each have our own little part of the beauty, our own gifts of the Spirit, as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 12. Paul says that the particular way “the Spirit is given to each person is for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). Paul's word for this is a “charism”—a gift that is given to each person not just for themselves, but to build up the community and even society. Since we don't have the full responsibility of putting it all together as individuals, we can shed the false theology of perfectionism. All we have to do is discover our own gift, even if it is just one thing, and use it for the good of all.

Paul uses the brilliant metaphor of the body to show how unity is created out of diversity: “As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. ...Now you are Christ’s body, and individually part of it” (see 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27).

So we, in our corporate wholeness, are the glory of God, the goodness of God, the presence of God. As an individual, I participate in that wholeness, and that is holiness! It’s not my private holiness; it’s our connectedness together.

(Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditation, May 24, 2021)

Questions

Do I believe that I am a disciple of Jesus Christ?

How do I live it?

How can I do better and who can help me grow in my role as a disciple?

Prayers

Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila

Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands but yours,
No feet but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which
Christ's compassion must look out on the world.
Yours are the feet with which
He is to go about doing good.
Yours are the hands with which
He is to bless us now.

(St. Teresa of Avila)

Lead, Kindly Light

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom
 Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home –
 Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene – one step enough for me.

(John Henry Newman, "The Pillar of Fire", page 45.)

Prayer of Collaboration

(Connie Roulett)

Dear Lord,

We thank you for leading us to participate in your fulfillment plan for the Kingdom you established through the gift of yourself on the Cross. We ask you to send down your gifts of the Holy Spirit to each of us, in the form of your charisms, so that we can carry on the abundant mission you have in store for each of us. Help us:

- C Find Christ in others
- O Discover the opportunity to take up our cross
- LL Live Christ like
- A Uncover Your abundant teachings, mercy, and love
- B Find our “Beloved” identity
- O Become other-centric
- R Respect all members of Your kingdom
- A Learn to adore You in everything we do
- T Transform ourselves and those we encounter, to a deeper intimacy with You
- I Uncover our identity in Christ
- O Incorporate oration, through preaching the teachings of Christ
- N Name You as our **FATHER** of the Kingdom of Christ, established through the mystery of the Holy Trinity

We praise you Lord. We ask for Your blessing as we walk forward under the cloak of Your Son. Through Christ. Amen

Prayer of Abandonment

(Charles de Foucauld)

Father, I abandon myself into your hands;
do with me what you will.
Whatever you may do, I thank you;
I am ready for all, I accept all.
Let only your will be done in me,
and in all your creatures –
I wish no more than this, O Lord.
Into your hands I commend my soul:
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands without reserve,
and with boundless confidence,
for you are my Father.

Suscipe of St. Ignatius of Loyola

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
memory, my understanding,
and my entire will.
All I have and call my own,
You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, ***I return it.***
Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.

Notes