

Sunday, June 19, 2016

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Zechariah 12:10-11; 13:1

Responsorial: Psalm 63:2-6, 8-9

2nd Reading: Galatians 3:26-29

Gospel: Luke 9:18-24

Saying Yes to Jesus' Call to Follow Him

Follow me. (Luke 9:23)

Did you ever go off on adventures when you were a child? Perhaps you journeyed into the woods behind your home or explored an old abandoned building, wondering where all the rooms and staircases would take you. Adventures like these can be fun, even for grown-ups!

Another thrilling adventure is the one that unfolds as we follow Jesus. You never know where he will take you!

We see this in today's Gospel, when Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" "The Christ of God," Peter replies (Luke 9:20). Then Jesus goes on to predict his passion and tell the disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. A whole new chapter in Peter's adventure has begun: the way of the cross. Surely he wondered what else lay ahead for him.

We know that following Jesus led Peter to a life that he could not have imagined: from being a humble fisherman to becoming the rock on which Jesus built his Church. But Peter didn't know all of this when he began. And it certainly didn't happen overnight. Still, Peter put his faith in Jesus, and while this meant letting go of some of his own plans along the way, he continued to take each new step because he trusted Jesus.

Jesus won't necessarily ask you to leave your family or your job as he asked Peter to. But he does want to be your Savior and Lord. Like Peter's, your adventure is sure to be filled with twists and turns. You've probably encountered some already, in fact, and learned that you don't have to be afraid. Keep that lesson in your mind the next time you face a new twist. Jesus is always by your side. He is always inviting you to trust him and follow him. He will never let you down!

"Jesus, thank you for calling me to follow you. Help me to hear and do all that you ask, today and always."

(Many thanks to **The Word Among Us** (www.wau.org) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.)

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Questions for Reflection or Discussion:

1. In the first reading, God says that he will pour out “a spirit of grace and petition.” What do you think this means? How important is it to you to ask God for “a spirit of grace and petition” during your times of prayer and even throughout the day? Experiment with doing this and see what happens.
2. The first reading also contains this Old Testament prophecy about Jesus: “they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son, and they shall grieve over him as one grieves over a firstborn.” How does this prophecy relate to Jesus’ death on the cross?
3. Finally, the first reading promises a “fountain to purify from sin and uncleanness.” How thirsty are you? Are you thirsty enough to spend time every day with Jesus in prayer in order to receive this “fountain” of living water? How important to you is the Sacrament of Reconciliation in providing you a “fountain to purify from sin and uncleanness”? What can you do to make your reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation more frequent and more fruitful?
4. The responsorial psalm speaks of someone who is continually seeking, thirsting for, gazing at, glorifying, blessing, and calling upon the Lord. In what way does (or doesn’t) this describe your relationship with the Lord? How important is it to you to have a similar relationship with Jesus? What steps can you take to deepen your relationship with him?
5. The second reading begins with these words: “Through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” What do these words mean to you?
6. The second reading also speaks of our unity in Christ as children of God: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s children, heirs according to the promise.” In Christ all our differences disappear. After prayerful consideration about your attitudes toward certain people, classes, races, and nationalities are there any that God may be asking you to change? What steps can you take to do so?
7. The Gospel ends with these powerful and challenging words: “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.” What do these words mean to you? What are some areas of your life that you struggle to “deny yourself”? How can you make these words of Jesus a greater reality in your life?
8. The meditation describes the impact Jesus’ call to follow him had on Peter’s life. It ends with these words: “Jesus won’t necessarily ask you to leave your family or your job as he asked Peter to. But he does want to be your Savior and Lord. Like Peter’s, your adventure is sure to be filled with twists and turns. You’ve probably encountered some already, in fact, and learned that you don’t have to be afraid. Keep that lesson in your mind the next time you face a new twist. Jesus is always by your side. He is always inviting you to trust him and follow him. He will never let you down!” How do these words apply to you? What steps can you take to deepen your trust in the Lord and say yes to his call to follow him?
9. Take some time this week to pray that you, all members of your family, and all members of the parish would experience more deeply God’s unconditional love and would say yes to his call to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him. Use the prayer at the end of the meditation as a starting point.

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, a director of partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>); a ministry of **The Word Among Us** (www.wau.org) to the military, prisoners, women with crisis pregnancies or who have had abortions, and college students. He is also a member of the National Service Committee Council of the

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