

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Discipleship Habit #3: Attend Mass Often

Week 17

Encountering Christ in the Mass

This month we will explore Discipleship Habit #3: Attend Mass Often. While focused on the Mass, we will maintain a common Opening Prayer with a reflection tailored to the Mass area of focus for the week. Each week our focus is a different aspect of the Mass with the goal to invite you into a better understanding of the Mass to inspire a greater Love of the Mass.

This weekly material is offered to support our Discipleship Journey as we walk in the foot prints of Jesus.

We encourage you to use this material as a part of your daily prayer practice as follows:

- ❖ Begin with the Opening Prayer.
- ❖ Study Discipleship Habit #3: Attend Mass Often.
- ❖ Reflect on Scripture (*John 6:48 - 59*)
- ❖ Close with the Closing Prayer.

Let us pray for each other that we are transformed, as individuals and as community, by this Discipleship Journey.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are good, for You are a faithful God. By offering us the sacrifice of Your Body and Blood, You lovingly give us Your grace and invite us into deep relationship. Forgive us for the times that we've failed to recognize that You desire to be truly present with us and in us through the Eucharist. In Your Scripture you tell us of the first Eucharist, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." (Luke 22:15) Thank You for giving Yourself to us in the Eucharist so freely and so completely. Help us to know that You eagerly await us at every Mass. Lord, inspire us to grow in intimate union with You be receiving You in the Eucharist often. Jesus we trust in You. We make this prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN

Reflection:

The third habit of discipleship that we want to explore is the call to “*Attend Mass Often*”. This is the habit that finds the disciple regularly encountering the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. By practicing this habit, we open ourselves to be filled with the Divine Life of Jesus so that we can be transformed more fully into His likeness.

For Catholics, the seven Sacraments are the pinnacle of how Jesus makes Himself alive and present to us through His Living Body of the Church. The Sacraments are the perfect “three-way intersection” of the fullness of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), Jesus’ Body of the Church, and each of our individual lives. The Sacraments are the holy intersection between heaven and earth! This is where disciples want to be as often as possible!

Since the Mass is offered somewhere every day, except on Good Friday, disciples make it a habit to encounter Christ in the Eucharist on a frequent, if not daily, basis. Deeply aware of the God-sized hunger in their souls, disciples intentionally seek Jesus at Mass so they can surrender their repentant hearts to Him and be nourished by His life-giving Word, Body, and Blood.

Beautiful in its simplicity, the Mass is a two-step journey into the very heart and life of Christ. First, we encounter Christ as He speaks His Word of love to us in the Scriptures and invites us into deep relationship. Then, as if that wasn’t amazing enough, we encounter Christ taking, blessing, breaking, and giving us His Body and Blood. He gives himself totally to us – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity!

Jesus calls us together as His Church so that He can give Himself to us in the Mass. He so badly wants to give Himself to us, to be so close to us, that we actually take His Body and Blood into ourselves through Communion. He wants to draw us deeply into His Divine Life and transform us through His death and resurrection so that He can send us in His image to bring His sacrificial love to the world. Let’s seek to encounter Him at Mass often so we can be strengthened for a life of intentional discipleship.

Reflecting with Scripture

John 6:48 - 59

Jesus said:

“I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world.”

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us [His] flesh to eat?”

Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.

For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent Me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on Me will have life because of Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.”

These things He said while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

One method of exploring a deeper understanding of this scripture and its relationship to the Mass is to markup/highlight the reading for further investigation and contemplation. The following are ideas of what to highlight:

- Significant repetitions
- Themes
- Connections within the text
- Contrasts within the text
- Puzzling words, phrases
- Questions that arise in you – especially as they relate to following Jesus
- Promises to claim
- Examples to follow
- Commands to obey
- Errors to avoid
- What speaks to your heart?
- What experiences in your life does this call to mind?

What is happening in this passage? What details stand out for you?

To whom is Jesus addressing in this passage?

What does Jesus mean when He talks about true food and drink? Why is Jesus true food and drink? What makes it true?

What does Jesus mean when He says we will live forever?

How do the people Jesus is speaking to in this passage react to this teaching? What about this teaching is difficult for you or someone you know?

What have you learned or experienced that has helped you to believe these teachings?

How do you think Jesus is calling you right now through this passage? How are you going to respond?

Closing Prayer

All Who Hunger
Sylvia G. Dunstan

All who hunger, gather gladly;
Holy manna is our bread.
Come from wilderness and wandering.
Here, in truth, we will be fed.
You who yearn for days of fullness,
All around us is our food.

Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger, never strangers,
Seeker, be a welcome guest.
Come from restlessness and roaming.
Here, in joy, we keep the feast.
We who once were lost and scattered,
In Communion's love have stood.

Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger, sing together;
Jesus Christ is living bread.
Come from loneliness and longing.
Here, in peace, we have been led.
Blest are those who from this table
Live their days in gratitude.

Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.

Gather Hymnal, #925