

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Discipleship Habit #4: Seek Reconciliation Often

Week 21

Heal Me, Oh Lord

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 #4: Seek Reconciliation Often.
- ❖ Praying with Scripture (*John 4:5 – 19, 25b – 26, 28 – 30, 39 – 42*).
- ❖ Pray with Visio Divina.
- ❖ 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, we praise You, for You are merciful. You died on the cross for our sins and rose to restore us to fullness of life in You. Forgive us for the times we've turned away from You and others and did not earnestly seek You. In Your Scripture You tell us, "the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:14b) Thank You for giving us Your mercy and healing in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Help us to know that You long to shower us with Your mercy. Give us the courage to face that which alienates us from You and allow You to tear down the walls that separate us from You. Help us to seek You often in Your Sacrament of Mercy. 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:

For some Catholics, the Sacrament of Reconciliation has been intimidating, almost scary.

“In our day and age, the word ‘sin’ is so prone to be misunderstood that it has become quite useless. The reality once called sin is still with us; however, and so our time had to find its own term for it. What other ages called sin, we call alienation...Alienation suggests an uprootedness from one’s true self, from others, from God...The word ‘sin’, too, suggests uprooting and separation. It is related to the word ‘asunder’. Sin tears asunder the wholeness in which all belongs together. Sin alienates. An action is sinful to the degree to which it causes alienation. Without alienation there is no sin...‘Working out our salvation’ means overcoming alienation in all its forms. The contemporary term for salvation is belonging. The path from alienation to belonging is the path from sin to salvation.”

Brother David Steindle-Rast, O.S.B. in *Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer*

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, like the Sacrament of the Eucharist, is a “sacrament of the journey”. Both Eucharist and Reconciliation feed us and keep us on the right path. Just as disciples receive Eucharist often, disciples receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation often.

How often should disciples go to confession? That may vary from person to person. The key is the regular, intentional examination of one’s life – and receiving the sacramental grace of healing and absolution.

Like the woman at the well who encountered Jesus, we seek living water. Like the Samaritan woman, we long to know we are loved and forgiven by the Lord. We want to share with Jesus everything that troubles us. We need His healing touch in our lives.

This month consider attending the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Notice any feelings or experiences, and how Jesus may be calling you. How might you seek reconciliation often?

Praying with Scripture

This week we are going to again read the story of the Woman at the Well, but this time we will take a little different approach.

Go to the Gospel reading on the following page and reread the passage aloud...

We are wired for God. We have an infinite desire for Him but instead of filling ourselves with God, we get hooked on something less, on worldly things. We get a little buzz from these worldly things and when the buzz wears off, we get “thirsty” again. Gradually that buzz becomes addictive desire. The “jar” in this story represents these wayward, skewed desires. The woman must keep filling her water jar (i.e., creating the buzz) to quench her thirst, just as we keep going back to our various addictions to fulfill our desires.

What is the water jar in your life? What are those things in your life that you thought were going to satisfy you?

In ancient Jewish culture, the husband governed a woman’s life. When Jesus tells her to “call her husband”, He is really asking her to tell Him *who* is in charge of her life. Think of the various points in your life, five years ago, or ten years ago, or now.

How would you have answered Jesus’ question if He asked it of you at these various points in your life? How would you answer it now?

What makes it difficult for you to set down the old water jar you are carrying?

Where, in your life, do you need forgiveness and healing?

Spend time talking with God.

Reflecting with Scripture

John 4:5 – 19, 25b – 26, 28 – 30, 39 – 42

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son, Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from His journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to Him, "How can You, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and Who is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

[The woman] said to Him, "Sir, You do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can You get this living water? Are You greater than our father, Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go call your husband and come back."

The woman answered and said to Him, "I do not have a husband." Jesus answered her, "You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I can see You are a prophet...I know that the Messiah is coming, the One called the Anointed; when He comes, He will tell us everything." Jesus said to her, "I am He, the One who is speaking with you."

...The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, "Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could He possibly be the Messiah?" They went out of the town and came to Him...Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me everything I have done." When the Samaritans came to Him, they invited Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

Praying Visio Divina

While *Lectio Divina* is a method of praying with Scripture, *Visio Divina* (Latin for "divine seeing") is a method for praying with images or other media. *Visio Divina* invites us to see at a more contemplative pace; to *see* all there is to see, exploring the entirety of the image; to see deeply, beyond first and second impressions, below initial ideas, judgments, or understandings; to be seen, addressed, surprised, and transformed by God Who is never limited or tied to any image, but speaks through them.

As your prayer begins, take a few moments to open your heart and mind to God. When you are ready, slowly look and notice the image below, taking your time to let feelings and thoughts come to you as you take in forms, figures, colors, lines, textures, and shapes. What does it look like, or remind you of? What do you find yourself drawn to? What do you like and not like? What are your initial thoughts? What feelings are evoked?



Writing your name on one hand and a meaningful name for God for you on the other. Is there a word you can write between the hands that brings them together?

How does this connect with what we already reflected on in Scripture?

Closing Prayer

Lord Christ,
I wish I could offer You
a reasonably clean
and swept house to dwell in,
but I can't.
I can say - and know the meaning of -
"I am not worthy to have you come
under my roof..."
But You are already there!
Living among the once flourishing idols.
The floor is dirty
And at times the room is airless -
even for me.

I am ashamed of Your presence there,
yet You slept in a cave
and on a donkey's back at night
under the desert stars.
So, if I can't change Your accommodations
let me rejoice all the same
that You are present.
I must believe strongly, Lord,
that I can't question this:
that You are at home with sinners -
and my greatest sin Lord Christ,
is that I don't want to be a sinner!
Nor do I easily accept it - still,
the evidence is overwhelming.
But hope is like a green shoot
in the midst of an airless, disordered world.
And that hope comes from Your Spirit.
I rest in that hope, Lord.

William Breault, S.J.