

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Discipleship Habit #4: Seek Reconciliation Often

Week 22

“Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more”

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.
- ❖ Reflection on Mercy – *Pope Francis*.
- ❖ Reflection on Sin.
- ❖ Pray the Examen.
- ❖ 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 on Mercy: Insights from Pope Francis

It is not easy to entrust oneself to God's mercy, because it is an abyss beyond our comprehension. But we must! ... "Oh, I am a great sinner!" "All the better! Go to Jesus: He likes you to tell Him these things!" He forgets, He has a very special capacity for forgetting. He forgets, He kisses you, He embraces you and He simply says to you: "Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more" (Jn 8:11).

— Homily on March 17, 2013

Jesus' attitude is striking: we do not hear the words of scorn, we do not hear words of condemnation, but only words of love, of mercy, which are an invitation to conversation. "Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again." Ah! Brothers and Sisters, God's face is the face of a merciful Father Who is always patient. Have you thought about God's patience, the patience He has with each one of us? That is His mercy. He always has patience, patience with us, He understands us, He waits for us, He does not tire of forgiving us if we are able to return to Him with a contrite heart. "Great is God's mercy," says the Psalm.

— Angelus on March 17, 2013

Spend a few minutes reflecting on Pope Francis' words. What thoughts or feelings emerge?

Read the quotes aloud slowly. What word or phrases stand out for you? Spend a few minutes quietly reflecting on that.

Read the quotes aloud slowly again. Notice how your body is responding. Share with God what you are experiencing.

Reflections on Sin

Below are two reflections on the topic of sin by different theologians. Choose one or both and, after reading and reflecting on the passage, spend time talking with God.

“[We] may understand sin as whatever lessens humanity, decreases the capacity to love, or gets in the way of developing [our] potential as an image of God. Sin ultimately goes against [our] own being, for its roots are relational. Thus, sin includes both individual and social responsibility.”

Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert in The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed

How true do these words resonate with your own life experience?

Where is your humanity lessened?

Your capacity to love diminished?

Your potential as an image of God marred?

“I propose...that sin originates in a lack of sufficient believable unconditional love... The way out of sin is to see through the falsehood, to be really convinced that someone else is sustaining you, that you don't have to sustain yourself, that you are already given more affirmation, nurturance, respect, love, life, joy than you can even imagine desiring. If you can really believe that someone else is sustaining you, then all the self-defense operations which result in sins are going to evaporate, because they are no longer needed.”

Beatrice Bruteau in Radical Optimism

How do these words resonate with your own life experience?

In what ways do you believe the falsehood that you are not unconditionally loved?



the EXAMEN

The *Examen* is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It's actually an attitude more than a method, a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life. It has five steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes 15 to 20 minutes per day. Here it is in a nutshell:

- 1** Ask God for light.
I want to look at my day with God's eyes, not merely my own.
- 2** Give thanks.
The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.
- 3** Review the day.
I carefully look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit.
- 4** Face your shortcomings.
I face up to what is wrong—in my life and in me.
- 5** Look toward the day to come.
I ask where I need God in the day to come.

Version of the Examen from *A Simple Life-Changing Prayer* by Jim Manney © Loyola Press

Closing Prayer

“Come As You Are” – Crowder, from the album “Neon Steeple”

Come out of sadness from wherever you've been
Come broken hearted let rescue begin
Come find your mercy
Oh sinner, come kneel
Earth has no sorrow
That Heaven can't heal

Refrain

So, lay down your burdens
Lay down your shame
All who are broken
Lift up your face
Oh wanderer, come home
You're not too far
So, lay down your hurt
Lay down your heart
Come as you are

There's hope for the hopeless
And all those who've strayed
Come sit at the table
Come taste the grace
There's rest for the weary
Rest that endures
Earth has no sorrow
That Heaven can't cure

Refrain

Come as you are
Fall in His arms
Come as you are
There's joy for the morning
Oh sinner, be still
Earth has no sorrow
That Heaven can't heal

Refrain