

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Jesus is Good News in our Lives

Week 7

Jesus' Boundless Mercy

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.
- ❖ Pray with the Gospel of John.
- ❖ Reflect with Tradition.
- ❖ 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 the source of all blessings. You make a way for us to live in relationship with You. You lovingly come to free us, forgive us, and show us the way to a new life in You. Forgive us for the times we've failed to recognize that the stories of our lives are the story of You redeeming us. Thank you, Father, that You so love the world that You gave Your only Son, "so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16). Thank you for so generously giving Yourself for us. Help us to know, not just with our head but with our whole being, how Jesus' coming is truly good news for our lives. Lord, help us to live in the true joy and gratitude for all that You have done for us. 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

Throughout this theme of *Jesus is the Good News in our Lives*, we began our Discipleship Journey by reflecting on God's love for us. God loves us more than we can imagine, so much that He fashioned each of us in our mother's womb as a unique creation for all time (Psalm 139). The Creator of the universe actually knows each of us by name and, believe it or not, has every hair on our heads counted (Matthew 10:30). God created us to live in loving relationship with Him now and for all time (1 John 3:1 – 3).

The problem is that we all have things in our lives that keep us from fully experiencing this loving relationship with God. There have been times when we've turned away from God's plan and chosen to go our own way, which breaks our relationship with God. We essentially tell God that we don't want or need him in our life. This brokenness leaves us with feelings of guilt, emptiness, or loneliness, as if God is far from us or doesn't exist at all.

Can you recall a time in your life when you felt as if God was really far away from you? What was that like for you? Journal about that experience.

The good news is that God loves us too much to leave us in our brokenness – He never gives up on us!!

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him (John 3:16 – 17).

By His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus takes upon Himself the consequences of our sins, and by His resurrection He restores our relationship with God. This is why He says, *I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6).*

No matter who you are or what your life circumstances have been, Jesus is good news for your life. If you are burdened by the weight of sin, know that Jesus has lovingly died for those sins on the cross so that you can be with Him now and for all eternity.

Praying with Tradition

CCC, #430, 545, 654-655
Jesus saves us

430

Jesus means in Hebrew: "God saves." At the annunciation, the angel Gabriel gave him the name Jesus as his proper name, which expresses both his identity and his mission. Since God alone can forgive sins, it is God who, in Jesus his eternal Son made man, "will save his people from their sins." In Jesus (as the new Adam), God recapitulates (undoes the wrong done by Adam) all of his history of salvation on behalf of men.

545

Jesus invites sinners to the table of the kingdom: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." He invites them to that conversion without which one cannot enter the kingdom but shows them in word and deed his Father's boundless mercy for them and the vast "joy in heaven over one sinner who repents." The supreme proof of his love will be the sacrifice of his own life "for the forgiveness of sins."

654

The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life. This new life is above all justification that reinstates us in God's grace, "so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." Justification consists in both victory over the death caused by sin and a new participation in grace. It brings about filial adoption so that men became Christ's brethren, as Jesus himself called his disciples after his Resurrection: "Go and tell my brethren." We are brethren not by nature, but by the gift of grace, because that adoptive filiation gains us a real share in the life of the only Son, which was fully revealed in his Resurrection.

655

Finally, Christ's Resurrection – and the risen Christ himself is the principle and source of our future resurrection: "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep...For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." The risen Christ lives in the hearts of his faithful while they await that fulfillment. In Christ, Christians "have tasted...the powers of the age to come" and their lives are swept up by Christ into the heart of divine life, so that they may "live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."

How have you experienced the Father's Boundless Mercy (see 545 above)?

Christ liberates you from your brokenness, how does this lead you into newness of life (see 654 above)?

Closing Prayer

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.
For He has looked upon His handmaid's lowliness;
behold, from now on will all ages call Me blessed.
The Mighty One has done great things for Me,
and holy is His name.
His mercy is from age to age,
to those who fear Him.
He has shown might with His arm,
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.
He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones,
but has lifted up the lowly.
The hungry He has filled with good things;
the rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped Israel His servant,
remembering His mercy,
According to His promise to our fathers,
to Abraham and his descendants forever.

Luke 1:46b - 55