

Everyday Living With God has a mission to help each of us make God a part of our *daily* living. We know God is always with us, but often we become busy doing OUR work, instead of focusing on GOD'S working in and through us. If you think a nonparishioner may be interested in a copy of this newsletter, please notify Mary at Good Shepherd Parish by phoning the office (715-427-5259) or emailing the person's name/address (or email address) to goodshepherd@newnorth.net. Thank you.

Being a Disciple of Christ

If one synchronized swimmer drowns, do all the rest have to drown too? This is a quote by comedian Steven Wright. I think we all see the humor in it; however, think about this in a spiritual light. Together we make up the Body of Christ. Together we are to follow in Jesus' footsteps. Jesus suffered and died. If we are truly synchronized with Jesus, we will also suffer and die. However, each one of us will suffer differently—some with physical pain or illness, some with emotional distress, some with a break in relationships, and some through sacrifices both big and small.

Discipleship takes discipline. In the words of Saint Henri Nouwen, *The word discipleship and the word discipline are the same word, which has always fascinated me. Once you have made the choice to say, "Yes, I want to follow Jesus," the question is, "What disciplines will help me remain faithful to that choice?" If we want to be disciples of Jesus, we have to live a disciplined life...*

In the spiritual life, the word discipline means "the effort to create some space in which God can act. Discipline means to prevent everything in your life from being filled up. Discipline means that somewhere you're not occupied, and certainly not preoccupied. In the spiritual life, discipline means to create that space in which something can happen that you hadn't planned or counted on."

Being a disciple is not an easy task. It takes a lot of prayer and the use of the Sacraments that Christ established for us. It takes the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit within us. And it takes a loving Father to continually call us back when we begin to stray. Are we ready for this undertaking? Are we willing to be synchronized with Jesus? Let's all work on it.

Being a Disciple of Christ...

Lent is nearing. Pray about how we are to journey with Christ.

...THE CALL...

...THE WAY...

...THE TRUTH...

...THE LIFE...

...THE MISSION

Saint Henri Nouwen

This modern day saint had many words of great wisdom. Among them is this one: *We should not just go to Mass. We should LIVE the Mass throughout the week.*

Nouwen listed three disciplines for those seeking to grow in spirituality. Those disciplines are:

1. **"SOLITUDE."** Find that quiet space that draws you closer to God and take time to meditate. *Solitude is the place of purification and transformation, the place of the great struggle and the great encounter,* says Nouwen.

2. **"COMMUNITY."** *It's remarkable that solitude always calls us to community. In solitude you realize you're part of a human family and that you want to lift something together... Community is not an organization; community is a way of living: you gather around people with whom you want to proclaim the truth that we are the beloved sons and daughters of God.*

3. **"MINISTRY."** *Ministry means you have to trust that if you are the son and daughter of God, power will go out from you and that people will be healed... Trust that if you are living as the beloved you will heal people whether or not you notice it. But you have to be faithful to that call.*

Nouwen went on to share this story from a funeral he attended: "The little river said, 'I can become a big river.' It worked hard, but there was a big rock. The river said, 'I'm going to get around this rock.' The little river pushed and pushed, and since it had a lot of strength, it got itself around the rock.

Soon the river faced a big wall, and the river kept pushing this wall. Eventually, the river made a canyon and carved a way through. The growing river said, 'I can do it. I can push it. I am not going to let down for anything.'



Then there was this enormous forest. The river said, 'I'll go ahead anyway and just force these trees down.' And the river did.

The river, now powerful, stood on the edge of an enormous desert with the sun beating down. The river said, 'I'm going to go through this desert.' But the hot sand soon began to soak up the whole river. The river said, 'Oh, no. I'm going to do it. I'm going to get myself through this desert.' But the river soon had drained into the sand until it was only a small mud pool.

Then the river heard a voice from above: 'Just surrender. Let me lift you up. Let me take over.' The river said, 'Here I am.' The sun then lifted up the river and made the river into a huge cloud. He carried the river right over the desert and let the cloud rain down and make the fields far away fruitful and rich.

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(Nouwen, Continued)

There is a moment in our life when we stand before the desert and want to do it ourselves. But there is the voice that comes, 'Let go. Surrender. I will make you fruitful. Yes, trust me. Give yourself to me.'



What counts in your life and mine is not successes but fruits. The fruits of your life you might not see yourself. The fruits of your life are born often in your pain and in your vulnerability and in your losses. The fruits of your life come only after the plow has carved through your land. God wants you to be fruitful.

The question is not, 'How much can I still do in the years that are left to me?' The question is, 'How can I prepare myself for total surrender so my life can be fruitful?' Our little lives are small, human lives. But in the eyes of the One who calls us beloved, we are great—greater than the years we have. We will bear fruits, fruits that you and I will not see on this earth but in which we can trust. Solitude, community, ministry—these disciplines help us live a fruitful life. Remain in Jesus; he remains in you. You will bear many fruits, you will have great joy, and your joy will be complete."

—from *Moving from Solitude to Community to Ministry* by Henri Nouwen

Catholic Trivia

What prominent heresy did the First Council of Nicaea condemn?

Answer: Arianism The First Council of Nicaea, convened in 325, condemned the heresy of Arianism.

Arianism was first proposed by the Catholic priest Arius, who lived in Alexandria, Egypt. Arius promoted the claim that Jesus Christ was not divine. Although this contradicted the Church's teachings, as expressed through Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, the idea became so popular that a majority of Catholic bishops accepted Arius' claims by the time the First Council of Nicaea was convened. Under the guidance of Saint Nicholas, the council developed the Nicene Creed and condemned Arianism as a heresy. The divinity of Christ was reasserted and Arius was pronounced a heretic.

The Cracked Pot

A shortened version of this story

A lady went to collect water from the river every day in two clay pots. One pot of water hung on each end of a large pole, which the lady carried across her shoulders. One pot was fine, but the other had a crack in it. Both were filled at the well, but by the time the lady returned to her village, the cracked pot was only half full of water.

The cracked pot felt unworthy of the task for which it was created. Finally one day the pot told the lady, "I am sorry to watch you work so hard to collect water. While the other pot is full when you return home, mine is only half full. I am flawed and imperfect and causing you a lot of work." The lady replied to the pot, "Do not focus on your flaws and what you are unable to do. Do not compare yourself to others. For I see the beauty you have to offer. Watch tomorrow when we return again from the river."

As the lady journeyed home the next day, once again the cracked pot began to leak water. Then the lady said, "Look at all the beauty you have brought along this path. As water leaked from your pot, it watered all the seeds along the roadside. Look how beautiful the flowers bloom where you watered."



Reflect on these...

- > Have I ever felt I had nothing to offer?
- > Do I become focused on my weaknesses and inabilities rather than what I can do?
- > Do I recognize God's love for me, even when I feel broken?
- > Am I watering flowers on my journey each day?

Life Regrets

There are several online sites about people who spoke with the dying, and what their biggest regrets were. Read them and if there are any that apply to you and me, let's do something about it while we can.

1. I wish I had made amends.
2. I wish I would not have worried so much.
3. I wish I had said, "I love you," and showed it too.
4. I wish I had worked less.
5. I wish I had spent more time with family.
6. I wish I had prayed together with my family.
7. I wish I had listened to my intuition.
8. I wish I had appreciated what God gave me and been satisfied with it.
9. I wish I had taken better care of my health.
10. I wish I had listened to the advice of my loved ones.

Lent is approaching. Let us ponder on the above statements, and commit ourselves to changing those things that we can. Have no regrets!

LIVE IN THE MOMENT

Living in the moment is not as easy as it sounds! Try it, and we can be amazed how many times our minds drift onto what needs to be done that day or week. But when we try extra hard to live in the moment, we realize how special those moments become. We can praise God more deeply, listen more attentively, and work more diligently. We can also love more sincerely and passionately. Take time this Lent to work on this, and see what a difference it can make in our lives.