


Catholic Discipleship

Unit 11: Service




Opening Prayer

O Holy Spirit of God, take me as your disciple. Guide me, illuminate me, sanctify me. Bind my hands that they may do no evil. Cover my eyes that they may see it no more. Sanctify my heart, that evil may not dwell within me. Be my guard. Be my guide.

Wherever you lead me, I will go. Whatever you forbid me, I will renounce. Whatever you command me, in your strength I will do. Lead me, then, to the fullness of your truth. Amen.

- Henry Edward Cardinal Manning, 1809-1892



Orientation

- ▶ The twelve units of *Catholic Discipleship* are helping us explore dimensions of what it means to be a missionary disciple in the Church today. We are down to our last 2 units. Congratulations!
- ▶ Each unit has an essay section, a spiritual exercise section, and a Scripture passage with reflection questions.
- ▶ Please read the essay section before each meeting.
- ▶ We will do the spiritual exercises together.
- ▶ We will use the Scripture as part of our prayer.

Objectives

- ▶ To reflect upon Jesus as Servant
- ▶ To see the place of service in the Kingdom of God
- ▶ To see various opportunities and modes of service in Catholic life
- ▶ To see how service is expressed in the three theological virtues:
 - ▶ Hope—Giving the world a vision
 - ▶ Love—Extending ourselves for the sake of others
 - ▶ Faith—A gift given and a gift to be given to others

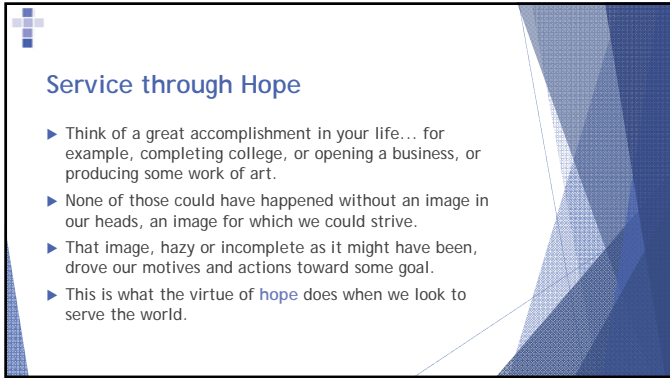
Service

- ▶ All of discipleship is to dispose us to service.
- ▶ Jesus showed the Kingdom of God by serving others.
- ▶ His service was directed at those who were stuck, in impossible situations, and outcasts, whether socially or morally.
- ▶ His deeds of service are viewed as the fulfillment of the vision of Isaiah—bringing Good News, making the blind see, helping the lame to walk, proclaiming a time of mercy from God, and preaching the Good News to the poor. (See Luke 4:16-20.)
- ▶ He washes the disciples' feet before his death.

Showing God

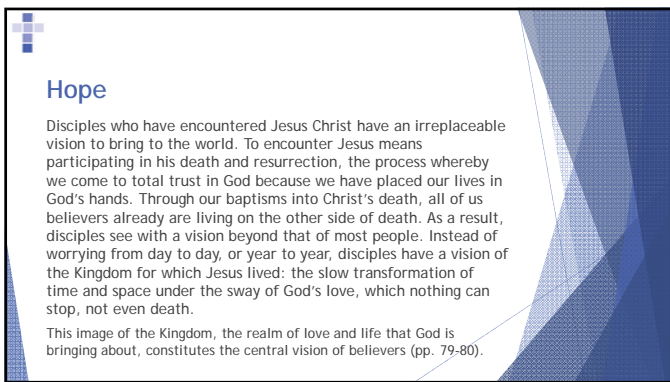
We can interpret the life of Jesus precisely in terms of the service he wills to give others to demonstrate the love of his Father and the presence of the Holy Spirit (p. 79).

- ❖ How often do we think of God as a servant?
- ❖ How does the Holy Spirit show itself in service?
- ❖ How do our deeds of service reveal God?



Service through Hope

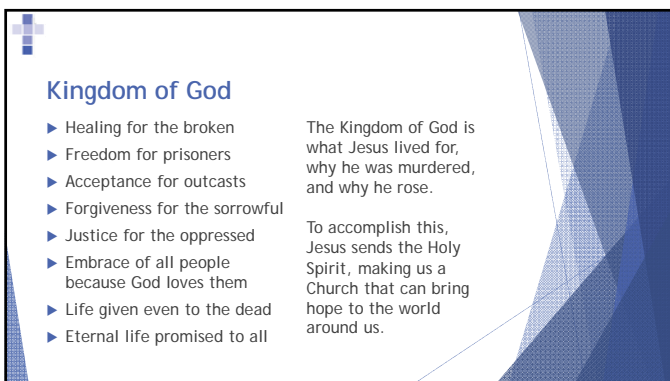
- ▶ Think of a great accomplishment in your life... for example, completing college, or opening a business, or producing some work of art.
- ▶ None of those could have happened without an image in our heads, an image for which we could strive.
- ▶ That image, hazy or incomplete as it might have been, drove our motives and actions toward some goal.
- ▶ This is what the virtue of **hope** does when we look to serve the world.



Hope

Disciples who have encountered Jesus Christ have an irreplaceable vision to bring to the world. To encounter Jesus means participating in his death and resurrection, the process whereby we come to total trust in God because we have placed our lives in God's hands. Through our baptisms into Christ's death, all of us believers already are living on the other side of death. As a result, disciples see with a vision beyond that of most people. Instead of worrying from day to day, or year to year, disciples have a vision of the Kingdom for which Jesus lived: the slow transformation of time and space under the sway of God's love, which nothing can stop, not even death.

This image of the Kingdom, the realm of love and life that God is bringing about, constitutes the central vision of believers (pp. 79-80).

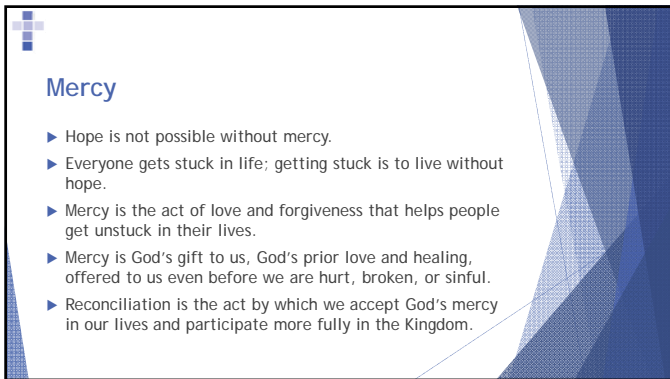


Kingdom of God

- ▶ Healing for the broken
- ▶ Freedom for prisoners
- ▶ Acceptance for outcasts
- ▶ Forgiveness for the sorrowful
- ▶ Justice for the oppressed
- ▶ Embrace of all people because God loves them
- ▶ Life given even to the dead
- ▶ Eternal life promised to all

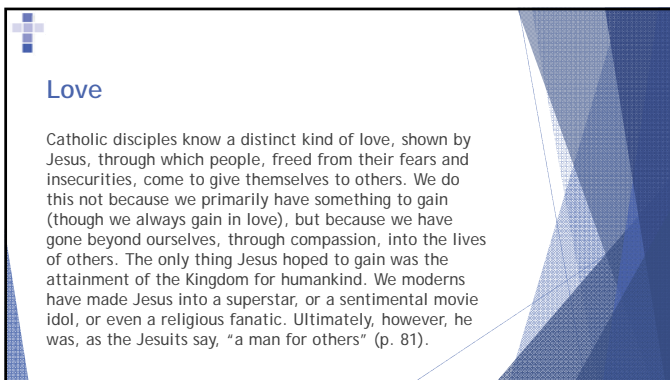
The Kingdom of God is what Jesus lived for, why he was murdered, and why he rose.

To accomplish this, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, making us a Church that can bring hope to the world around us.



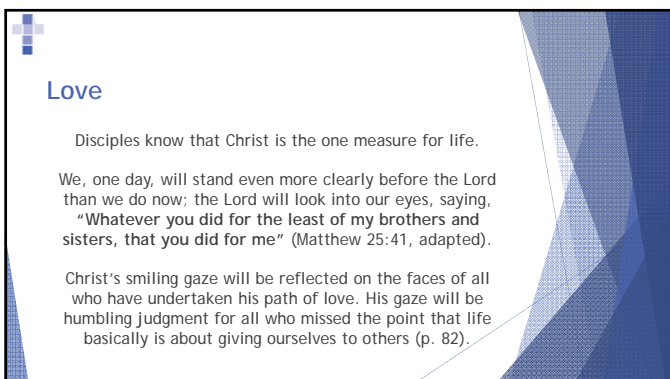
Mercy

- ▶ Hope is not possible without mercy.
- ▶ Everyone gets stuck in life; getting stuck is to live without hope.
- ▶ Mercy is the act of love and forgiveness that helps people get unstuck in their lives.
- ▶ Mercy is God's gift to us, God's prior love and healing, offered to us even before we are hurt, broken, or sinful.
- ▶ Reconciliation is the act by which we accept God's mercy in our lives and participate more fully in the Kingdom.



Love

Catholic disciples know a distinct kind of love, shown by Jesus, through which people, freed from their fears and insecurities, come to give themselves to others. We do this not because we primarily have something to gain (though we always gain in love), but because we have gone beyond ourselves, through compassion, into the lives of others. The only thing Jesus hoped to gain was the attainment of the Kingdom for humankind. We moderns have made Jesus into a superstar, or a sentimental movie idol, or even a religious fanatic. Ultimately, however, he was, as the Jesuits say, "a man for others" (p. 81).



Love

Disciples know that Christ is the one measure for life.

We, one day, will stand even more clearly before the Lord than we do now; the Lord will look into our eyes, saying, "Whatever you did for the least of my brothers and sisters, that you did for me" (Matthew 25:41, adapted).

Christ's smiling gaze will be reflected on the faces of all who have undertaken his path of love. His gaze will be humbling judgment for all who missed the point that life basically is about giving ourselves to others (p. 82).

Faith

- ▶ Faith is a gift that comes from God, the transformation of our vision from knowing the God of Jesus.
- ▶ But faith is not a gift to be kept... Rather it must be shared.
- ▶ To share faith is to offer people the most precious resource they can have—a vision of God active in their lives through Jesus and the Spirit.
- ▶ To share faith is to invite people to consciously embrace the Kingdom of God, to live for that Kingdom, and to extend that Kingdom.
- ▶ Sharing faith is not nagging people, making them feel small, or attacking them. It is offering them a gift.

Spiritual Exercise (p. 84)

Look at the list of people you associate with. Think of ways in which you have come to serve them.

- ▶ Family and relatives
- ▶ Friends
- ▶ People in the workplace
- ▶ Actions in the neighborhood
- ▶ Actions through service agencies
- ▶ Deeds done for the poor, the homeless, the imprisoned, the mentally-challenged
- ▶ Opportunities to serve through your parish

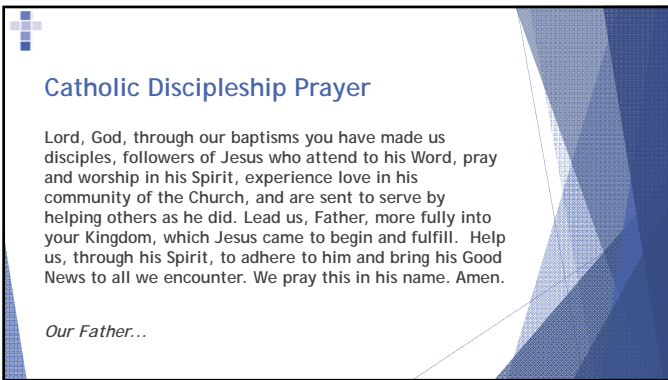
Scripture—John 13:1-9

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Master, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well."



Conclusion

- ▶ Thank you for coming and participating.
- ▶ We will have our final session next week. If you want to bring a treat to share with others, please do so.
- ▶ You may bring your Bible next week, although we will be focusing on the theme of being a missionary.
- ▶ We invite you to spend some time in hospitality after our session.
- ▶ Please stand and recite together the Catholic Discipleship prayer and the Lord's Prayer.



Catholic Discipleship Prayer

Lord, God, through our baptisms you have made us disciples, followers of Jesus who attend to his Word, pray and worship in his Spirit, experience love in his community of the Church, and are sent to serve by helping others as he did. Lead us, Father, more fully into your Kingdom, which Jesus came to begin and fulfill. Help us, through his Spirit, to adhere to him and bring his Good News to all we encounter. We pray this in his name. Amen.

Our Father...
