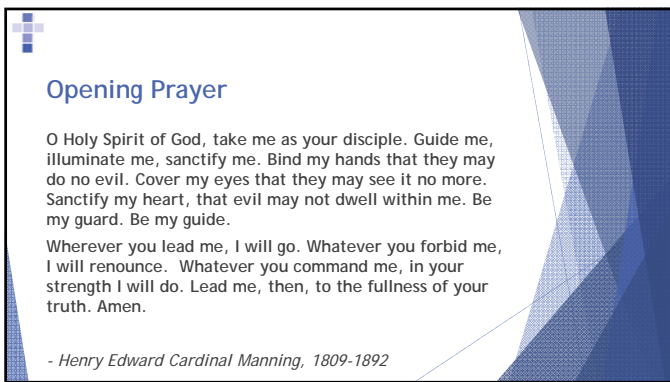


Catholic Discipleship
Unit 12: Missionaries

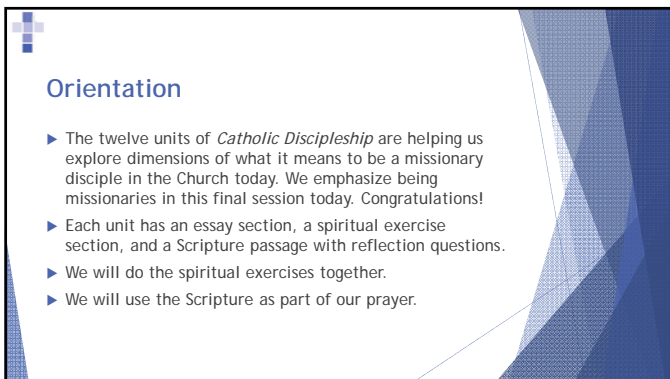


Opening Prayer

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.

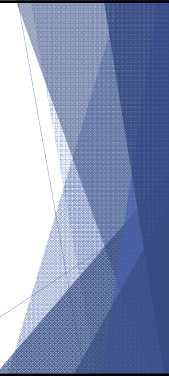
Wherever you lead me, I will go. Whatever you forbid me, I will renounce. Whatever you command me, in your strength I will do. Lead me, then, to the fullness of your truth. Amen.

- Henry Edward Cardinal Manning, 1809-1892



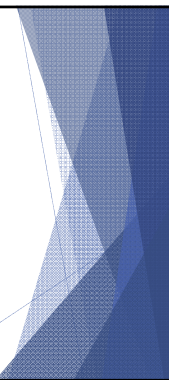
Orientation

- ▶ 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 emphasize being missionaries in this final session today. Congratulations!
- ▶ Each unit has an essay section, a spiritual exercise section, and a Scripture passage with reflection questions.
- ▶ We will do the spiritual exercises together.
- ▶ We will use the Scripture as part of our prayer.



Objectives

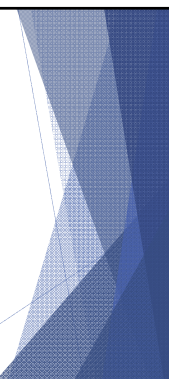
- ▶ To review our understanding of mission, particularly through the writings of recent popes
- ▶ To explore the challenge of Pope Francis
- ▶ To elaborate dimensions of mission in terms of:
 - ▶ Ourselves
 - ▶ Our families
 - ▶ Our neighbors
- ▶ To look at ways the parish allows us to engage in mission



Images of Missionaries

Let's take a few moments to explore the images of missionaries that we have.

If you have met someone who has served as a missionary even for a short period of time, tell us about that person.



Pope Francis

Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are "disciples" and "missionaries", but rather that we are always "missionary disciples" ("The Joy of the Gospel," #120).

Missionaries to Ourselves

- ▶ We cannot evangelize unless we continue to be evangelized ourselves. Our evangelization is never complete.
- ▶ We are evangelized by living the life of discipleship as fully as we can.
- ▶ Evangelization deepens through our ongoing contact with the Word of God.
- ▶ Evangelization has power to the extent that we pray, and celebrate the Mass, to attain unity with Jesus through the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ We deepen our roots in community and serve people willingly.
- ▶ We have spiritual guides and communities along the way.

Missionaries in Family

- ▶ Living our vows is to live a life of ongoing commitment and conversion.
- ▶ Loving our children for their sake teaches us selflessness.
- ▶ Passing on the faith to our children is essential for the growth of the Kingdom of God.
- ▶ Today's assumptions about life have made it harder to pass faith on to children.
- ▶ Prayer, community, and service have to be part of a family's ordinary experiences.

**Neighbors—
"The Joy of the Gospel" (#128)**

1. Begin with the other person, getting him or her to express care and concern.
2. Show interest in the other person, being willing to listen and share.
3. After there is some common basis, one can speak about one's own experience. Pope Francis then says, "Only afterwards is it possible to bring up God's word, perhaps by reading a Bible verse or relating a story, but always keeping in mind the fundamental message: the personal love of God who became man, who gave himself up for us, who is living and who offers us his salvation and his friendship."
4. Then speak what the Spirit gives you to speak, humbly and simply. In all of this, the object is not to win arguments, or prove people wrong, or show off our holiness or knowledge. Rather, it's to express the love of God.
5. If appropriate, one might then offer to pray with a person.

Missionaries in Parish Communities

- ▶ Think about the various “audiences” that parishes might be called to reach:
 - ▶ Their own membership, active and inactive
 - ▶ People who have moved to the margins in terms of their Catholic lives
 - ▶ People searching for faith and meaning today
- ▶ How can we help our parish reach out to these various audiences?
- ▶ What committees or organizations does the parish have that can strengthen this kind of outreach?
- ▶ Can our parishes each have evangelization teams to reach out?

Spiritual Exercise (p. 93)
Scripture—Matthew 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Imagine hearing Jesus say this to me.
 Who is Jesus sending me to reach?

Dedication

Lord God, Father of infinite love and grace, your Son, Jesus, consecrated himself to the truth (John 17:17-19) of your self-giving life, revealed through his actions of mercy, healing, and peace. He gave himself through his death to the salvation of humankind. You raised him up in order to bestow the Spirit of grace and life upon us (John 20:22). Lord, in this same Spirit, I consecrate myself to be a follower of Jesus.

I pray that I will continue to die and rise with him, through the power of his Spirit: to die to my selfishness and sinfulness, to rise as a disciple, experiencing his power in my life as I overcome sin, grow in prayer, and serve others in his name.

I consecrate myself as Jesus did: I consecrate myself in the image of his Mother, Mary, who heard your Word so deeply that it became flesh within her, who accompanied your Son in the joys and sorrows of his life, right up to being with him in your death and receiving his risen Spirit.

Father, consecrate me with the holiness and dedication of Jesus Christ.

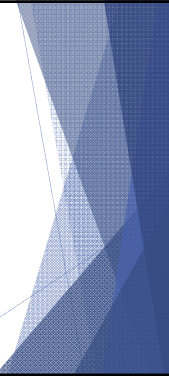
Renew in me my baptism and my promises to reject sin and follow Jesus.

Fill me with the Spirit who bestows Jesus’ Easter gifts upon us, as I hear his Word, experience ongoing conversion, celebrate in worship, pray for myself and the world, support fellow believers as they support me, and give my life in service as a disciple, showing your selfless love in my life, and being on mission to serve and further your Kingdom.

May your divine compassion, your generous forgiveness, and your unending love show itself in all my actions.


I pray this in the Spirit of Jesus whom you bestow upon me, and all who seek to follow you in Christ Jesus.

Amen.



Conclusion

- ▶ Thank you for coming and participating! We hope this has been an enriching experience for you.
- ▶ We hope you have reflected on your call to be a missionary disciples in such a way that you can continue many of the disciplines we have learned—reflection on our lives, and contemplative prayer of the Scripture, along with a more active role as Christ's servant.
- ▶ Please use the Disciples Checklist on p. 98 to review your particular practices as disciples.
- ▶ We invite you to spend some time in hospitality after our session.



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...
