

Prayer



Jesus, you call to my heart once more: “Leave anything that holds you back from deeper love. Come follow me, again and again.”

Grant me the courage to leave behind whatever keeps me from you and to trust you with my life.

May my heart’s connection with you be so strong and true that I will daily risk the road of following in your footsteps.

Keep me open to the adventure of life where I meet you day by day.

Remind me often of my inner goodness.

Help me to believe that you look upon me with love

Thank you for the call to be your disciple.

Joyce Rupp’s Out of the Ordinary. Page 139



How Can I be of Service?

What is your ministry to others?

Definition of Service:

The action of helping or doing work for someone.

Definition of Christian Service:

Christian service is the act of doing work for God with a willing heart... willingly spending your time and resources to spread the Good News of the Gospel.

We are all called to serve. Christian service is our response to God's call. It means we are committed to serving others as Jesus did. It is about allowing our love for God to flow in us from Him and then to others around us. Service allows us to build up the Kingdom of God on earth. Service also nurtures and strengthens us as a means of grace; as we grow, we serve. The more we serve, the more Christ-like we become.

All Christian belief must culminate in service or else the belief itself will wither away. Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16); again, in giving His parting instructions to His disciples, He commanded, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations".

(Matthew 28:19,20)

Reflection:

- 1 Do I exhibit a life of daily service to God and others?
- 2 How do I do this?
- 3 How can I develop a willingness to respond to this call to serve?
- 4 What stops me from doing more?



Scripture

God has been calling people to serve Him through the ages, for example, Moses (Exodus 3); Mary (Luke 1:26-38) AND NOW US!

In James 2:14-17 we read - Faith without Works Is Dead

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill', and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.



For Discussion:

- ◆ What is James saying in this passage about faith and obedience? What does true faith look like?
- ◆ In verse 2:14, James speaks of a person having faith without deeds and asks, "Can such faith save her/him?" Can it?
- ◆ "Faith is dead when it doesn't result in faithful activity" (vs. 17), but is faith necessarily alive when there is activity? Suppose a very active Christian friend confides in you that while they're doing many good things in Christ's name, their faith in Christ has faded and at times even appears to be nonexistent. They're deeply troubled by this. In light of this passage in James, what can you say to them?

Faith in Action Can be Seen in....

Frederic Ozanam

While still at University Frederic Ozanam and a group of his fellow students decided 'to do' something to improve the lot of the poor. They joined Sister Rosalie and her Sisters in helping to deliver wood and food to the needy. On one occasion Frederic was challenged to not only talk about the love of God and the poor state of things but 'to put his faith into action.' It was this incident which motivated him to form what later became the international St Vincent de Society which exists not only to attend to the material and spiritual needs of the poor but also to give them a voice.



The aims of the Society are summed up in their logo:

*The three hands –
the hand that gives,
the hand that receives
and the hand of
blessing.*



Input

Water from the Rock: Bringing Good News to the Poor

Pages 71-73; # 128 – 134

As Marists we too are called to serve:

Our Marist charism prompts us to be attentive to the calls of our time, to the longings and preoccupations of people, especially the young. Surpassing religious and cultural borders we seek the same dignity for all: human rights, justice, peace, and equitable and responsible sharing of the planet's wealth. Our compassionate response to the needs of the world wells up from our spirituality. Spirituality draws us into mission and, in living that mission, finds itself nourished and rekindled. It gives meaning to our human experiences and allows us to read life with the eyes and heart of God and to understand it as God's project.

Central to the apostolic zeal of Marcellin Champagnat is his experience of an all-embracing presence of God. He is sure that every moment of his life is immersed in this divine presence. God's will is revealed to him through the daily experiences of life. Having determined that something is willed by God it becomes part of his mission. He does not spare himself in its accomplishment. Yet he retains the firm conviction that it is God's work, not his. His core belief is that *unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.*

Mary inspired Marcellin's style of being on mission. She received the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation and responded immediately to Elizabeth's need. In so doing, she shows us that contemplation and action are both indispensable elements of spirituality. Mary's way lays the foundation of all our actions: listening, patient waiting, nurturing interiority and responsiveness to God's will.

Confirmed in her own vocation by the invitation of the Spirit, Mary feels compelled to leave her own house to enter the house of another. She indicates for us the direction of mission – that we are to meet others where they are.

Mary, as a sensitive and compassionate disciple, goes "in haste," responding quickly to those who need her. She goes "in haste" to joyfully announce the news of a God who loves, and the sure promise that a reign of justice and faithfulness is at hand. She brings to Elizabeth both her hands for service and her experience of the Spirit.

As Mary in the Cenacle in the midst of the Apostles we - joyfully, simply and humbly - bring the Good News through our presence and our faith.



- ◆ Highlight any word or phrase that stands out for you and ask why.
- ◆ Where and how can you encounter and deepen your relationship with God today so that you can be God's hands and feet?
- ◆ How can you live out your Marist vocation where you live and work?
- ◆ What are you going to commit to doing?

Share your insights in small groups



Closing Prayer



A Disciple's Prayer

How easy to believe that I am an instrument of your love when my life is going well, O God. How difficult to believe this when my life seems to be going nowhere, or is filled with many concerns and activities that wear me out. Yet, you greatly desire to proclaim your goodness through every part of my life, no matter what the situation is.

I do not need to have good feelings in order to be an instrument of your love. I do not need to always feel satisfied with what I am attempting to be and to do in order to be a disciple of yours. It is the intention of my heart that makes the difference. Deep within I long for you and I give myself to your cause. I place my heart in yours and enter as fully as I can into your loving embrace.

I am your messenger, ready to tell of your enormous kindness and mercy. I will trust in you. I believe that those with whom I live and work will see your love shining through all I am and all I do. It is your radiance within me that will transform the bits and pieces of my life into a tapestry of ardent devotion. Thank you for being present in my life and for calling to me with your gracious voice of unconditional love.

Amen

Joyce Rupp- *Out of the Ordinary*, Page 148

St Marcellin Champagnat

Pray for us,

Mary our Good Mother

Pray for us,

And let us always remember

To pray for one another.

