

Day One "You did not choose me but I chose you." (Jn15:16)

The Word of God John 1:35-39

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

"Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

Meditation

The start of the journey is an encounter between a human being and God, between the created and the Creator, between time and eternity.

Abraham heard the call: "Go to the land I will show you". Like Abraham we are called to leave that which is familiar and go to the place that God has prepared in the depths of our hearts. Along the way, we become more and more ourselves, the people God has wanted us to be from the beginning. And by following the call that is addressed to us, we become a blessing for our loved ones, our neighbours, and the world.

The love of God seeks us. God became human in Jesus, in whom we encounter the gaze of God. In our lives, as in the Gospel of John, God's call is heard in different ways. Touched by his love, we set out. In this encounter, we walk a path of transformation - the bright beginning of a relationship of love that is always started anew.

"One day you understood that, without your being aware of it, a yes had already been inscribed in your innermost depths. And so you chose to go forward in the footsteps of Christ....

In silence in the presence of Christ, you heard him say, 'Come, follow me; I will give you a place to rest your heart.'" [The Sources of Taizé (2000) p.52

Prayer

Jesus Christ,
you seek us, you wish to offer us your friendship
and lead us to a life that is ever more complete.
Grant us the confidence to answer your call
so that we may be transformed
and become witnesses of your
tenderness for the world. Amen

Day Two "Abide in me as I abide in you." (John 15:4)

The Word of God Luke 2:41-52

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they travelled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Meditation

The encounter with Jesus gives rise to the desire to stay with him and to abide in him: a time in which fruit matures.

Being fully human, like us Jesus grew and matured. He lived a simple life, rooted in the practices of his Jewish faith. In this hidden life in Nazareth, where apparently nothing extraordinary happened, the presence of the Father nourished him.

Mary contemplated the actions of God in her life and in that of her son. She treasured all these things in her heart. Thus, little by little, she embraced the mystery of Jesus.

We too need a long period of maturation, an entire lifetime, in order to plumb the depths of Christ's love, to let him abide in us and for us to abide in him.

Without our knowing how, the Spirit makes Christ dwell in our hearts. And it is through prayer, by listening to the word, in sharing with others, by putting into practice what we have understood, that the inner being is strengthened.

"Letting Christ descend into the depths of our being ... He will penetrate the regions of the mind and the heart, he will reach our flesh unto our innermost being, so that we too will one day experience the depths of mercy."

[The Sources of Taizé (2000) p134]

Prayer

Holy Spirit,
May we receive in our hearts the presence of Christ,
and cherish it as a secret of love. Nourish our prayer,
enlighten our reading of Scripture, act through us.
so that the fruits of your gifts can patiently grow in us. Amen

Day Three

“Love one another as I have loved you.” Jn 15:12

The Word of God Jn 13:34-35

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Meditation

On the eve of his death, Jesus knelt to wash the feet of his disciples. He knew the difficulty of living together and the importance of forgiveness and mutual service. “Unless I wash you,” he said to Peter, “you have no share with me.”

Peter received Jesus at his feet; he was washed and was touched by the humility and gentleness of Christ. Later he would follow Jesus’ example and serve the fellowship of the faithful in the early church.

Jesus wishes that life and love circulate through us as the sap through the vine, so that Christian communities be one body. But today as in the past, it is not easy to live together. We are often faced with our own limitations. At times we fail to love those who are close to us in a community, parish or family. There are times when our relationships break down completely.

In Christ we are invited to be clothed in compassion, through countless new beginnings. The recognition that we are loved by God moves us to welcome each other with our strengths and weaknesses. It is then that Christ is in our midst.

“With almost nothing, are you a creator of reconciliation in that communion of love, which is the Body of Christ, his Church? Sustained by a shared momentum, rejoice! You are no longer alone, in all things you are advancing together with your brothers and sisters. With them, you are called to live the parable of community.” [The Sources of Taizé (2000) pp. 48-49]

Prayer

God our Father,
you reveal to us your love through Christ
and through our brothers and sisters.
Open our hearts so that we can welcome each other
with our differences and live in forgiveness.
Grant us to live united in one body,
so that the gift that is each person comes to light.
May all of us together be a reflection of the living Christ.
Amen

Day Four

“I do not call you servants any longer... but I have called you friends.” John 15:15

The Word of God Lk 11:1-4

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

He said to them, “When you pray, say:

“Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins,

for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.

And lead us not into temptation.”

Meditation

God thirsts for relationship with us. He searches for us as he searched for Adam, calling to him in the garden: “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9)

In Christ, God came to meet us. Jesus lived in prayer, intimately united to his Father, while creating friendships with his disciples and all those he met. He introduced them to that which was most precious to him: the relationship of love with his Father, who is our Father. Jesus and the disciples sang psalms together, rooted in the richness of their Jewish tradition. At other times, Jesus retired to pray alone.

Prayer can be solitary or shared with others. It can express wonder, complaint, intercession, thanksgiving or simple silence. Sometimes the desire to pray is there, but one has the feeling of not being able to do so. Turning to Jesus and saying to him, “teach me”, can pave the way. Our desire itself is already prayer.

Getting together in a group offers us support. Through hymns, words and silence, communion is created. If we pray with Christians of other traditions, we may be surprised to feel united by a bond of friendship that comes from the One who is beyond all division. The forms may vary, but it is the same Spirit that brings us together.

“In the regularity of our common prayer, the love of Jesus springs up within us, we know not how.

Common prayer does not exempt us from personal prayer. One sustains the other. Let us take a time each day to renew our personal intimacy with Jesus Christ.”

[The Rule of Taizé in French and English, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Great Britain pp. 19 & 21]

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

your entire life was prayer, perfect harmony with the Father.

Through your Spirit, teach us to pray according to your will of love.

May the faithful of the whole world unite in intercession and praise,

and may your kingdom of love come.

Amen

Day Five “You have already been pruned by the word.” Jn 15:3

The Word of God Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus said:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Meditation

The Word of God is very close to us. It is a blessing and a promise of happiness. If we open our hearts, God speaks to us and patiently transforms that which is dying in us. He removes that which prevents the growth of real life, just as the vine grower prunes the vine.

Regularly meditating on a biblical text, alone or in a group, changes our outlook. Many Christians pray the Beatitudes every day. The Beatitudes reveal to us a happiness that is hidden in that which is unfulfilled, a happiness that lies beyond suffering: blessed are those who, touched by the Spirit, no longer hold back their tears but let them flow and thus receive consolation. As they discover the wellspring hidden within their inner landscape, the hunger for justice, and the thirst to engage with others for a world of peace, grows in them.

We are constantly called to renew our commitment to life, through our thoughts and actions. There are times when we already taste, here and now, the blessing that will be fulfilled at the end of time.

“Pray and work that God may reign. Throughout your day

Let the Word of God breathe life into work and rest.

Maintain inner silence in all things so as to dwell in Christ.

Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes,

joy, simplicity, mercy.”

[These words are recited daily by the Sisters of the Grandchamp Community]

Prayer

Blessed are you, God our Father,

for the gift of your word in Holy Scripture.

Blessed are you for its transforming power.

Help us choose life and guide us by your Spirit,

so that we can experience the happiness which you want so much to share with us. Amen

Day Six

“Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.” Jn 15:16

The Word of God Mark 6:30-34

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

Meditation

When we let ourselves be transformed by Christ, his love in us grows and bears fruit. Welcoming the other is a concrete way of sharing the love that is within us.

Throughout his life, Jesus welcomed those he met. He listened to them and let himself be touched by them without being afraid of their suffering.

In the gospel account of the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus is moved with compassion after seeing the hungry crowd. He knows that the entire human person must be nourished, and that he alone can truly satisfy the hunger for bread and the thirst for life. But he does not wish to do this without his disciples, without that little something they can give him: five loaves and two fish.

Even today he draws us to be co-workers in his unconditional care. Sometimes something as small as a kind look, an open ear, or our presence is enough to make a person feel welcome. When we offer our poor abilities to Jesus, he uses them in a surprising way.

We then experience what Abraham did, for it is by giving that we receive, and when we welcome others, we are blessed in abundance.

“It is Christ himself whom we receive in a guest.”

[The rule of Taizé in French and English (2012) p. 103]

“Will the people we welcome day after day find in us men and women radiant with Christ, our peace?” [The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 60]

Prayer

Jesus Christ,
we desire to welcome fully the brothers and sisters who are with us.
You know how often we feel helpless in the face of their suffering,
yet you are always there ahead of us
and you have already received them in your compassion.
Speak to them through our words, support them through our actions,
and let your blessing rest on us all. Amen

Day Seven

“I am the vine, you are the branches.” Jn 15:15

The Word of God Jn 17:20-23

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one - I in them and you in me - so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Meditation

On the eve of his death, Jesus prayed for the unity of those the Father gave him: “that they may all be one... so that the world may believe”. Joined to him, as a branch is to the vine, we share the same sap that circulates among us and vitalizes us.

Each tradition seeks to lead us to the heart of our faith: communion with God, through Christ, in the Spirit.

The more we live this communion, the more we are connected to other Christians and to all of humanity. Paul warns us against an attitude that had already threatened the unity of the first Christians: absolutizing one’s own tradition to the detriment of the unity of the body of Christ.

Differences then become divisive instead of mutually enriching. Paul had a very broad vision: “All are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God” (1 Cor 3:22-23). Christ’s will commits us to a path of unity and reconciliation. It also commits us to unite our prayer to his: “that they may all be one. . .so that the world may believe” (Jn 17:21).

“Never resign yourself to the scandal of the separation of Christians who so readily profess love for their neighbour, and yet remain divided. Make the unity of the body of Christ your passionate concern.” [Rule of Taizé in French and English (2023) p 13]

Prayer

Holy Spirit,
vivifying fire and gentle breath, come and abide in us.
Renew in us the passion for unity
so that we may live in awareness of the bond that unites us in you.
May all who have put on Christ at their Baptism
unite and bear witness together to the hope that sustains them.

Day Eight

“So that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be Complete.” Jn 15:11

The Word of God Mk 4:30-32

Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.

Meditation

The hymn to Christ in the epistle to the Colossians invites us to sing the praise of God’s salvation, which encompasses the entire universe. Through the crucified and risen Christ, a path of reconciliation has been opened up; creation too is destined for a future of life and peace.

With the eyes of faith, we see that the kingdom of God is a reality that is very close but still very small, hardly visible – like a mustard seed. However, it is growing. Even in the distress of our world the Spirit of the Risen One is at work. He encourages us to become involved – with all people of good will – in tirelessly seeking justice and peace, and ensuring the earth is once again a home for all creatures.

We participate in the work of the Spirit so that creation in all its fullness may continue to praise God. When nature suffers, when human beings are crushed, the Spirit of the risen Christ – far from allowing us to lose heart – invites us to become part of his work of healing.

The newness of life that Christ brings, however hidden, is a light of hope for many. It is a wellspring of reconciliation for the whole of creation and contains a joy that comes from beyond ourselves: “so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete” (Jn 15:11).

“Do you wish to celebrate the newness of life that Christ gives through the Holy Spirit, and let it live in you, among us, in the church, in the world and in all of creation?”

[Second promise made during profession at the Community of Grandchamp]

Prayer

Thrice-holy God, we thank you for having created and loved us.

We thank you for your presence in us and in creation.

May we learn to look upon the world as you look upon it,
with love.

In the hope of this vision, may we be able to work for a world
where justice and peace flourish, for the glory of your name. Amen