

## ***Writing a Poem: Receiving Christ's Invitation—A Missional Practice***

*Missional practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.*

**Purpose:** to be awake to Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and by reflecting on an experience from one's life and then writing a poem.

### **Steps:**

1. Become aware of the presence of God and awake to Christ's invitation. Take a moment to be calm and centered.
2. Choose and read a text from the four Gospels in the spirit of prayer seeking to be closer to the Living Christ.
3. See next page for an example of a pattern to follow (using excerpts from *Seasons of the Heart: Prayers and Reflections* by Macrina Wiederkehr) and then:
  - Read the text a 2<sup>nd</sup> time.
  - Invite God's Spirit to help you recall an experience or observation from your own life related to the scripture.
  - Write a few sentences about your experience or observation and its connection to the scripture.
  - Compose a poem. You may only be able to begin writing a poem. It may take days to complete your poem. *Note: a poem does not have to rhyme or be in complete sentences. Often, just beginning your poem with a few words that reflect and remind you how you are feeling can be the basis of a good and even a short poem.*
4. End this time in a spirit of prayer.

### **Tips for the Process:**

- Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to draw closer to the Living Christ by remembering his ever being present and his invitation to share life with him.
- Do not rush—take time. There may be days when you follow each step. Other days, you may want to stay only with one or two steps. There is no particular length—less or longer than 10-20 minutes daily is fine. Be willing to spend multiple days to complete your poem. Find and follow a pattern that works for you.
- The key is simplicity and not being constrained by each step.

**Read a text from the Gospels** (the text below illustrates a connection to the reflection quoted):

*Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." The Samaritan woman said to him, "What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?" Jesus replied:*

*"If you only knew what God is offering and who it is saying to you:  
'Give me a drink,' you would have been the one to ask,  
and he would have given you living water."*

—John 4:7-10, JB

**Write a reflection** (the reflection below illustrates a connection to the poem quoted):

*Sometimes I get tired of walking with strangers. Sometimes I get tired of giving drinks. One such tired moment found me in the Kansas City airport. I was on my way to Phoenix to give myself a drink, a workshop given by the monks of Weston Priory.*

*But strangers have a way of bumping into me even when I'm not handing out free drinks. This one was obviously very thirsty. And before I realized what was happening, I became the woman at the well asking the same kind of questions, struggling with the same living water. Looking into the eyes of that thirsty stranger, I was able with the help of grace to notice that his well was deep and that I did, after all, have a bucket.\**

**Write a poem:** (the poem below illustrates a connection to the text and reflection quoted):

I'm tired of giving drinks  
I'm closing up my well for the winter  
I'm throwing the bucket away  
By the time I get to Phoenix  
I'll be ready for a few drinks myself.  
  
But I hadn't even gotten out of Kansas City  
when someone came up to me  
already wanting a drink.  
  
He was old  
and not used to traveling alone.  
He had just had knee surgery  
and couldn't get around very well.  
He wanted to talk.  
  
I back away in my heart.  
Everything in me said:  
"Giving drinks is not in season for me  
My well is closed for the winter

Don't ask me for a drink  
Please don't  
I am too empty  
I am thirsty myself."  
  
But it was too late  
I had already seen his eyes  
I had already heard his voice.  
"Give me a drink," it said...  
  
And I?  
Well, I didn't cancel my trip to Phoenix  
but I was filled  
with a new kind of vision  
and I knew  
that  
by the time I got to Phoenix  
My well would be open again.\*

\*Reflection and poem from Wiederkehr, Macrina. *SEASONS OF YOUR HEART: Prayers & Reflections*. Rev. and Expanded. ed. San Francisco, Calif.: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991. P. 164-167.