WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO GIVE YOUR LIFE FOR JESUS?

“From birth man has an insatiable thirst to quench his most basic needs. Babies learn that if they cry, scream and throw tantrums they will be granted their requests. This gets us into the habit of doing and saying whatever we want to garner favorable results. We go through life selfish and entitled. When Jesus revealed the plan that he must die to the disciples, Peter’s first thought was to rebuke him. He felt that Jesus was too good and too important to die. Peter felt that this plan must be a mistake. Jesus said “Get thee behind me, Satan.” Jesus could see that his life meant nothing if it wasn’t a life glorifying God. Why do we always as humans feel our way is right? Why do we find it so hard to completely trust God? These feelings and thoughts are natural to man. We have a predisposition to receive rather than to give. It is only through our constant pursuit of Jesus that he makes us more like him. He makes us want to give more, love more and forgive more. We have to constantly meditate on his word. Seek him with all our hearts. Share the life and blessings of Christ with others and live a life that glorifies him. Then and only then will we be able to speak those powerfully commanding words of Jesus – “Get thee behind me, Satan.”

Our life is no life at all if it is not a life spent glorifying God for his goodness and mercy towards us.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Thinking about this reflection, pray with the following questions and write down your responses on a separate sheet of paper.

- What is my concept of success? What does Jesus’ interpellation to Peter tell me? Question my understanding of success? What do I feel about the model that Jesus proposes?

- What does the invitation to live life as a gift for others mean today in my concrete reality? In what spaces and with what people do I feel called to be more open and available?

- Do I live a healthy dedication to others? How can I generously offer what I am without neglecting my needs?
MONTHLY EXAMEN

After reading the quote on the top of the first page, prayerfully reflect with this month's Examen.

Intro
In this passage, Matthew presents us with one of the most radical questions that Jesus is constantly asking. How and when do we lay down our lives for others? Peter faces a Jesus who challenges him to deepen his own call to love others. This is a call from Jesus that makes us uncomfortable because it seeks to get us out of our “comfort zone.” This week is an invitation to listen to how and where God invites us to give our lives for our neighbor.

Presence
Become aware that God’s presence is active at each moment of your life, looking at you with love, desirous of speaking directly to your heart. How do you feel at this moment?

Ask
Ask God for the grace to live my life as a gift to others.

Gratitude
Be grateful. Thank God for the gifts of the day, both big and small. What are you most grateful for today?

Review
How difficult it is for Peter to accept what Jesus announces. Among his expectations is not seeing his teacher suffer and fail: on the contrary, Pedro hopes to see him “succeed” Jesus himself is in charge of questioning this expectation of triumph. In this exchange, we see how Peter understands the success of Jesus from the world: popularity, recognition, power. Counterculturally, Jesus presents the model of the cross: use your life as a gift to others. The ideal of sacrifice that Jesus proposes to us is not a renunciation of our happiness. Surrender is not self-exploring for others or procrastinating indefinitely. The call of Jesus is to wholeness through love. A life open to the needs of others, willing to love and serve, and fuller life. While self-absorption leaves us empty, being available to others broadens our lives. Thus assuming life as a gift created to be given to others and fulfilling that giving, Jesus’ words make the most sense.

Respond
You are not stuck. Tomorrow is a new day. Ask God to give you the grace to be the loving and generous person you were created to be. What can you do tomorrow to be more generous and loving?

LECTIO DIVINA

Additional Passages: Ezekiel 33: 7 - 9; Romans 14: 7 - 9; Isaiah 55: 6 - 9; Philippians 2: 1 - 5

Choose one Gospel reading or additional passage from this month. Read it slowly and prayerfully, listening for particular words or phrases that you are drawn to (this is God wanting to speak to you!) and write down the word or phrase that you picked out. St. Ignatius said how important it was to write down what happens in our prayer, so we should do the same!

After you’ve picked out the word or phrase from the reading, read the passage again and focus on the following questions:
Why am I drawn to this word or phrase? Was it because of a blessing I’ve received? A challenge I’ve experienced? A hope that I’ve had? It reminds me of something close to my heart?
How, in the past week or month, can this word or phrase guide me in making good decisions and/or dealing with things in my life?
What in these readings gives me hope that God is with me and will continue to guide me?
Once you have prayed with these questions, write down what came up in your prayer.

Repeat this prayer for as many passages you wish and then sit quietly before and after to experience the full effect of the living word of God.

From our Spiritual Mentors to all of you

Sometimes we think of you being isolated from us; sometimes we think of ourselves being isolated from you. But however we look at our isolation and yours, we know that we’re in this distressing situation together and maybe together can find comfort in Jesus’ words: “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.” (John 14:18) Please know that every Wednesday, the Thrive For Life Spiritual Mentors gather to pray at 8PM. Please join us in prayer from where you are!