

Christian Discipleship

A Resource in Spirituality for Holy Cross Associates



... With Zeal and
Hope to bring ...

Introduction

Father Moreau's spirituality first and foremost helped him to draw closer to Christ, to be as authentic a disciple as he could be, accepting Christ's mission to bring about the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. The purpose of this booklet is to accept the same call to discipleship. This does not mean that we are called to angelic perfection. We only have to look at the lives of the people that Jesus chose. They were flawed in many ways and yet they were open to the learning and growth which the Spirit produced in them. With the guidance of the Spirit they served their mission well. As Holy Cross Associates the same Spirit will guide us and help us to take our part in the Holy Cross mission in the church and in the world.

"The charism of the Congregation of Holy Cross is rooted in an experience of Jesus Christ. The founder's spirituality is fully centered on Jesus Christ, with access to his person notable in contemplation of the scriptures and in the liturgy. Father Moreau believed that it is the essence of religious life to conform oneself to Christ, not only in external conduct, but in one's very being as a religious person." Blessed Basile Moreau. (Fides)

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HOLY CROSS ASSOCIATES

CHAPTER MEETINGS

Format:

The format for chapter meetings consists of the following:

- Opening prayer
- Reading of quotes from Holy Cross resources
- Reading of the personal reflection by a Holy Cross Associate
- Using the “lectio” process for praying the Scriptures
- Concluding with announcements and a final prayer

It is recommended that some social time either at the beginning of the meeting or at the end of the session.

The “Lectio Divina” Process for Praying the Scriptures:

The desert fathers and mothers in the early church had a very unique way of spending an entire day in reflection on a passage of Scripture. Their method, known as “lectio divina,” has come down through the centuries as an important way of growing in the spiritual life. It consists in reading a passage of Scripture four times. Each time the passage will contain more meaning as the reader begins to apply its message to his or her own life.

Follow these instructions as you reflect on Scripture as part of monthly chapter meetings:

1. The group leader chooses volunteers to read a selected scriptural passage four times.
2. Prior to the first reading, the chapter spends a moment in silent prayer asking the Holy Spirit to be present in this discernment process.

afflicted and in a preferential way to the poor and the oppressed. We come not just as servants but as their neighbors, to be with them and of them. It is not that we take sides against sinful enemies; before the Lord all of us are sinners and none is an enemy. We stand with the poor and the afflicted because only from there can we appeal as Jesus did for the conversion and the deliverance of all.

14. The mission is not simple, for the impoverishments we would relieve are not simple. There are networks of privilege, prejudice and power so commonplace that often neither oppressors nor victims are aware of them. We must be aware and also understanding by reason of fellowship with the impoverished and by reason of patient learning. For the kingdom to come in this world, disciples must have the competence to see and the courage to act.

(From the Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross)

Constitution 2 Mission

9. God so loved the world that he sent his only Son that we might have life and have it abundantly. In the fullness of time the Lord Jesus came among us anointed by the Spirit to inaugurate a kingdom of justice, love and peace. His rule would be no mere earthly regime: it would initiate a new creation in every land. His power would be within and without, rescuing us from the injustice we suffer and also from the injustice we inflict.

10. This was the good news that many misunderstood and many rejected. The Lord Jesus was crucified. But the Father raised him to glory, and Christ breathed his Spirit into his people, the church. Dying and rising with him in baptism, his followers are sent to continue his mission, to hasten along the kingdom.

11. The same Spirit moved Father Moreau to found the community of Holy Cross in which we have responded to the call to serve Christ. We live and work as priests and brothers together. Our mutual respect and shared undertaking should be a hopeful sign of the kingdom, and they are when others can behold how we love one another.

12. As disciples of Jesus we stand side by side with all people. Like them we are burdened by the same struggles and beset by the same weaknesses; like them we are made new by the same Lord's love; like them we hope for a world where justice and love prevail. Thus, wherever through its superiors the congregation sends us we go as educators in the faith to those whose lot we share, supporting men and women of grace and goodwill everywhere in their efforts to form communities of the coming kingdom.

13. Christ was anointed to bring good news to the poor, release for prisoners, sight for the blind, restoration for every broken victim. Our efforts, which are his, reach out to the

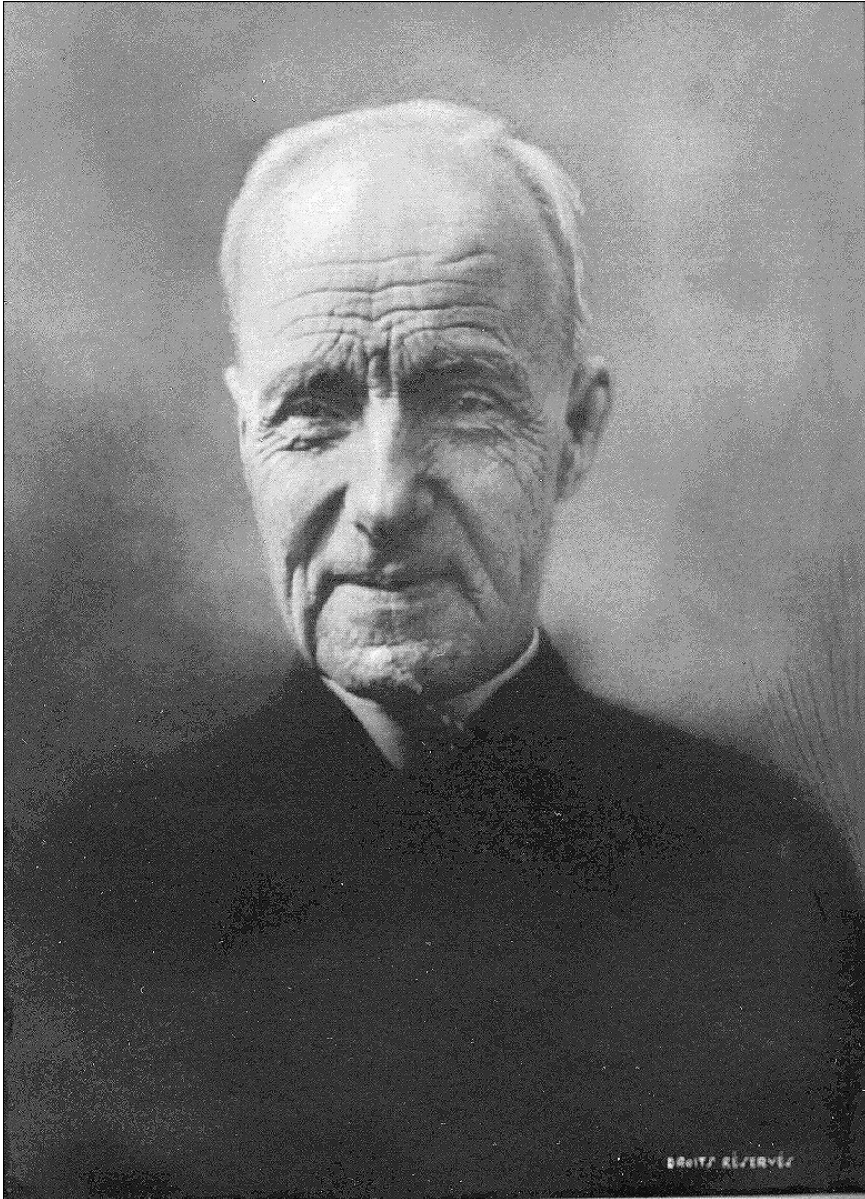
3. Before reading the passage for the first time, the group leader says, "We read the passage to familiarize ourselves with its meaning."

4. Before the second reading, the group leader says, "As we read the passage for the second time, choose a word or phrase that captures your attention." After the passage is read, the group leader says, "Take a moment to reflect on that word or phrase. After a short period of the reflection, the group leader shares his/her word or phrase and then invites others in the group to share theirs. It is important to allow enough time for all to participate

Before the third reading, the group leader says, "As we read the passage for the third time, listen for a personal message God is giving you. It could have something to do with the word or phrase you have already chosen." After the passage is read, the group leader says, "Take a moment to hear the message God has for you in this passage. I will begin by sharing first and then I will invite others to share." It is important to allow two or three minutes before the leader shares his/her thoughts. Some members will need this time to receive the significance of the passage for them. After the group leader shares, he/she invites others to share. Stress the importance of sharing aloud. Each individual sharing is a gift to the group and has special significance for the community

Before having someone read the passage for the fourth time, the group leader says, "As we read the passage for the fourth time, listen for a call from God. What direction does God want you to take during the coming month? I will begin by sharing first and then I will invite others to share." It is important to allow two or three minutes before the leader shares his or her thoughts. After the group leader shares, he or she invites others to share.

At the end of the process the group leader asks the group how God is leading the chapter for the coming month.



Blessed André Bessette
Patron
Holy Cross Associates

holiness and wisdom in us.

The Christian way necessarily begins with learning how to obey certain standards of conduct, but it soon becomes a way of simple obedience to God in the Spirit of love, which dwells in His Church, the assembly of all the faithful who are One in Christ.

This communal aspect of Christian holiness is important. Christian perfection is not merely an ascetic detachment of the individual who has set himself to follow a heroic way of renunciation. It is above all a communion in the joyous love of Christ living in His Church. It is sharing in the joy of faith, a participation in worship and in spiritual light, a common life in the Holy Spirit. From this life no one is excluded—not the poor, not the despised, not the unfortunate sinner who consents to be loved and to return to Christ.

To be a Christian is then not only to believe in Christ, but also to live as Christ and, in a mysterious way, to become united with Christ. This is both Christian life and Christian holiness.

THOMAS MERTON'S VOICE FROM *HONORABLE READER*

Epilogue

Christianity is first of all a way of life, rather than a way of thought. Merely to study Christian truths and gain intellectual understanding of them is not enough. Indeed, study does not, by itself, bring us to a complete understanding of them. It is only by living the Christian life that we come to understand the full meaning of the Christian message. The meaning of this message is precisely that God has come to dwell in man to show, that the sorrows, sufferings and defeats inherent in human existence can never deprive one's life of meaning as long as he is capable of deciding to live as a son of God and consent to let God live and triumph in his own heart.

One cannot *live* the Christian life, as it is meant to be lived, without seeking to be holy, in order to be holy one must become free from the tyranny and demands of sin, of lust, of anger, of pride, ambition, injustice, and the spirit of violence. When one sincerely renounces sin and selfish living, one begins to find something of the peace and serenity that come from the awareness that God lives and acts in us. However, the "old man" of sin is not yet dead in us. Soon there begins a new phase of struggle and uncertainty, in which we learn that holiness is not easy, and is not just a matter of will power and good intentions. In this difficult struggle we gain experience of our own limitations and weakness. But we also learn, by experience, that if we trust in the power of God, and seek to imitate His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, in His passion and His victory, we receive mysterious strength that has no human source. Then we begin to become more closely identified with Christ and to realize, at least in the silence of the heart that loves and trusts Him, that He Himself lives in us and is our strength. Jesus Christ *is* our new and hidden self. Our true way of life is then to renounce our old external self, with its selfish desires and its illusions, in order that Christ may fully live in us. It is thus that we begin to be truly Christians. For then the new life that began in us sacramentally by baptism becomes a matter of everyday experience, since Christ takes possession of our being in order that He Himself may be life,

Chapters of the Booklet

1. **Christian Discipleship, What is it? p 1**
2. **Who is Jesus for you? p 3**
(The Disciple's Relationship with Christ)
3. **Getting Our Act Together p 7**
(The Disciple's Spirituality)
4. **Giving Your Life Away p 9**
(The Disciple's Mission)
5. **What We Leave Behind..... p13**
(The Disciple's Legacy)
6. **Promises p15**
(The Disciple's Commitment)
7. **Happy are They p17**
(The Disciple's Program)

Epilogue p19

1. Christian Discipleship, What is it?

When Jesus asked to be invited to Zacchaeus's house. Zacchaeus responds with gladness and is so overwhelmed that his generosity extends to every part of his life. And even though he is imperfect and human, justice and mercy come into his house.

A disciple, like Zacchaeus, is one who has access to Jesus. Jesus wants to stay with his disciples and his disciples are happy to welcome him. What is the significance of this homecoming? It is a choice that Jesus makes. He is inviting his disciples to an intimate relationship - a choice that has many consequences.

What are the consequences of your discipleship? Your home becomes a welcoming, warm and happy place. Your life takes on new meaning and you have a reason for living your life. Even though many questions still remain along with your motives, grace and love make it all worthwhile. This means giving up and letting go of any recognition by worldly standards. But your willingness to change your life opens you to receive your destiny as God has envisioned it. Joy in the midst of change and uncertainty is a sign that Jesus is at home in your house and will be with you through the vicissitudes of living. God does not promise the elimination of hardships, pain and suffering. Even Jesus had to endure these. God does promise that everything will work out in the end. All will be well.

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

To be a Christian disciple is to humbly accept that I too, as a lay person, have been called to receive the promise of "abundant life" in Christ. We see this life as the gift of gifts, without merit or even full understanding. Our simple and continuous response to Christ, opens the life to sacrifice, surrender, joy and hope. We "*learn*" that Christ is all and all is in Christ.

Did Jesus mean by his teachings to show us a path of spiritual transformation? Did he mean to turn our world of pre-conceived notions, topsy-turvy – to burst our bubble of self-righteousness and conceit?

What? Do you mean I shouldn't strive to be *holier than thou*? Empty myself of ego and aggrandizement? Be humble? Disengage from aggressive and selfish grasping? Have I succeeded in coming to God, as an empty, humble pauper? Hardly!

Be merciful. The mercy, love and compassion that Jesus speaks of are universal and unconditional. It is likened to a Mother's love ('rahamim' means mother's womb). Mercy arises from the depths of one's being. The worthiness of the object has nothing to do with the moment to moment outpouring, of mercy, love and compassion, of the Christ within.

Do I love my enemies? When someone speaks ill of me, am I offended? Do I wish to retaliate? Do my mercy, love and compassion extend to all God's creations? Not yet!

Did Jesus mean to leave us in despair of ever fulfilling these teachings? I think not! He left us his example. He gave us the Holy Spirit, and a heart, mind and a yearning to evolve into God's righteousness, compassion, justice and mercy. He has taught us that great faith can create miracles. And we know from our own lives, that what we practice, we become.



Roberta Gittens
Palm Desert Chapter, Palm Desert, CA

Scriptural Reflection

Use Luke 6:20-23 on the beatitudes, and the Lexio Process described in the Introduction to develop the them in the session.

7. Happy are They (The Disciple's Program)

Jesus updated the law found in the Jewish Scriptures, with his Sermon on the Mount. He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it. He wanted to present a change in attitude calling his precepts the be-attitudes. Blessed and happy are those who are not tied to instant results but are willing to plant seeds that can grow and bear fruit and reproduce themselves. This requires the virtue of hope. Our Constitutions encourage us to be people with "hope to bring." The beatitudes give us practical ways in which hope can be translated into our daily lives. His life, death, and resurrection was the way in which Jesus came into his own. Should there be any other way for his disciples?

THE BEATITUDES

Jesus gathered his disciples around him. They had retreated to a mountain top above the raucous crowd. The power, with which he had recently healed so many, still radiated out from him. He sat. He 'opened his mouth' and then poured out from him, in wisdom and prophecy, God's Holy Spirit. (Matthew 5:3-12)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (First Beatitude – Matthew 5:3)

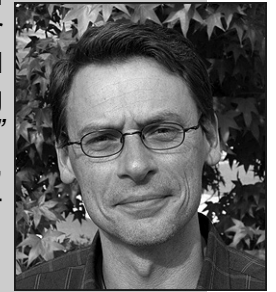
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (Third Beatitude – Matthew 5:5)

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. (Fifth Beatitude – Matthew 5:8)

In addition, more... nine teachings in all Jesus imparted to them that day. In beauty of phrasing, in depth of meaning, in universality of thought, he spoke to them in the multi-layered poetry of the Aramaic tongue.

The question remains, now as then. Are we ripe/good/ready? Are we in tune, in harmony? Are we fully present in the moment? Are we prepared and ready to receive the Kingdom of Heaven?

As a Holy Cross Associate, being Catholic, part of the Church, and the "people of God," is clarified with greater intensity. Blessed Basil Moreau and the Congregation of Holy Cross offer a unique and universal way to live and be. Our Christian discipleship in **being** Holy Cross, becomes the sweet "*flavor*" of our spirituality. Holy Cross people, place, history and work become an endless banquet for the soul to nourish itself.



Peter Francis Shelley
Moreau Chapter, Hayward, CA

Scriptural Reflection

Use Luke 19:1-10, the story of Zacchaeus, and the Lexio Process described in the Introduction to further develop the theme.

2. Who is Jesus for you? (The Disciple's Relationship with Christ)

As a Holy Cross Associate, you are called to a deeper relationship to Christ. God takes the initiative, giving you an invitation:

- An invitation to give Jesus your whole heart.
- An invitation to stay with Jesus even in times of confusion and lack of understanding.
- An invitation to hear the same words spoken by the Father to Jesus and apply them to yourself.
- An invitation to constantly change everyday living into the wine of appreciation and Christian joy.
- An invitation to meet Jesus in Galilee - a place of fervor and first love and in Jerusalem - a place of commitment, pain, and humiliation.
- An invitation to come and see where Jesus lives.
- An invitation to enter the mystery of the cross with Jesus.
- An invitation to see community as the place where the Spirit is given to you.
- An invitation to make your death a final gift and blessing.

Christ invites; he never forces. Like the rich young man in Scriptures, he loves each of us in a unique way but always gives us the freedom to walk away. Our decision is tempered by all of the choices we have made in our life to not be afraid, to take risks and to live by faith.

my discipleship into practice. When I do experience discipleship in action, it teaches me little by little how to listen and follow God's lead in my work. Even so, I do not always have the heart of a disciple. I am a work in progress.

Being a Holy Cross Associate has clarified for me the everyday "cost of discipleship." My prayer life must strive to be an experience of the presence of Christ that is nourished by daily Mass, personal prayer, spiritual reading and a contemplative spirit. In my relationships at home, community and work, I attempt to do what I have to do with love and leave the results to God. (Jesus says "Without me you can do *nothing*.")

A disciple for me is one who wants to know how to pray, who knows how to relate to brothers and sisters in community, who sees everyone as Christ. He or she is one who with the Church has an "option for the poor" and lonely, who does not flee from suffering, and who sticks it out no matter the cost – all this with a certain amount of joy, serenity and peace. With the gifts God has given me, these marks of discipleship are my goals. These goals, and how to reach them, have come to me largely from some 50 years of mentoring under the auspices of Holy Cross: Notre Dame, seminary formation, Ave Maria Press and living over 40 years in Holy Cross parishes in South Bend.



Ken Peters
Holy Cross Village Chapter, Notre Dame, IN

Scriptural Reflection

Use Acts 2:42-47 on the early Christian community, and the Lexio Process described in the Introduction to develop the theme for this session.

6. Promises (The Disciple's Commitment)

As the years progress, our promises as Associates take on ever more challenging meaning. Is our faith life maturing? Is our relationship with Jesus deepening? Has our prayer life become a priority on a daily basis? Have we updated our understanding of God, Jesus and Church in line with the Vatican II documents? Have we identified our leadership potential and used it in the service of our local community? Have we given support to members of our local communities as they face the challenges of living? Has our vision expanded to include Holy Cross throughout the world as part of our extended family?

Have we been able to experience the benefits of our Holy Cross spirituality as we choose and accomplish our ministry? Do we see our ministry as part of the Holy Cross' mission? Do we get support from others in our local community to carry out our ministry? Are we bringing the Holy Cross charism of "family spirit" into our ministry?

Remember that Jesus and the Community accepts us as we are. Like a good friend, Jesus and the Community will always be there to help us become the person God created us to be.

Discipleship in Holy Cross

Zeal, the "burning desire to make God known, loved and served" (Blessed Basil Moreau), is the spiritual tradition of Holy Cross that has most formed me as a disciple of Christ. The gift of zeal comes from listening to and following Jesus in thought, word and deed. That is the job description of a disciple. The disciple also does whatever he or she does out of love, not constraint, and does it for the glory of God.

As a disciple, I need to get rid of ego so that my ministry becomes God's work, not mine. ("He must increase, I must decrease.") A tall order, indeed! When I am called upon for a St. Vincent de Paul call, make "spiritual care" calls at Holy Cross Care and Rehab, or be a part of a workshop on aging, I am asked to put

"When we step out on the Word of God, we may, indeed, be tempted to take only small baby steps when God is asking for a leap of faith. What gives us confidence to take such strides is when we let ourselves be found by God whose extravagant love finds us, no matter how lost we are. In kind, we can fling ourselves with abandon into the arms of God's love in our constant prayer. We loosen our grip on our material goods, as we stretch our grasp toward the treasure God has in store for us. We dine in God's realm, not knowing who will be coming to dinner, yet ready to welcome all. We choose the side of the voiceless and the poor as we persist in our pursuit of justice. No half-way measures are adequate when we become immersed in this life of discipleship. There is no tameness to what God offers. The Spirit helps us, plunges us into God, draws us to the Crucified One, and impels us to live and proclaim Christ's liberating message."

Barbara E. Reid, O.P.

WHO DO I SAY THAT JESUS IS?

I believe that Jesus is fully God and fully man. If he were only a man, he could not know me and I could not know him. His life and teaching would have no relevance for me, today. If Jesus were only God, I could easily dismiss him as a figment of my imagination—I could not have a personal relationship with him, and through him, come to know the Father and the Holy Spirit.

I believe that Jesus Christ is God—the only Son of the living God. I have not seen him, but I have come to know him; he lives within my heart. Jesus is the source of a beauty and glory that does not fade, a truth that does not change, a goodness that cannot be corrupted by evil, and a love that is constant and never-ending. If I did not believe this, I could not believe in, or love, the Church who taught me about Jesus—she would be a tyrant. If I did not believe in Jesus, I could not believe in the kingdom of God—a kingdom that is

eternal.

Jesus is my hope—hope in a life that is not temporary and a kingdom that is not temporary. Hope gives meaning and purpose to the life that I have lived, the life that I am living now, and the life that I will live. With hope, life is not in vain, not passing, not meaningless, not here today and gone tomorrow. Without hope, beauty is fleeting, goodness is futile, truth is only conjecture or opinion, and love is merely sentiment. Without hope, the Beatitudes are merely a description of insanity; creation is only an illusion without rhyme or reason—a temporary pleasure. Without hope we may as well “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” Jesus is the reason for life—he is life.



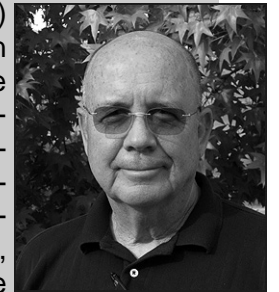
Lenora Grimaud
Palm Desert Chapter, Palm Desert, CA

Scriptural Reflection

Use Luke 10:38-42 - the story of Martha and Mary and the Lexio Process described in the introduction to develop the theme.

I fret over the past. I angst about the future. Yet, deep in my heart, I know it is the present moment wherein lies the truest expression of myself as a disciple. Reminiscent of seizing the rain drops, I come to know the blueprints of my discipleship in these moments. They are formed by decades of association with Holy Cross – the lens through which I envision and accomplish discipleship. Who I am and what I do as a disciple is greatly framed by the spirituality and charisms of Holy Cross. I have a sense of what I do carries positive consequence for God’s kingdom as I try to make the rain drops matter as a result.

I think legacies (and we all have them) are simply an accumulation of the rain drops – life’s present moments. For me they are *fashioned* by my presence before God, Holy Cross and my relationships with others. In the end, my legacies are *determined* by human and spiritual realities – sometimes competing, and sometimes not competing with the designs God has for me.



Joe Connell
Moreau Chapter, Hayward, CA

Scriptural Reflection

Use John 15:8-17 on bearing fruit, and the Lexio Process described in the Introduction to develop the theme of this session.

5. What We Leave Behind (The Disciple's Legacy)

Many times it is not our privilege to see the results of our efforts. Jesus never experienced the fruition of all the seeds that he planted in his life time. Father Moreau at the end of his life had no assurance of his legacy in the community that he founded. We too live in the in-between-time and might not fully see the results of all that Vatican II envisioned or the vision we have for our association. But we need to have the determination to keep on the path and trust in God's providence as Father Moreau did. Crosses were a sign to him that God was favoring the community because it was through them the community would grow strong in the faith..

What better legacy to leave our family, friends and community than to live a life dedicated to the three promises that make us Holy Cross Associates.

Legacies

How true it is that our life passes like a shadow, and its movements are like drops of water which fall to the earth and disappear in its depths. Our duty for the present is to seize upon everything which can contribute to realizing God's designs in our regard. (Basil Moreau)

Moreau understands that the passage of life is as rain drops disappearing into the earth. Awareness of my life's passage is unimportant when I am absorbed in something. These moments are as if there is no time, for I lose any sense of time's passage. Immersion without distraction in the present moment has accumulative effects on who I am as a disciple of Jesus. The earth is watered by the accumulation of rain drops....



3. Getting Our Act Together (The Disciple's Spirituality)

We are called to self knowledge. Spiritual growth means acknowledging the false self from the true self. Jesus had to do this in the temptations he faced in the desert. He experienced the temptation to base his happiness on material things and pleasures, to base his worth on the power that he could have over others, or on the respect and homage others would give him. All aspects of human nature that are ego driven.

He rather chose to surrender these considerations in favor of the relationship he had with his Father and the mission that his Father gave him to establish a new order of peace, justice and love - values of the true self which are totally connected with the divine. Each of us has that same connection. As St. Augustine says, "Our hearts are yearning for God and they will not rest until they rest in God." As disciples of Jesus we receive our destiny (our unique place in the universe) from God as Jesus did. We share in his mission to help bring about God's reign on earth as it is in heaven. As Holy Cross Associates we are called to educate others about their true nature and about the love God gives them to develop their potential as they take their place in the family of all of God's creation.

Putting Your Personal Life Together

As I consider my spiritual growth, I find the clues and inspiration for growth in the Lord come from all aspects of my life's journey: My everyday life in my present environment, in my activities and interests, from my fellow travelers along the way, and most of all from my personal relationship with God. I sense progress when I have a peace and harmony in my inner thoughts and whatever I am engaged in. When dissonance occurs, it becomes a spur to consider where I need to travel next and what prayer, thought and activity I need to develop or change. This is when I am most aware that I am "always learning and growing."

Scriptural Reflection

Use Matthew 14:13-21 The story of the miracle of the loaves, and the Lexio Process described in the introduction to further develop the theme.



Original Holy Cross Seal

able. I am volunteering my time so I really don't have to help them, but I do enjoy spending a bit of time with them when I can.

Since I believe in the teachings of Holy Cross as a Holy Cross Associate, I know that I must treat everyone with care, dignity and a generous heart. Would I have to be an Associate to live a life of generosity and service to others? Of course not, but it happens that I want to grow, giving more and more to others as the Holy Cross family teaches us to do. God loves a cheerful heart, and I believe that generosity and service to others are two responsibilities that we are given at birth. It pleases Him greatly when we give of our time to those in need. It is what He expects of His children everywhere.

As I talk with other Holy Cross Associates, I am amazed and humbled by the depth of their generous hearts. They volunteer for many different needs that lead in many different paths. When we volunteer, we all follow the same directions given by our Lord and Savior, as He tells us to give generously of our time and service wherever and whenever needed. I find that the time crunch is a real mountain for me at times, but I plan to continue to work toward giving as much time and service as possible for the Glory of God.

I am only a work in progress, but I know that as a member of the Associates of Holy Cross I am being taught by true "educators of the faith." With God's encouragement and with the strength and example of my fellow associates, I will work diligently to be a strong vital member of the program.



Jeannie Hayes
Holy Cross Village Chapter, Notre Dame, IN

In my everyday life and environment, little epiphanies of God's word and presence are awesome teachers along the journey. The morning sunrise from our living room window, the busy wild life in our woods, and the bevy of birds that come for food at the feeder. The ebb and flow of the seasons remind me of the ebb and flow of my life. As I am in the autumn of my life, I can look back and appreciate the ebb and flow of my experiences, joys and sorrows.

I have always loved reading and learning more. Planning and preparing for a prayer/share group in our home or a Holy Cross Associates meeting brings to bear creativity and new insights.

My fellow travelers along the way never fail to speak or act in ways that inspire and teach me what God wants from me in this time and place. So many times at Mass, the homily says exactly what I need to hear at that particular moment, or someone shares a word or experience that answers an inner quest.

All of these lead to the key component of my journey – time with God. Personal prayer, prayer times with others and with my husband give the yeast for growth in the Lord. The Mass, Eucharist and meditation on the rosary center me and lead me into the desert where I find my Lord and my God. May it always be so!



Ellie Peters
Holy Cross Village Chapter, Notre Dame, IN

Scriptural Reflection

Use Luke 6:46-49 on the two foundations and the Lexio Process described in the Introduction to develop the theme in this session.

4. Giving Your Life Away (The Disciple's Mission)

There was a woman who wanted peace in the world and peace in her heart and all sorts of good things, but she was very frustrated. The world seemed to be falling apart. She would read the papers and get depressed. One day she decided to go shopping and she went into a mall and picked a store at random. She walked in and was surprised to see Jesus behind the counter. She knew it was Jesus, because he looked just like the pictures she had seen. She looked again and again at him, and finally she got up her nerve and asked, "Excuse me, are you Jesus?"

"I am."

"Do you work here?"

"No, Jesus said, "I own the store."

"What do you sell in here?"

"Oh, just about anything!"

"Anything?"

"Yes, anything you want. What do you want?"

She said, "I don't know."

"Well, Jesus said, "Feel free, walk up and down the aisles, make a list, see what it is you want, and then come back and we'll see what we can do for you."

She did just that -walked up and down the aisles. There was peace on earth, no more war, no hunger or poverty, peace in families, no more drugs, clean air, careful use of resources. She wrote furiously. By the time she got back to the counter, she had a long list. Jesus took the list, skimmed through it, looked up at her and smiled, "No problem." And then he bent down behind the counter and picked out all sorts of things, stood up, and laid out a row of little packets,

The woman asked, "What are these?"

Jesus replied, "Seed packets. This is a seed catalog store."

She said, "You mean I don't get the finished product?" No, this is a place of dreams. You come and see what it looks like, and I give you the seeds. You plant the seeds. You go home and nurture them and help them grow."

When we choose to become our true self, God can use us in a very special way which goes beyond our plans and our expectations. God puts us into circumstances, being in the right place at the right time, and to accomplish his will and fulfill our vocation.

Since Vatican II's statement on the role of the laity in the Church, the Church has relied on the laity more and more to take on major roles in accomplishing Christ's mission. As the vocations to religious life have diminished, religious communities also depend on the laity to continue their work for the Church. By the power of the Holy Spirit, men and women are recognizing that God can use their natural gifts to accomplish great things. Our Holy Cross Constitutions state that religious walk side by side with the laity to be in mission with them to educate others in the faith and to bring about healing and peace among all peoples. When God's grace is at work within them, all things are possible.

Christian Service

Lately I have been spending a lot of time with the elderly. My mom, who is almost 98 years old, has been in a transitional care facility since mid-September. I feel blessed to be able to help care for her. I do what most daughters and sons do. I lovingly give of my time finding ways to make her more comfortable when I am with her. I love to see her smile and laugh. I never tire of sitting and listening to her relate stories of her life. It is easy to be generous with my time for her because not only is she easy to love, she is my mom. We have a history together, that sweet little old lady and her not so young daughter.

While I am in the facility, I see many residents who are not as healthy as my mom is at this time. They are not all so sweet, and they are not all able to tell me what they want me to do for them to make them comfort-