

Walk of Discipleship

CALL TO PRAYER

Lord Jesus, send the Spirit to animate our lives and lead us on an adventure. Bring us joy and cast out fear. Help us to let go of our desire to control our destiny and be open to the ways you will call us to be fully alive. Open our eyes to see those who need to hear the Gospel message, give us the endurance we need to walk faithfully, and give us joy and peace in times of trial. We ask this in your name. Amen.

Summary

Some have likened a life living in the Holy Spirit as a rollercoaster. Why? Because living in the Spirit requires us to hand over control to him to embark on a great adventure. Many Catholics struggle to relinquish control in their lives because of fear of where God may take them.

One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is joy, which should be the identifying mark of a follower of Jesus. We can only be joyful, however, when we live in rhythm with the Holy Spirit. Our joy should be so noticeable to others that they ask us the reason for it.

Jesus did not withhold the truth about discipleship. He told his apostles, “I have said this to you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). So even if we do all the right things, we will still experience suffering and pain. The only way to maintain our joy and peace in such times is through the Holy Spirit. If we want to walk with people and invite them into a life with the Spirit, we need to deepen our relationship with him.

NOTES

Words That Inspire

Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence. – 1 Peter 3:15

In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. – John 16:33

The joy of the Lord is your strength. – Nehemiah 8:10

The man who is wise, therefore, will see his life as more like a reservoir than a canal. The canal simultaneously pours out what it receives; the reservoir retains the water till it is filled, then discharges the overflow without loss to itself ... Today there are many in the Church who act like canals, the reservoirs are far too rare ... You too must learn to await this fullness before pouring out your gifts, do not try to be more generous than God. – St. Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Song of Songs

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Is your faith more like a rollercoaster or carousel? What makes “rollercoaster faith” so intimidating?
2. Have you ever responded to a call from the Holy Spirit? What was the fruit of that?
3. Have you ever experienced a call from the Holy Spirit that you ignored out of fear?
4. What in your life is stealing your joy? Is it possible to invite the Holy Spirit into that area in order to bear that suffering or trial with more peace?

Team Workshop Prompt

Individually and as a team, recall particular times or events that cause you to look back and laugh. Were the experiences joyful at the time? Or were they stressful? What can you learn from them?

A joyful parish team is key in building a joy-filled parish. In general, would you describe your team as joyful? Are there times or situations when it is more difficult to be joyful? Have an honest conversation about these questions. Then discuss how your team can more consistently radiate joy to your parish.

To this end, come up with two Holy Spirit-centered prayer commitments that your team can engage in to become more consistent in your joy. If there is a project or circumstance that is particularly challenging, pray to be open to ways that joy can be found and encouraged.

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