

1. Read (Seek) — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate (Find) — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage.
God what are you saying to me through this?

3. Pray (Ask) — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate (Taste) — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

[1] John 3:2

[2] Luke 10:1

[3] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 160

[4] Luke 10:39

[5] Luke 10:42

[6] St. Augustine (Spiritual Reading)

[7] In Conversation with God 2, 86. 3

[8] J. Escriva, Christ is passing by, 122

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Gospel Reading – Matthew 28:16-20 – Roman Missal [Cycle A]

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Spiritual Reading - From Saint Augustine

Today our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; let our hearts ascend with him. Listen to the words of the Apostle: If you have risen with Christ, set your hearts on the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth. For just as he remained with us even after his ascension, so we too are already in heaven with him, even though what is promised us has not yet been fulfilled in our bodies. Christ is now exalted above the heavens, but he still suffers on earth all the pain that we, the members of his body, have to bear. He showed this when he cried out from above: Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? and when he said: I was hungry and you gave me food. Why do we on earth not strive to find rest with him in heaven even now, through the faith, hope and love that unites us to him? While in heaven he is also with us; and we while on earth are with him. He is here with us by his divinity, his power and his love. We cannot be in heaven, as he is on earth, by divinity, but in him, we can be there by love. He did not leave heaven when he came down to us; nor did he withdraw from us when he went up again into heaven. The fact that he was in heaven even while he was on earth is borne out by his own statement: No one has ever ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven. These words are explained by our oneness with Christ, for he is our head and we are his body. No one ascended into heaven except Christ because we also are Christ: he is the Son of Man by his union with us, and we by our union with him are the sons of God. So the Apostle says: Just as the human body, which has many members, is a unity, because all the different members make one body, so is it also with Christ. He too has many members, but one body. Out of compassion for us he descended from heaven, and although he ascended alone, we also ascend, because we are in him by grace. Thus, no one but Christ descended and no one but Christ

ascended; not because there is no distinction between the head and the body, but because the body as a unity cannot be separated from the head.

Go and make disciples – Lesson and Discussion

“make disciples of all nations”

Today’s Gospel reading is the concluding chapter in Matthew’s Gospel. It is the last words we read, and possibly the last words spoken to the eleven Apostles before He ascended body and soul into heaven. His final speech given to them is a message of trust, hope, and a mission and purpose for their lives in following faithfully our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is a disciple? A disciple is someone who is learning under a teacher or scholar. In scripture we see Jesus being called a teacher[1]. The closest and most notable disciples of Jesus Christ were his twelve closest disciples, the Apostles. However, there were also other disciples, most notably the seventy-two that were sent out by Jesus.[2] Disciple comes from the Latin word *discipulus*, which means follower or pupil.[3] In ancient times a pupil would literally sit “at the feet” of the teacher. Saint Luke gives us the story of Mary and Martha, Saint Mary “...sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak.”[4] Jesus says, “There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.”[5] This story about sitting “at the feet” as a pupil is found within the same chapter as the sending out of the seventy-two disciples and just before the teaching of the Our Father. It is a reminder that disciples must choose to sit at the feet of the master. The word *discipulus* (disciple) and *disciplina* (discipline) are very similar. *Disciplina* means instruction or knowledge. It is only when we are willing to be a pupil that we are instructed, it is only when we follow that we gain knowledge.

Why are we called to discipleship? If we have been baptized then we are called to be Disciples of Christ. In the Gospel reading, Jesus instructs the Apostles to make disciples of everyone by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He goes further by telling them to teach all they had observed from Him. When we are baptized, we are claimed by Christ and are a disciple of His. We are to follow in the missionary spirit and apostolate of the Church. We are filled with the power of the triune God that cannot be hidden and kept to ourselves, but must be shared with everyone we meet. If we are to follow the Traditions and Sacred Scripture of Jesus, we must be willing to make disciples as He commanded us too.

In the Gospel, Jesus gives the Apostles a mission. The Ascension is a central event in Non-Catholic Christian and refers to this Gospel as the Great Commission. The Apostles are given the task of making disciples of all nations. **How will they do this?** Jesus assures them that He will be them and with us, “until the end of age”. **What will they do?** He says to baptize and to teach.

What is the importance of baptizing and teaching? Baptism is a necessary means for salvation. It is also the door to all other

sacraments; it is the gate into the sacramental life. To baptize all nations, means to give all nations the sacraments. Through the sacraments people are spiritually born and grow in faith. Jesus also says to teach them to “observe all that I have commanded you”. This is the moral life, the life of Christ. The importance of baptizing and teachings is to give all nations, all people both faith and morals. The Church is the universal means of salvation for the world and is an expert in the area of faith and morals because the Holy Spirit guides her. A disciple therefore lives a life of faith and morals.

To be a disciple we must look to the first disciples, the Apostles. We must look to what they did after the Ascension. First, two angels refocused them. In the first reading, the Angels reassure them not to just stand there looking up in the sky for Jesus but to do the work He had commanded of them, and to wait for the Holy Spirit. Then, the disciples, filled with joy, went back to Jerusalem to be with Mary and await the coming of the Holy Spirit. We too, should remain close to Mary who is our mother and is also joyfully in Heaven, body and soul, with her Son, Jesus Christ.

How should one perceive us everyday? Being disciples of Jesus Christ means we should not be full of dread, worry, depression, and sin but, rather, filled with joy and hope of Heaven. We have a joy and hope because we too are already in heaven with Him. Saint Augustine says, “For just as he remained with us even after his ascension, so we too are already in heaven with him, even though what is promised us has not yet been fulfilled in our bodies.”[6] Jesus has remained with us in our soul; this is the divine life. We have a taste of heaven. We are experiencing a bit of heaven now, since our head, Jesus Christ, is in heaven and in us. If we are experiencing heaven, through the divine life and at the Holy Mass, where we join all the choirs of angels and Saints in their endless praise, we should show great joy and hope in our life. People should witness this joy and hope in our life. Those who we see on a consistent basis should observe someone who is loyal, sincere, and hardworking. People should see that despite the ups and downs of this life, we behave and live as children of God. We cannot just live the bare minimum of being “nice” as an exterior gesture, but be genuine, thoughtful, caring of people through the fruit of charity.[7] As Saint Jose Maria Escriva wrote, “Today’s feast reminds us that our concern for souls is a response to a command of love given to us by our Lord. Our responsibility is great, because to be Christ’s witness implies first of all that we should try to behave according to his doctrine, that we should struggle to make our actions remind others of Jesus and his most lovable personality.”[8] In short, to be a disciple, people must see Christ when they see us.