

## Start with Jesus: Walking the Path of Missionary Discipleship

### Session 5

Acts 1:1-5, 8, 13-14

Acts 2:1-18, 21



The first 2 chapters of the Acts of the Apostles are illustrated in the 2 links below taken from a movie about these verses:

The Book of Acts section 1

[https://remote.stmarysgrafon.org/OWA/redir.aspx?C=aM0SyrpO2HUB2zJ9Wp-OJec\\_khFfxz6gchfN1QzBhyJFVCR7KgDYCA..&URL=https%3a%2f%2fyoutu.be%2flnGKFxJp8XM](https://remote.stmarysgrafon.org/OWA/redir.aspx?C=aM0SyrpO2HUB2zJ9Wp-OJec_khFfxz6gchfN1QzBhyJFVCR7KgDYCA..&URL=https%3a%2f%2fyoutu.be%2flnGKFxJp8XM)

The Book of Acts section 2

[https://remote.stmarysgrafon.org/OWA/redir.aspx?C=0GE3WiS3t-2y6zVA51pgmm9-2SHILQHp5LCsKITH6Ny\\_CvZ6KgDYCA..&URL=https%3a%2f%2fyoutu.be%2fITdlz5WJgpY](https://remote.stmarysgrafon.org/OWA/redir.aspx?C=0GE3WiS3t-2y6zVA51pgmm9-2SHILQHp5LCsKITH6Ny_CvZ6KgDYCA..&URL=https%3a%2f%2fyoutu.be%2fITdlz5WJgpY)

*The Holy Spirit comforts and advocates for us.*

In Scripture, we find references to the Holy Spirit as one who consoles and comforts us (John 14:16) and as our helper who comes alongside us to live a life of virtue and holiness (John 16:13). One of the titles of the Holy Spirit is the "Paraclete," which is translated from the Greek term, *parakletos*, as one who advocates, comforts, and comes to our aid. We can feel burnt out and overwhelmed at times. The Holy Spirit has been sent to each one of us to renew our minds and hearts, helping us become ever more conscious of our intimacy with Jesus and with one another. How has the Holy Spirit advocated for and comforted you?

--Julianne Stanz

Watch video below from Barbara Lee who reflects on the Gospel, John 17:1–11a. Lee is a spiritual director and author of [\*\*God Isn't Finished with Me Yet.\*\*](#)

<https://youtu.be/AFWqtChMyYs>

*The Holy Spirit helps us to grow in holiness.*

The Trinity is a communion of Persons, a relationship of three in one. As such, each Person of the Trinity helps sanctify us. The Latin word *sanctificare* means "to purify, cleanse, or to make holy." The Holy Spirit helps us grow in discipleship by sanctifying us and our actions.

As you reflect upon your relationship with the Holy Spirit, ask yourself the following question: When you pray, which member of the Trinity do you pray most to: God the Father? God the Son? God the Holy Spirit?

**—Julianne Stanz**

*You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8)*

*"Go, therefore, and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19)*

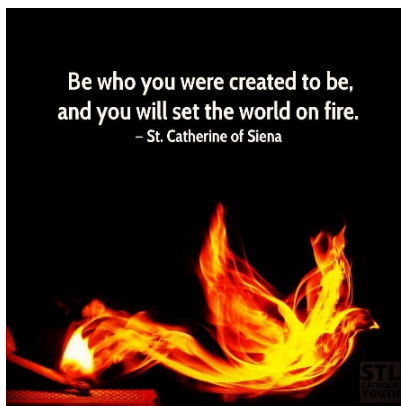
**Who are we?** You and I are witnesses for those whom God sends down our path. We are witnesses to the encounters we have had with the risen Christ. And through our witness, we make disciples. Go make disciples! Go be Christ's witnesses!

**Jesus has poured the Holy Spirit into our hearts to bring us to new life in his Church and sends his Church on a mission so that others can experience new life.**

The Holy Spirit remains with us and gives us the gifts of faith, hope, and love that make it possible for us to live as disciples. One cannot believe in Jesus Christ without sharing in his Spirit. The Holy Spirit reveals to us who Jesus is. For no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. (CCC 152) In that love we are called to proclaim the Good News to all creation, making disciples everywhere.

### Reflection Questions

- ! How do I share the Good News with others?
- ! In what ways do I have a sense that the Holy Spirit is calling me to share my story and share in the Church's mission?



The 3 links below are excerpts from Living as Missionary Disciples published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/living-as-missionary-disciples/files/assets/basic-html/page-17.html#>

<http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/living-as-missionary-disciples/files/assets/basic-html/page-18.html>

<http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/living-as-missionary-disciples/files/assets/basic-html/page-19.html>



We are all blessed with spiritual gifts and St. Paul in the book of Ephesians tells us that the purpose of these gifts is to build up the Body of Christ. Ever wonder what spiritual gifts you might have? Check out the link below for an online spiritual gifts inventory that you can take which will reveal some of your gifts and how you might use them to be of service in the church and the world.

<https://staustin.org/spiritual-gifts-inventory>

**Discern, Purify, Reform**

If we want to move from a low or medium commitment to being on fire for our faith, then we must be bold, innovative, and creative! This means taking a fresh look at our lives so that we can examine what is helping us grow in faith, where we need to concentrate our efforts so that we can continue to move forward, and what we need to let go of. This three-part process of discernment, purification, and reform can help you decide what opportunities are presenting themselves and where the challenges lie as you are called to be a missionary disciple.

**Discernment.** Discernment is an ancient art and practice in the Christian tradition that honors God's will and vision for our lives. It is an interior search that seeks to align what we hope for and our plans and dreams with how God is calling us to live and what he wants for our lives. Discernment is not shorthand for "Let me think about it" but instead "Let me converse with God and listen for his voice and direction."

**Reflect:** "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jeremiah 29:11)

Do you believe that the Lord has plans for you? As you spend time in discernment, what plans that come from the Lord are revealing themselves to you?

**Purification.** After you have discerned some areas of your life in need of renewal, be ready to begin the process of pruning so that new life can occur. What you "cut away" can include relationships you might be engaged in that are no longer life-giving or projects or events that are no longer bearing fruit. Not everything we do bears fruit, so we must take the time to distill the essential elements of what we will keep going forward. Examine what is outdated or no longer working. Take the time to grieve, give thanks for all that was, and look at options for the future.

**Reflect:** "Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22)

What areas of your life are you called to prune so that you can love more deeply from the heart? How might you continue to purify your soul in obedience to the truth?

**Reform.** Simplify and streamline areas of your life that have gotten overly complicated and unnecessary. Reform or let go of processes, relationships, and programs that are not in total alignment with this goal

**Reflect:** "Abide in me as I abide in you... I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:4-5)

What is your biggest hope at this point in your life? As you move into a new way of being, how might your relationship with Jesus deepen and grow?

Revisit these three questions in regard to your personal life:

What do I need to START doing?      What do I need to KEEP doing?      What do I need to STOP doing?

---Julianne Stanz

**Sow, Grow and Go**

St. Urban of Langres and St. Botolph of Ikenhoe often referred to the spiritual life as a living organism, like a garden, that the Lord cultivates as we grow in holiness. Sometimes our spiritual garden is blooming with flowers, and other times there are many weeds threatening its growth. As we grow in faith, here are three principles to reflect on : Sow, Grow, and Go.

**Sow.** In the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-8), Jesus reminds us that the farmer scattered seed indiscriminately. Some of the seeds ended up taking root in fertile soil, others were eaten by birds, and some fell on rocky ground. But the sower was relentless in the work and kept on sowing and scattering seeds everywhere he could. Jesus tells us that the seeds that fell on good soil produced a bumper crop: a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.

**Reflect:** At this time, how are the seeds that Jesus is scattering in your life taking root?

What are some of the rocky places in your heart that the Lord is helping you work through?

At this time, where are you in the parable of the sower? Are you the sower? The seed? The farmer? The tiller of the ground? Or somewhere else?

**Grow.** During winter, when the earth seems silent and there is an absence of vegetation, we mistakenly believe that nothing is growing or moving. We get excited when we see the first shoots of green popping up from the earth, but we forget that the tulip bulb pushed into the darkness of the earth is still growing in winter, even though we cannot see it. Growth, especially growth in the spiritual life, often happens unseen, in the silent recesses of the heart. We cannot always see our own progress as we grow in faith, but that does not mean that the shoots of new life are not waiting to burst forth.

**Reflect:** What are some of the signs of new life that you see emerging right now?

What places in your life are still growing in silence?

Who is helping you in this process?

**Go.** Inertia and complacency are anathema to spiritual growth. Consider the words of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, where he warns against a “tomb psychology” that slowly transforms “Christians into mummies in a museum” (#83). Surrendering to Christ, taking steps toward him, however small, is the key to spiritual growth.

**Reflect:** Which aspects of your faith do you feel most comfortable with?

Identify a place of inertia or complacency in your life. What factors have contributed to this situation? How might you address this?

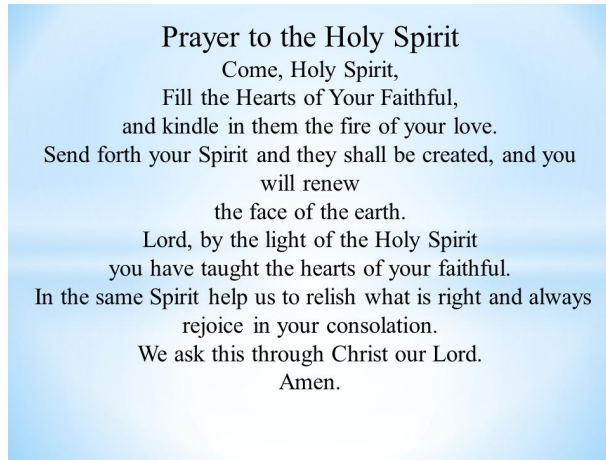
We are all called to scatter gospel seeds as best we can and to nourish the seeds of new life in our own lives. Even neatly planting seeds in perfect rows doesn't guarantee their growth! The spiritual life is not something that can be neatly planned because it is time intensive and can be messy. Some of the seeds that we plant will take root in a heart that is disposed to hear what we have to say, other seeds will fall to the ground unnoticed, and yet others will yield a crop that far surpasses what we could ever imagine. “Sow, Grow, and Go” on your journey of faith and watch those shoots of new life appear!

--Julianne Stanz

ZOOM SESSION

Icebreaker: Share an experience of when you were challenged to move out of your comfort zone to learn something new (15 minutes)

Prayer:



Scriptural Exegesis

Feedback on Reading Material (20 minutes)

Announcements (5 minutes)

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

#### **A PRAYER FOR PENTECOST**

Spirit! Power and Passion of my being, press upon my heart your profound love. Move through the fragments of my days; enable me to sense your fiery Presence, consecrating my most insignificant moments.

Spirit! Source of Vision, Perceptive Guide, permeate the moments of my choices when falsehood and truth both call to me. Turn me toward the way of goodness, so that I will always lean toward your love.

Spirit! Blessing for the heart grown weary, encircle me with your loving energy; empower me with your active gentleness. Deepen within me a faith in your dynamism which strengthens the weak and the tired.

Spirit! Breath of Life, Touch of Mystery, you are the ribbon of inner connection, uniting me with the groaning of all creation. Because of you, my life gathers into a oneness. Keep me attentive to this interdependence. Fill my being with a constant compassion and a deep hope that knows no bounds.

Spirit! Dwelling Place, Sanctuary of Silence, you are the home for which I deeply yearn. You are the resting place for which I long. I find both comfort and challenge in you. Grant that I may keep my whole self open to the transforming power of your indwelling, that I may ever know the blessing of your tremendous companionship.

Glory be....