

## ENCOUNTERING JESUS

Scripture passage:

Luke 24: 13-35

## YOUTUBE VIDEOS

Jot down any thoughts/insights while watching the video.

Place yourselves in the video below. What are your thoughts as you travel back to share the good news with others?

## Watch Road to Emmaus

<https://youtu.be/vepBqHvZ0Xs>

“Where have you been on the road to Emmaus? Where are you now?”

- ❖ *Heading back*—discouraged, hopes dashed, disheartened...What is your main emotional response to life?
- ❖ *Telling your story*—sorting out what is going on, looking at expectations and the reality of life...How do you stay in touch with your story?
- ❖ *Listening to the connections*—discovering truths, seeing the deeper realities...How do you see your life in relation to the journey of death and resurrection?
- ❖ *Pressed him to stay on*—desire for God, moments of intimacy in solitude and community...How and when do you invite God into your life?
- ❖ *Recognition and hearts set afire*—events, people, and inner awareness that have restored the fire in your heart...When was the last time that you have felt “enkindled” in your relationship with God?
- ❖ *Set out to tell*— a ministry alive with a relationship with the Beloved, a service shared with others that is energized by daily encounters with this Beloved...What do you most want to “go and tell” to the people who are in your life?
- ❖ *Now in your life*—Which of the steps in the Emmaus story is most active in your own life story at the present time?”

Joyce Rupp

If Jesus were to walk alongside you today, what “heavy burdens” would you like Him to carry?



Prayer

*Lord Jesus I invite your presence and ask you to walk beside me in what I am going through. Help me to recognize that you are with me. Reveal yourself to me, and make me aware of your master plan for my life. Amen.*

**Scripture Passage:**

**John 20:11-18**

Place yourselves in the video below. What are your thoughts as you travel back to share the good news with others?

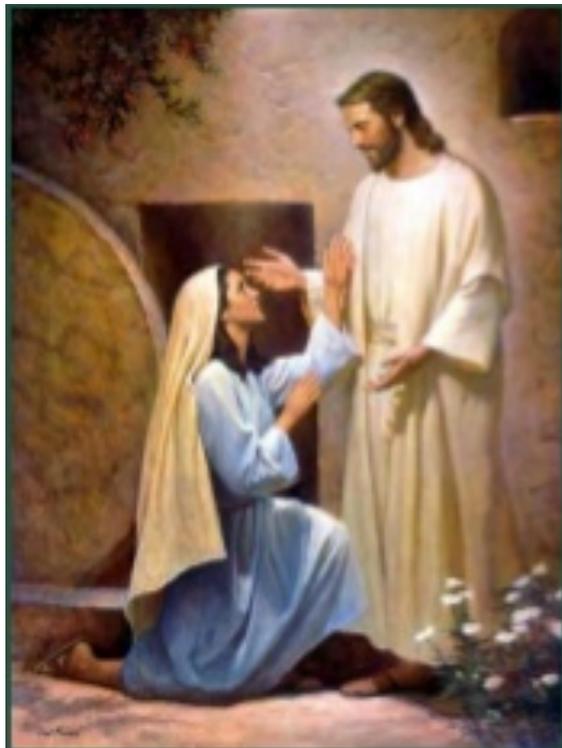
**Watch Mary Magdalene and listen to the beauty of hearing it in the original language (with English subtitles)**

<https://youtu.be/a2TIWuQQqS4>

**Read Called by Name: A meditation on John 20:1-18 from Mary Magdalene's perspective**

[https://www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/MT\\_13\\_01\\_Palmerton.pdf](https://www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/MT_13_01_Palmerton.pdf)

The author writes: "I didn't see Jesus come forth from the tomb. I heard my name and then I came forth from my tomb." Has an experience like this ever happened for you? What areas of your life entomb you? Have you heard your name being called by Jesus? What has he spoken to you?



## What is a Disciple?

The word *disciple* comes from the Greek word *mathetes*, meaning a pupil or student of the master. The master is, of course, Jesus Christ. A disciple is one who follows Jesus, loves him, desires to learn from him, to be with him, and to share him with others. The identity of a disciple springs from Jesus Christ, through faith and baptism, and grows in the church, the community where all its members acquire equal dignity and participate in various ministries and gifts. We are disciples of a person, and that person is Jesus Christ. “Discipleship is not about achieving a height of holiness,” remarks Kristin Bird, executive director of the Burning Hearts Apostolate, “but rather a depth of relationship that holiness flows from.”

So where do we begin in our discipleship efforts? We begin by starting with ourselves and our own conversion—and continued conversion—to Jesus Christ. At the USCCB General Assembly meeting in 2012, Cardinal Timothy Dolan challenged the bishops with the following words: “First things first...We cannot engage culture unless we let [Jesus] first engage us; we cannot dialogue with others unless we first dialogue with Him; we cannot challenge others unless we first let Him challenge us.”

Every one of us, regardless of vocation, role in life, or ministry, is called to holiness and to growth in the Catholic faith. You might be wondering if you have the necessary qualifications for discipleship; well, you do! Your qualification for missionary discipleship comes from the Sacrament of Baptism, which is the core catalyst for the disciple’s life. Baptism imparts to us the grace necessary to share the Gospel, and there are some keys that continue to help us grow as disciples. Below are the ten Ds of discipleship.

- 1. Desire.** We begin our journey as a disciple in baptism, but we must continually affirm our desire to grow in relationship with Jesus and his body, the Church. Without this desire, we can become disconnected and apathetic.

Questions: What is the date of my baptism? How do I continually affirm my desire to live out my baptismal call?

- 2. Discern.** Being a disciple means that we must make the time to reflect on our lives. Just as Jesus went away to pray about and discern whom to choose as his disciples, we must also discern what it means to be a disciple. Discernment and prayer are at the heart of the disciples’ life.

Questions: How do I understand and practice the steps of discernment? What helps guide my discernment?

3. **Decision.** At some point in our lives, we recognize more fully that we need to set aside those distractions and habits that lead us away from Christ. This decision or series of decisions, to say no to the things of the world and yes to Jesus Christ is at the heart of our ongoing conversion.

Questions: When did I decide to follow Jesus Christ? Was it a specific time or a season in my life? What was going on in my life at that time?

4. **Discipline.** Saying yes to Christ involves personal sacrifice and discipline. Time is the currency of discipleship: if we want to grow as disciples, we must be disciplined in spending time with Christ and learning from him.

Questions: How disciplined am I at setting aside time to grow as a disciple? How can I grow stronger in relationship with Jesus? With the church? Choosing one area, what will I do to become more disciplined?

5. **Dwelling in the Word.** The Word of God holds the power to form and transform us. God speaks to us in his Word. A disciple cannot grow and be nourished apart from the Word of God. Dwelling in the Word of God is essential for growth in the Christian life.

Questions: How do I integrate Gods' Word into my daily life? In what ways can I be more faithful to the Word of God in thought, deed, and action?

6. **Dependence on the Holy Spirit.** All the good that we do in life depends on the action or animations of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who awakens in us the desire to follow Jesus and to grow in holiness, the Holy Spirit shines through us. We must become more dependent on listening to the promptings and 'nudgings' of the Holy Spirit.

Questions: How would I describe my relationship with the Holy Spirit? How does the presence of the Holy Spirit manifest in my life?

7. **Denial.** Saying yes to God means saying no to the habits, beliefs, and practices that pull us away from Him. Denial of self so that we can carry the cross helps us develop reliance on God and resilience for the journey ahead. Jesus reminds us that "if any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34)

Questions: What would I give up right now to be truly at peace and free to walk with Jesus?

8. **Dedication.** Being a friend and follower of Jesus involves daily dedication to living a virtuous and moral life. Dedication involves sacrificing our time and ourselves to give to others and to work with God in redeeming the world.

Questions: What sacrifices do I make to grow in my discipleship? In what areas am I most dedicated? What areas need more prayer and work?

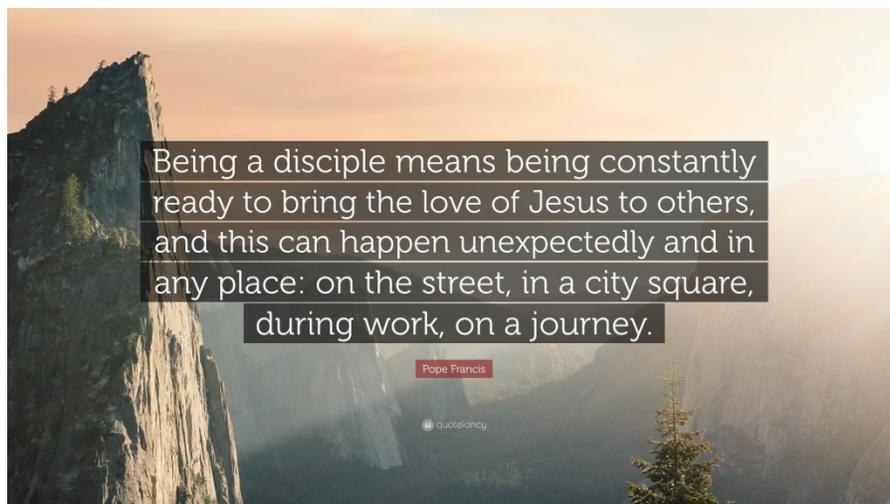
9. **Deliberation.** Intentionality is necessary for the disciple. Like all practices, growth in discipleship is the result of small daily actions that help us conform ourselves even more to Christ. This is not happenstance; it takes time and effort to plan and center our lives around our relationship with Christ. In the words of John, “he must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30)

Questions: How intentional am I in my journey as a disciple? What is one specific change I can make to be more deliberate in my walk of faith?

10. **Do.** Discipleship is not a program but a process, a way of life. The entire discipleship process is an apprenticeship in faith, in the living out of the Christian life. We must move from being hearers of the Word to “doers.” We are nourished to be doers by Jesus’ very body and blood. He urges us to “do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19)

Questions: Do I “do” too little or too much? What areas of my life do I need to reassess so that I can be a doer of the Word and not a doer of the world?

Julianne Stanz



## PRAYING IN THE PEWS

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray so that they could deepen their love for Christ and for one another. The Scriptures are clear. Jesus tells us to pray with others, for others, and over others. We may be part of a parish community whose pews are overflowing or one where the pews are empty week after week. Regardless of our parish experience, we can all pray that our parishes become places filled with people on fire for the Lord. Whether we sit in the same pew each week or sit somewhere different, we can uplift all those who have sat or will sit in the pews of our parish communities. A parish team can walk through the church and pause before each pew, praying for all those who have sat there and those who will sit there. You can also do this individually or with your family. Here's how it goes. Spiritually adopt the pew that you pray in, whether you sit there regularly or not. There are three ways to do this.

1. Pray for the people of the pew. Remembering that there are those who attend daily Mass or go to Mass at a different time than you, spiritually adopt your pew as a place of prayer for those who have sat there or who will sit there during the week. Include in your thoughts and prayers all those who will sit in this sacred space and offer their intentions to the Lord, who knows the deepest desires of our hearts.
2. While at Mass, look for those who are new. Consciously ask, "Who's new to the pew? Every time you sit in your pew. Make an effort to smile, introduce yourself (if possible), and be especially gracious during the sign of peace. Making a newcomer feel welcome at Mass is good for everyone but can be especially comforting for those who are lonely, hurting, or struggling.
3. Embrace the middle of the pew. There are valid and important reasons people decide to sit at the end of the pew. It is convenient for those who are elderly, for those who have children, and for those who have disabilities. But for those of us, who like to sit at the end of a pew for convenience, try to scoot in and make room for new people. Trust me, families with young children or the elderly will be especially thankful for those who take the time to do this out of love and concern for others!

### A Prayer from the Pew

*Heavenly Father, with grateful hearts we thank you for all our parish family who have sat in these pews. Whether they are registered parishioners or treasured guests, they are all part of our family of faith who worship and glorify you. We thank you for their lives, their faith, and the gift of their presence. Uplift all whose hearts are filled with sorrow and burdens. Comfort those who face difficult challenges. Guide those who need the warmth of your reassurance. Strengthen us anew to continually seek the face of your Son. Lord Jesus Christ. We ask this in your name. Amen.*

Julianne Stanz

**PRAYER: OUR DAILY BREAD**

The saying is true: “We are what we eat.” Neglecting to eat a wide array of foods will result in a nutritional imbalance within our bodies, and these imbalances can be quite serious. A balanced diet, on the other hand, contains a healthy array of foods to sustain us. This is also true for our spiritual diet. The Catholic Church offers a wide variety of spiritual foods to give us hope and sustain us on our journey of faith so that we can be spiritually well balanced. As you go through the following list of common Catholic prayer practices, take a mental inventory of the practices that nourish you regularly and the ones that do not. Which practices would you call the “staples”? Which ones do you not currently practice? Which ones could you add for a more balanced diet?

<b>Habits of Prayer</b>	<b>Part of My Life (staples)</b>	<b>Not Part of My Life</b>	<b>Practices I would Like to Add</b>
Morning Prayer			
Mealtimes Prayer			
Daily Scripture Reading			
Lectio Divina			
Adoration			
Daily Mass			
Contemplative Prayer			
The Spiritual Exercises			
Examination of Conscience			
Corporal Works of Mercy			
Spiritual Works of Mercy			
Liturgy of the Hours			
Novenas			
Pilgrimages			
Other			

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that “prayer and Christian life are inseparable” (CCC 2745) and that “prayer is a vital necessity” (CCC 2744), but sometimes we need a little help establishing a more prayerful routine to help others pray. Establishing a daily prayer routine can be difficult if you don’t know where to begin. The following template can serve as a guide for you.

**Begin with where you are.**

List the times during the day/week when you currently prayer.

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**Keep realistic expectations.**

What is one thing you can do to strengthen your prayer life at this time?

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**Try new things.**

Pick two or three new prayer practices to try.

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**Don't go it alone.**

Who can help you become more well-rounded in prayer? List their names here.

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**How will you achieve your goals?**

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*When evangelizers rise from prayer, their hearts are more open: freed of self-absorption, they are desirous of doing good and sharing their lives with others."*

*Evangelii Gaudium, #282*

Julianne Stanz

## ZOOM SESSION

Icebreaker: (15 minutes)

What is your favorite walking place to think, pray or just be alone? What do you like about this place?

When have you experienced a surprising encounter of God's presence in this particular walking space or any other space?

Are you willing to share?

Prayer—Guided Meditation (15 minutes)

Scriptural Exegesis

Feedback on Reading Material (20 minutes)

Announcements (5 minutes)

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

## CLOSING PRAYER

**Response:**           **Walk closely with us Jesus**

As we strive to live our lives well.....

As we enjoy the treasures we've found in the field of faith.....

As we continue to surrender ourselves to you.....

As we journey into the unknown territory of new experiences.....

As we hurt in the process of loving our enemies.....

As we learn to accept our weaknesses and our strengths.....

As we open our hearts to the messengers you send to us.....

As we stay faithful to our relationship with you.....

As we give ourselves to the poor and the powerless.....

As we keep searching for the truth.....

As we try to live in the heart of the scriptures....

As we accept your constant love for us.....

**All:    Lord Jesus, we are walking into mystery. We face the future, not knowing what the days and months will bring to us or how we will respond. Be love in us as we journey. May we welcome all who come our way. Deepen our faith to see all of life through your eyes. Fill us with hope and an abiding trust that you dwell in us amidst all our joys and sorrows. Thank you for the treasure of our faith life. Thank you for the gift of being able to rise each day with the assurance of your walking through the day with us. Amen.**

