

God's Compassion Missions Jesus (Retreat part 12)

We have responded to the invitation of Jesus, the one who loves us. At some level we have expressed our desire to *be with* Jesus in his mission from God. Now we give ourselves over to the desires of this growing love-companionship relationship.

As we grow in love for someone — especially someone who has done so much for us — we experience a powerful desire not only to be *with* the one we love but also to know everything we can *about* that person. In the fascination of love we say that we can't get enough of the one we love.

For this week, and for the weeks ahead, our one desire is to come to know as much as we can about Jesus. Of course, this is not *head knowledge*. It's more the kind of discovery that leads to deeper feelings of intimacy and love, and deeper desires to be with him in his mission. *To know him more intimately that I might love him more deeply, that I might follow him more closely.*

In the early days of this retreat, we looked at our own story, through the imaginative exercise of looking through the images in the *photo album* of our life. Now we ask Jesus to show us *his* photo album. In our desire to know more about him, we ask Jesus to show us *everything* — to tell us his story — that we might fall more deeply in love with the one we will come to know so intimately. The one who has invited us to be with him in his mission.

This week we start at the beginning. We imagine that in God's eternity, the Trinity of Persons in God looked down on human history and was filled with infinite compassion that missioned Jesus to save us. We know that that expression of love by God resulted in our salvation history — the preparation, the promises, the expectation, and finally the birth of Jesus and his life, death, and resurrection for us.

Let us enter into the mystery of the Incarnation, the choice of God to redeem our world. We've reviewed all that sin and rebellion in our world has meant, including our personal sin. Now we imagine the response of God to the sin of the world — the missioning of Jesus. And let's begin to express our desire to know his origins that we might fall more deeply in love with him and be united with his mission, however he should choose to invite us to join him.

Pray in these or similar words...

Dear Lord,

What is it like for you to look at the world you created? You see the beauty, the nature, people caring for each other, children being born. But there is the other side. I can't imagine how much evil you see. Children going hungry, dying in their mother's arms; weapons becoming more important than the people they were designed to protect; tired and lonely people wandering the streets, not only without a place to stay but also without dignity and respect.

How do you look down on such a world, where we are destroying one another's homes, pouring chemicals into the waters, and valuing money and possessions more than each other? You must feel such great sadness inside. Your creations have forgotten you.

But in an incomprehensible act of love, your compassion moves you to give yourself so completely to the world you created. You express your love for us in a most unusual way — you become one of us. How could you love us that much? Knowing that it means pain and struggle and death?

Oh, Lord, teach me to love more. I beg you, please let me see and feel how you lived your life on earth. I want to know you even better and want to be with you in this world. I want to accept your invitation, to say yes to you. Now please let me become friends with you as you walk the earth. Let me learn from you, talk with you. Let me see how I can pattern my life after yours.

I am in awe at your love for us — for me. I don't have the words to express any of it except a paltry "thank you," which sounds so inadequate. Take my hand, Lord. Talk to me. Show me your photo album and your life. Help me to say yes every day.