

IMPACT

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.

RUNNING GETS US NOWHERE

We might say it is in our common human tendency to run away. As toddlers, many of us packed a few of our most precious belongings and left home in search of freedom or simply because we had to see what was beyond the doors of the familiar and loved. Our tendency to run doesn't stop as we mature. We fight the temptation to run away - from difficulties, commitment, even from God - throughout our lives. Jesus knows how often we resolve to follow him only to backtrack when the going gets tough. He understands how easy it is for us to turn away from God's divine plan and will. We may for a time feel we are heading somewhere. Yet Jesus knows that we will only find fulfillment and peace when we are close to him. The Lord knows that ultimately our running gets us nowhere because we are running from who we are called to be and what we are called to do.

REMAIN RATHER THAN RUN

Jesus said to his disciples: "Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me." (Jn 15:1-8) Running away is not true to our deepest nature as people who are created in God's image, after God's very likeness. In our most perfect self, we are so close to God there is no distance between us. When we are faithful to our baptism, we are united to Jesus and to one another. As disciples, we find the strength we need in the power of the Holy Spirit to remain rather than run.

BE ROOTED

Remaining with Jesus roots us in God's love. Like branches on a thriving vine, we gain sustenance and life in the Lord who remains in us, as we remain in him. It is difficult for us to grasp the immensity of God's love and the abundance of God's grace that is offered to

us through Jesus Christ. Yet, this abundant life is freely given us. We have only to accept it and to live it.

BEAR FRUIT

Rooted in God's love, we will bear good fruit. St. John Neumann captured our call to bear the fruit of God's love profoundly: "God sees every one of us; He creates every soul ...for a purpose. He needs, He deigns to need every one of us. He has an end for each of us; we are all equal in His sight, and we are placed in our different ranks and stations, not to get what we can out of them for ourselves, but to labor in them for Him. As Christ has worked, we too have but to labor in them for Him. As Christ has His work, we too have ours; as He rejoiced to do his work, we must rejoice in ours also."

"I am the vine, you are the branches."

JN 15:1-8

REMAIN IN ME.

BEAR FRUIT.

We live in mission through the Holy Spirit

Have you ever felt it just isn't possible to live as a disciple in today's world?

There is no doubt, living faith in our daily lives is not always easy. Not only is the world increasingly ambivalent about, sometimes overtly hostile to, faith, it is challenging to consciously live as a follower of Jesus. Doing so requires us to be intentional about our attitudes, decisions, and actions, every day, in every situation.

We are sometimes uncertain whether we are ready to take our relationship with Christ seriously.

It isn't that life is always hard, although we all have difficult periods in our lives. We have collectively endured the past year together, and have often taken heart knowing that we are in this together.

Sometimes we are tempted to run away and take the easy way out.

We may get weary and become disheartened. Friends may want us to do things that feel counter to the Christian way of life. We may face ethical dilemmas at work. We may fight selfish and self-centered tendencies when demands are placed on our time. We may be afraid to truly live as a person of faith, for fear of rejection or ridicule.

After Jesus' crucifixion, the disciples were filled with fear. They may have wanted to run away and hide.

Yet, they remained together, waiting as Jesus had told them, uncertain of what was to come.

On the day of Pentecost, they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Empowered with the strength and courage of the Spirit of God, they boldly shared the good news of Jesus' resurrection and they never looked back.

Like the disciples, we, too, have a mission. And like them, the Holy Spirit is with us.

In his pastoral exhortation on the call to holiness in today's world, Pope Francis challenges us to live our mission with purpose through the power of the Holy Spirit: "You too need to see the entirety of your life as a mission. Try to do so by listening to God in prayer and recognizing the signs that he gives you. Always ask the Spirit what Jesus expects

from you at every moment of your life and in every decision you must make, so as to discern its place in the mission you have received. Allow the Spirit to forge in you the personal mystery that can reflect Jesus Christ in today's world." (GE, 23).



Impact this month

Commit yourself to live as a follower of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Pray this prayer to the Holy Spirit each day this month.

Lift your heart and mind to God, and be especially mindful of the ways in which you need the power of the Spirit at this time.

Holy Spirit, fire of love, open my heart and mind to your wisdom.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Guide me as I walk the way of discipleship; enliven me in your presence.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Give me courage to serve boldly and with compassion.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Strengthen my faith as I grow more deeply in relationship with Christ and with others.

Come, Holy Spirit!

You are God, with the Father and the Son, now and forever.

Come, Holy Spirit, come!

