

RESOURCES FOR YOUR CONTINUING GROWTH AS A DISCIPLE

As you continue to grow in your discipleship, there are many resources that might be able to assist you. We have curated some of those resources for you here. When possible, we have listed any correlations between the resources and the particular Catholic discipleship expressions it addresses.

Table of Contents

1. EXPLORING MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP	1
2. DEEPENING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD	1
3. SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS	2
4. PAPAL TEACHINGS ON CATHOLIC DISCIPLESHIP	5
5. CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHINGS RELATED TO DISCIPLESHIP	13

1. EXPLORING MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

View these inspiring videos based on *Living as Missionary Disciples*, a booklet from the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

1. [Encounter](#)

Bishop Frank Caggiano provides a rich reflection on the Catholic Discipleship Profile expression of Encountering God.

2. [Accompany](#)

Julianne Stanz offers insight into the Catholic Discipleship Profile expression of Accompanying and Being Accompanied.

3. [Send](#)

Fr. Frank Donio, S.A.C., shares his thoughts on what it means to follow Jesus as a missionary disciple.

2. DEEPENING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Learn about proven ways to grow closer to God.

1. **Encounter Christ in the Scriptures, the Word of God.**

“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work”
2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Read and pray with the Sunday and daily Mass readings [here](#). Try to develop the habit of reading these Scriptures every day.

2. **Pray with the Scriptures using Lectio Divina**

Watch this [video](#) to learn how you can pray using Lectio Divina, a dynamic five-step method of praying with the Scriptures in the Catholic tradition. Using Lectio Divina helps you develop a more intimate and personal relationship with God that can change your life.

3. Develop a deeper awareness of the presence of God in your life through praying the Examen

This [video](#) teaches you about the Ignatian Consciousness Examen, a way of reflecting on God's presence in your life.

3. SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

Spend some time reflecting on these Scriptures by answering the questions provided.

1. Encountering God - Matthew 11:25-29

At that time Jesus said in reply "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

For Reflection

- 1) In what way do you think your faith in God the Father is "childlike"? What are the positive aspects of this kind of attitude?
- 2) In what ways do you think Jesus has made the Father known to you? How has he freed you up to pray to God?
- 3) How is your relationship with God reflected in the attitude and prayer of Jesus? What else do you think needs to grow in your life.

2. Integrating Faith and Life - Matthew 13: 31-33

He proposed another parable to them. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the 'birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.'"

He spoke to them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened."

For Reflection:

- 1) How do you think of holiness as part of the ordinary process of daily life?
- 2) In what ways do you strive to bring your daily life and your faith together? Are there actions you take to make this more visible to you or to others?
- 3) Look back over the last ten years of your life; what are the areas of growth you would most identify? What aspects of your faith, if any, were part of that growth? How might you take steps to enlarge faith's influence in your personal growth?

3. Accompanying and Being Accompanied - John 1:35-42

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). Then he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

For Reflection

- 1) As you read this section of the Gospel according to John, where do you see yourself in the scene? Why?
- 2) What is Jesus' attitude toward those who are curious about him? What does he invite them to do? What is Jesus' invitation to you?
- 3) Peter begins a long relationship with Jesus; think about this relationship and reflect on what it means for Jesus to have accompanied Peter.

4. Serving Others - Matthew 25:31-40

[Jesus said] "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And

the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

For Reflection

- 1) What questions does this image of the final judgment raise for you?
- 2) Why do you think the Son of Man makes judgment rest on how "the least" were treated? What do you make of the fact that the "just" did not even realize they were serving the Son of Man?
- 3) How do you think you would make out if you were judged according to these criteria? Are there any things you would keep the same, or change, in your style of life?

5. Living as a Catholic - Matthew 6:5-15

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

"This is how you are to pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and do not subject us to the final test,
but deliver us from the evil one.

If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.

For Reflection

- 1) What, in the Lord's Prayer, most resonates with you? Why?
- 2) As you look at this prayer, what parts of it seem to speak of your Catholic life, i.e., prayer, worship, reconciliation, care for others, temptation, etc. In what ways do you think this prayer supports your Catholic way of living?

3) If someone asked you, “What does your faith do for you?” how would you answer them?

4. PAPAL TEACHINGS ON CATHOLIC DISCIPLESHIP

The teachings of Pope Francis add clarity and understanding to the five expressions of Catholic discipleship in the Catholic Discipleship Profile. Some of these teachings from [*The Joy of the Gospel*](#), [*Rejoice and Be Glad*](#), [*The Joy of Love*](#), and [*Fratelli Tutti*](#) are found in the numbered paragraphs below. You can access the entire documents by clicking on the links provided.

Expression 1: Encountering God

The Joy of the Gospel by Pope Francis

This apostolic exhortation, published November 24, 2013, focuses on the proclamation of the Gospel in today’s world.

1. The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in years to come.

I. A joy ever new, a joy which is shared

2. The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God’s voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless. That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God’s will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ.

3. I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”.^[1] The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: “Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace”. How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy. Christ, who told us to forgive one another “seventy times seven” (Mt 18:22) has given us his example: he has forgiven us seventy times seven. Time and time again he bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unfailing love. With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it

possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew. Let us not flee from the resurrection of Jesus, let us never give up, come what will. May nothing inspire more than his life, which impels us onwards!

The mysterious working of the risen Christ and his Spirit

278. Faith also means believing in God, believing that he truly loves us, that he is alive, that he is mysteriously capable of intervening, that he does not abandon us and that he brings good out of evil by his power and his infinite creativity. It means believing that he marches triumphantly in history with those who “are called and chosen and faithful” (Rev 17:14). Let us believe the Gospel when it tells us that the kingdom of God is already present in this world and is growing, here and there, and in different ways: like the small seed which grows into a great tree (cf. Mt 13:31-32), like the measure of leaven that makes the dough rise (cf. Mt 13:33) and like the good seed that grows amid the weeds (cf. Mt 13, 24-30) and can always pleasantly surprise us. The kingdom is here, it returns, it struggles to flourish anew. Christ’s resurrection everywhere calls forth seeds of that new world; even if they are cut back, they grow again, for the resurrection is already secretly woven into the fabric of this history, for Jesus did not rise in vain. May we never remain on the sidelines of this march of living hope!

279. Because we do not always see these seeds growing, we need an interior certainty, a conviction that God is able to act in every situation, even amid apparent setbacks: “We have this treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Cor 4:7). This certainty is often called “a sense of mystery”. It involves knowing with certitude that all those who entrust themselves to God in love will bear good fruit (cf. Jn 15:5). This fruitfulness is often invisible, elusive and unquantifiable. We can know quite well that our lives will be fruitful, without claiming to know how, or where, or when. We may be sure that none of our acts of love will be lost, nor any of our acts of sincere concern for others. No single act of love for God will be lost, no generous effort is meaningless, no painful endurance is wasted. All of these encircle our world like a vital force. Sometimes it seems that our work is fruitless, but mission is not like a business transaction or investment, or even a humanitarian activity. It is not a show where we count how many people come as a result of our publicity; it is something much deeper, which escapes all measurement. It may be that the Lord uses our sacrifices to shower blessings in another part of the world which we will never visit. The Holy Spirit works as he wills, when he wills and where he wills; we entrust ourselves without pretending to see striking results. We know only that our commitment is necessary. Let us learn to rest in the tenderness of the arms of the Father amid our creative and generous commitment. Let us keep marching forward; let us give him everything, allowing him to make our efforts bear fruit in his good time.

280. Keeping our missionary fervor alive calls for firm trust in the Holy Spirit, for it is he who “helps us in our weakness” (Rom 8:26). But this generous trust has to be nourished, and so we need to invoke the Spirit constantly. He can heal whatever causes us to flag in the missionary endeavor. It is true that this trust in the unseen can cause us to feel disoriented: it is like being plunged into the deep and not knowing what we will find. I myself have frequently experienced this. Yet there is no greater freedom than that of allowing oneself to be guided by the Holy Spirit, renouncing the attempt to plan and control everything to the last detail, and instead letting him enlighten, guide and direct us, leading us wherever he wills. The Holy Spirit knows well what is needed in every time and place. This is what it means to be mysteriously fruitful!

The missionary power of intercessory prayer

281. One form of prayer moves us particularly to take up the task of evangelization and to seek the good of others: it is the prayer of intercession. Let us peer for a moment into the heart of Saint Paul, to see what his prayer was like. It was full of people: "...I constantly pray with you in every one of my prayers for all of you... because I hold you in my heart" (Phil 1:4, 7). Here we see that intercessory prayer does not divert us from true contemplation, since authentic contemplation always has a place for others.

282. This attitude becomes a prayer of gratitude to God for others. "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you" (Rom 1:8). It is constant thankfulness: "I give thanks to God always for you because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor 1:4); "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you" (Phil 1:3). Far from being suspicious, negative and despairing, it is a spiritual gaze born of deep faith which acknowledges what God is doing in the lives of others. At the same time, it is the gratitude which flows from a heart attentive to others. 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.

Expression 2: Integrating Faith and Life

Rejoice and Be Glad by Pope Francis

This apostolic exhortation, published March 19, 2018, focuses on the call to holiness in today's world.

1. "REJOICE AND BE GLAD" (Mt 5:12), Jesus tells those persecuted or humiliated for his sake. The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence. The call to holiness is present in various ways from the very first pages of the Bible. We see it expressed in the Lord's words to Abraham: "Walk before me, and be blameless" (Gen 17:1).

2. What follows is not meant to be a treatise on holiness, containing definitions and distinctions helpful for understanding this important subject, or a discussion of the various means of sanctification. My modest goal is to repropose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities. For the Lord has chosen each one of us "to be holy and blameless before him in love" (Eph 1:4).

CHAPTER ONE: THE CALL TO HOLINESS

The saints who encourage and accompany us

3. The Letter to the Hebrews presents a number of testimonies that encourage us to "run with perseverance the race that is set before us" (12:1). It speaks of Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Gideon and others (cf. 11:1-12:3). Above all, it invites us to realize that "a great cloud of witnesses" (12:1) impels us to advance constantly towards the goal. These witnesses may include our own mothers, grandmothers or other loved ones (cf. 2 Tim 1:5). Their lives may not always have been perfect, yet even amid their faults and failings they kept moving forward and proved pleasing to the Lord.

4. The saints now in God's presence preserve their bonds of love and communion with us. The Book of Revelation attests to this when it speaks of the intercession of the martyrs: "I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried

out with a loud voice, ‘O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge?’” (6:9-10). Each of us can say: “Surrounded, led and guided by the friends of God... I do not have to carry alone what, in truth, I could never carry alone. All the saints of God are there to protect me, to sustain me and to carry me”.[1]

5. The processes of beatification and canonization recognize the signs of heroic virtue, the sacrifice of one’s life in martyrdom, and certain cases where a life is constantly offered for others, even until death. This shows an exemplary imitation of Christ, one worthy of the admiration of the faithful.[2] We can think, for example, of Blessed Maria Gabriella Sagheddu, who offered her life for the unity of Christians.

The Saints “Next Door”

6. Nor need we think only of those already beatified and canonized. The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God’s holy and faithful people, for “it has pleased God to make men and women holy and to save them, not as individuals without any bond between them, but rather as a people who might acknowledge him in truth and serve him in holiness”.[3] In salvation history, the Lord saved one people. We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual. Rather, God draws us to himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in a human community. God wanted to enter into the life and history of a people.

7. I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God’s people: in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile. In their daily perseverance I see the holiness of the Church militant. Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbors, those who, living in our midst, reflect God’s presence. We might call them “the middle class of holiness”.[4]

8. Let us be spurred on by the signs of holiness that the Lord shows us through the humblest members of that people which “shares also in Christ’s prophetic office, spreading abroad a living witness to him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity”.[5] We should consider the fact that, as Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross suggests, real history is made by so many of them. As she writes: “The greatest figures of prophecy and sanctity step forth out of the darkest night. But for the most part, the formative stream of the mystical life remains invisible. Certainly the most decisive turning points in world history are substantially co-determined by souls whom no history book ever mentions. And we will only find out about those souls to whom we owe the decisive turning points in our personal lives on the day when all that is hidden is revealed”.[6]

9. Holiness is the most attractive face of the Church. But even outside the Catholic Church and in very different contexts, the Holy Spirit raises up “signs of his presence which help Christ’s followers”.[7] Saint John Paul II reminded us that “the witness to Christ borne even to the shedding of blood has become a common inheritance of Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants”.[8] In the moving ecumenical commemoration held in the Colosseum during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, he stated that the martyrs are “a heritage which speaks more powerfully than all the causes of division”.[9]

The Lord Calls

10. All this is important. Yet with this Exhortation I would like to insist primarily on the call to holiness that the Lord addresses to each of us, the call that he also addresses, personally, to you: “Be holy, for I

am holy” (Lev 11:44; cf. 1 Pet 1:16). The Second Vatican Council stated this clearly: “Strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord – each in his or her own way – to that perfect holiness by which the Father himself is perfect”. [10]

11. “Each in his or her own way” the Council says. We should not grow discouraged before examples of holiness that appear unattainable. There are some testimonies that may prove helpful and inspiring, but that we are not meant to copy, for that could even lead us astray from the one specific path that the Lord has in mind for us. The important thing is that each believer discern his or her own path, that they bring out the very best of themselves, the most personal gifts that God has placed in their hearts (cf. 1 Cor 12:7), rather than hopelessly trying to imitate something not meant for them. We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many actual ways of bearing witness. [11] Indeed, when the great mystic, Saint John of the Cross, wrote his *Spiritual Canticle*, he preferred to avoid hard and fast rules for all. He explained that his verses were composed so that everyone could benefit from them “in his or her own way”. [12] For God’s life is communicated “to some in one way and to others in another”. [13]

12. Within these various forms, I would stress too that the “genius of woman” is seen in feminine styles of holiness, which are an essential means of reflecting God’s holiness in this world. Indeed, in times when women tended to be most ignored or overlooked, the Holy Spirit raised up saints whose attractiveness produced new spiritual vigor and important reforms in the Church. We can mention Saint Hildegard of Bingen, Saint Bridget, Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. But I think too of all those unknown or forgotten women who, each in her own way, sustained and transformed families and communities by the power of their witness.

13. This should excite and encourage us to give our all and to embrace that unique plan that God willed for each of us from eternity: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you” (Jer 1:5).

Expression 3: Accompanying and Being Accompanied

The Joy of the Gospel by Pope Francis

This apostolic exhortation, published November 24, 2013, focuses on the proclamation of the Gospel in today’s world.

Personal accompaniment in processes of growth

170. Although it sounds obvious, spiritual accompaniment must lead others ever closer to God, in whom we attain true freedom. Some people think they are free if they can avoid God; they fail to see that they remain existentially orphaned, helpless, homeless. They cease being pilgrims and become drifters, flitting around themselves and never getting anywhere. To accompany them would be counterproductive if it became a sort of therapy supporting their self-absorption and ceased to be a pilgrimage with Christ to the Father.

171. Today more than ever we need men and women who, because of their experience of accompanying others, are familiar with processes which call for prudence, understanding, patience and docility to the Spirit, so that they can protect the sheep from wolves who would scatter the flock. We

need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur. Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders. Only through such respectful and compassionate listening can we enter on the paths of true growth and awaken a yearning for the Christian ideal: the desire to respond fully to God's love and to bring to fruition what he has sown in our lives. But this always demands the patience of one who knows full well what Saint Thomas Aquinas tells us: that anyone can have grace and charity, and yet falter in the exercise of the virtues because of persistent "contrary inclinations".[133] In other words, the organic unity of the virtues always and necessarily exists in habitu, even though forms of conditioning can hinder the operations of those virtuous habits. Hence the need for "a pedagogy which will introduce people step by step to the full appropriation of the mystery".[134] Reaching a level of maturity where individuals can make truly free and responsible decisions calls for much time and patience. As Blessed Peter Faber used to say: "Time is God's messenger".

172. One who accompanies others has to realize that each person's situation before God and their life in grace are mysteries which no one can fully know from without. The Gospel tells us to correct others and to help them to grow on the basis of a recognition of the objective evil of their actions (cf. Mt 18:15), but without making judgments about their responsibility and culpability (cf. Mt 7:1; Lk 6:37). Someone good at such accompaniment does not give in to frustrations or fears. He or she invites others to let themselves be healed, to take up their mat, embrace the cross, leave all behind and go forth ever anew to proclaim the Gospel. Our personal experience of being accompanied and assisted, and of openness to those who accompany us, will teach us to be patient and compassionate with others, and to find the right way to gain their trust, their openness and their readiness to grow.

173. Genuine spiritual accompaniment always begins and flourishes in the context of service to the mission of evangelization. Paul's relationship with Timothy and Titus provides an example of this accompaniment and formation which takes place in the midst of apostolic activity. Entrusting them with the mission of remaining in each city to "put in order what remains to be done" (Tit 1:5; cf. 1 Tim 1:3-5), Paul also gives them rules for their personal lives and their pastoral activity. This is clearly distinct from every kind of intrusive accompaniment or isolated self-realization. Missionary disciples accompany missionary disciples.

The Joy of Love by Pope Francis

This apostolic exhortation, published March 19, 2016, focuses on love in the family.

Accompanying the first years of married life

217. It is important that marriage be seen as a matter of love, that only those who freely choose and love one another may marry. When love is merely physical attraction or a vague affection, spouses become particularly vulnerable once this affection wanes or physical attraction diminishes. Given the frequency with which this happens, it is all the more essential that couples be helped during the first years of their married life to enrich and deepen their conscious and free decision to have, hold and love one another for life. Often the engagement period is not long enough, the decision is precipitated for various reasons and, what is even more problematic, the couple themselves are insufficiently mature. As a result, the newly married couple need to complete a process that should have taken place during their engagement.

218. Another great challenge of marriage preparation is to help couples realize that marriage is not something that happens once for all. Their union is real and irrevocable, confirmed and consecrated by the sacrament of matrimony. Yet in joining their lives, the spouses assume an active and creative role in a lifelong project. Their gaze now has to be directed to the future that, with the help of God's grace, they are daily called to build. For this very reason, neither spouse can expect the other to be perfect. Each must set aside all illusions and accept the other as he or she actually is: an unfinished product, needing to grow, a work in progress.

Expression 4: Serving Others

***Fratelli Tutti* by Pope Francis**

This encyclical letter, published October 3, 2020, focuses on fraternity and social friendship.

The value of solidarity

114. I would like especially to mention solidarity, which, "as a moral virtue and social attitude born of personal conversion, calls for commitment on the part of those responsible for education and formation. I think first of families, called to a primary and vital mission of education. Families are the first place where the values of love and fraternity, togetherness and sharing, concern and care for others are lived out and handed on. They are also the privileged milieu for transmitting the faith, beginning with those first simple gestures of devotion which mothers teach their children. Teachers, who have the challenging task of training children and youth in schools or other settings, should be conscious that their responsibility extends also to the moral, spiritual and social aspects of life. The values of freedom, mutual respect and solidarity can be handed on from a tender age... Communicators also have a responsibility for education and formation, especially nowadays, when the means of information and communication are so widespread".[87]

115. At a time when everything seems to disintegrate and lose consistency, it is good for us to appeal to the "solidity"[88] born of the consciousness that we are responsible for the fragility of others as we strive to build a common future. Solidarity finds concrete expression in service, which can take a variety of forms in an effort to care for others. And service in great part means "caring for vulnerability, for the vulnerable members of our families, our society, our people". In offering such service, individuals learn to "set aside their own wishes and desires, their pursuit of power, before the concrete gaze of those who are most vulnerable... Service always looks to their faces, touches their flesh, senses their closeness and even, in some cases, 'suffers' that closeness and tries to help them. Service is never ideological, for we do not serve ideas, we serve people".[89]

116. The needy generally "practice the special solidarity that exists among those who are poor and suffering, and which our civilization seems to have forgotten or would prefer in fact to forget. Solidarity is a word that is not always well received; in certain situations, it has become a dirty word, a word that dare not be said. Solidarity means much more than engaging in sporadic acts of generosity. It means thinking and acting in terms of community. It means that the lives of all are prior to the appropriation of goods by a few. It also means combatting the structural causes of poverty, inequality, the lack of work, land and housing, the denial of social and labor rights. It means confronting the destructive effects of the empire of money... Solidarity, understood in its most profound meaning, is a way of making history, and this is what popular movements are doing".[90]

117. When we speak of the need to care for our common home, our planet, we appeal to that spark of universal consciousness and mutual concern that may still be present in people's hearts. Those who enjoy a surplus of water yet choose to conserve it for the sake of the greater human family have attained a moral stature that allows them to look beyond themselves and the group to which they belong. How marvelously human! The same attitude is demanded if we are to recognize the rights of all people, even those born beyond our own borders.

Expression 5: Living as a Catholic

Rejoice and Be Glad by Pope Francis

This apostolic exhortation, published March 19, 2018, focuses on the call to holiness in today's world.

In community

140. When we live apart from others, it is very difficult to fight against concupiscence, the snares and temptations of the devil and the selfishness of the world. Bombarded as we are by so many enticements, we can grow too isolated, lose our sense of reality and inner clarity, and easily succumb.

141. Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others. We see this in some holy communities. From time to time, the Church has canonized entire communities that lived the Gospel heroically or offered to God the lives of all their members. We can think, for example, of the seven holy founders of the Order of the Servants of Mary, the seven blessed sisters of the first monastery of the Visitation in Madrid, the Japanese martyrs Saint Paul Miki and companions, the Korean martyrs Saint Andrew Taegon and companions, or the South American martyrs Saint Roque González, Saint Alonso Rodríguez and companions. We should also remember the more recent witness borne by the Trappists of Tibhirine, Algeria, who prepared as a community for martyrdom. In many holy marriages too, each spouse becomes a means used by Christ for the sanctification of the other. Living or working alongside others is surely a path of spiritual growth. Saint John of the Cross told one of his followers: "You are living with others in order to be fashioned and tried".[104]

142. Each community is called to create a "God-enlightened space in which to experience the hidden presence of the risen Lord".[105] Sharing the word and celebrating the Eucharist together fosters fraternity and makes us a holy and missionary community. It also gives rise to authentic and shared mystical experiences. Such was the case with Saints Benedict and Scholastica. We can also think of the sublime spiritual experience shared by Saint Augustine and his mother, Saint Monica. "As the day now approached on which she was to depart this life, a day known to you but not to us, it came about, as I believe by your secret arrangement, that she and I stood alone leaning in a window that looked onto a garden... We opened wide our hearts to drink in the streams of your fountain, the source of life that is in you... And as we spoke of that wisdom and strained after it, we touched it in some measure by the impetus of our hearts... eternal life might be like that one moment of knowledge which we now sighed after".[106]

143. Such experiences, however, are neither the most frequent nor the most important. The common life, whether in the family, the parish, the religious community or any other, is made up of small everyday things. This was true of the holy community formed by Jesus, Mary and Joseph, which

reflected in an exemplary way the beauty of the Trinitarian communion. It was also true of the life that Jesus shared with his disciples and with ordinary people.

144. Let us not forget that Jesus asked his disciples to pay attention to details.

The little detail that wine was running out at a party.

The little detail that one sheep was missing.

The little detail of noticing the widow who offered her two small coins.

The little detail of having spare oil for the lamps, should the bridegroom delay.

The little detail of asking the disciples how many loaves of bread they had.

The little detail of having a fire burning and a fish cooking as he waited for the disciples at daybreak.

5. CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHINGS ON CATHOLIC DISCIPLESHIP

These Catholic Church teachings will help you reflect more deeply on the five discipleship expressions of the Catholic Discipleship Profile.

1. ENCOUNTERING God

[Catechism of the Catholic Church #27-30; 2559-2565; 2700-2724](#)

[Living as Missionary Disciples](#) p. 7-9

[The Joy of the Gospel #1-8; 264-267](#)

2. INTEGRATING Faith and Life

[Catechism of the Catholic Church #1812-1829; 1965-1970](#)

[Living as Missionary Disciples](#) p. 12-14

[The Joy of the Gospel #163-168](#)

3. ACCOMPANYING and Being Accompanied

[Catechism of the Catholic Church #781-795](#)

[Living as Missionary Disciples](#) p. 14-16

[The Joy of the Gospel #40-45; 169-173](#)

4. SERVING Others

[Catechism of the Catholic Church #849-856; 1939-1942](#)

[Living as Missionary Disciples](#) p. 17-18

[The Joy of the Gospel 119-121; 127-129; 217-237](#)

5. LIVING as a Catholic

[Catechism of the Catholic Church #1145-1167; 2663-2679](#)

[Living as Missionary Disciples](#) p. 9-11

[The Joy of Gospel #87-92](#)