

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



The Oxford English Dictionary defines a disciple as “a follower or pupil of a teacher, leader, or philosopher.” A disciple is a student whose desire is to learn from the teacher some lesson, skill or idea that can enhance the student’s life. Throughout history we have disciples who went on to change the world because the lessons taught by their teachers. Aristotle was Plato’s greatest student. St. Augustine was catechized and baptized by St. Ambrose. Ralph Waldo Emerson was mentored by writer Henry David Thoreau. St. Albert the Great taught theology to St. Thomas Aquinas. In our Servite tradition, St. Peregrine changed his life through the preaching of St. Philip Benizi who later received Peregrine into the Servite Community. But, the greatest example of a teacher influencing a disciple is the Lord Jesus and the Holy Apostles. From the apostle’s discipleship, you and I have the benefit of knowing Jesus in the Church. As Christians, we are the modern-day disciples of Jesus.

Simply put, a Christian disciple is a student of Jesus who lives by faith the lessons the master Jesus teaches. Through the guidance of the Church, the celebration of the Eucharist and the sacraments and in prayer, Jesus continues to teach us how to live. Also, with each encounter that we have with Jesus, our love for Him grows deeper and more intense. We begin to

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make decisions based on Jesus’ life and teachings. Our relationship with Jesus grows to be personal and not superficial. We experience Him in worship, in prayer and in others. Our mission as Christian disciples is to present Christ to the world by lovingly proclaiming what He taught. As one Baptist Christian once said, ‘the only Bible that most people will ever read is the one lived by a Christian.’ Being disciples of Jesus, we are tasked by the Lord to proclaim His love to others through

selfless service. In this way, the lessons we learn in the classroom of the Church’s liturgy and teachings, and the classroom of our personal prayer become a way of life that is characterized by love, hope, service, courage and joy. All this we learn as pupils of the Master, Jesus. Discipleship of Jesus is the foundation of the Consecrated Life.

By virtue of our Baptism, all of us are disciples of Jesus. Consecrated Men and Women vow to witness Jesus to the world



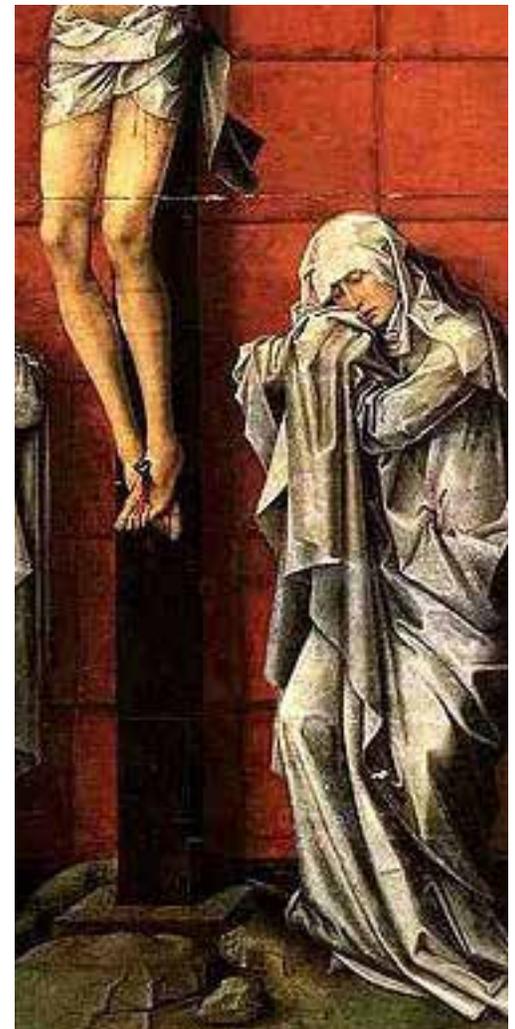
Questions for Prayer and Reflection:

1. How do I understand discipleship? What is the Lord teaching me about my life in Him?
2. How can the life of Mary, the Mother of God, teach me about my response to the Lord? Is following the Lord easy or difficult for me at this time in my life? Why?

through profession of the three evangelical counsels (celibacy for the Kingdom of God, poverty and obedience) and life in community. We are students of Christ, and our classroom is the education we receive within our community. We are witnesses of Jesus through our loving service to others. We are lovers of Jesus as He is our most significant relationship. The greatest lesson that Jesus teach us is that He and Father are forever faithful. The Holy Spirit reminds us of this through the events and people of our lives. The classroom of discipleship for Servites is the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Mary is the Perfect Disciple of the Lord Jesus. The entirety of Mary's life was marked by faithfulness to God. Through joys and sorrows, uncontrollable life events and situations, Mary remained faithful to the Lord. Mary's faithfulness is notably witnessed at the Cross of Jesus where she stands as a silent and compassionate witness to the faithfulness of God whose Son dies to bring salvation to humanity. Mary's faithfulness to God was founded on hope birthed in the love she experienced from God. As we meditate on the image of Mary at the foot of the Cross, we Servites are challenged in learning to be faithful to God, who is lovingly faithful to us. We express our faithfulness by standing faithfully with those who suffer pain or injustice. We pray that our compassionate presence to others leads them to know that God is with them in their travails. Servite discipleship is learning to love Christ in the classroom of Mary's life and of the Church and witnessing the faithful love we experience to others.

As you continue your discernment of the Lord's call for your life, we invite you to reflect on your discipleship of the Lord. The call to religious life and priesthood is about being a disciple, a student of Jesus and witnessing His love to the world. Let the Mother of God be your teacher in this task. We Servites are praying for you.



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