

CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO THE PILGRIMS

GENERAL COMMENTS:

This meditation for Sunday morning introduces the theme for the day, "Sharing Grace with the World". It begins the discussion of life after retreat. It is to be both an affirmation of the pilgrimage experience as well as a recognition of the possibility of living this new life in the world. (It would be helpful for the worship leader to review the outline for the clergy talk for this day, "A Life of Grace", since it will elaborate on this theme.)

NOTE The worship leader is reminded that the chapel will look much different this morning as the crucifix has been removed and the flower laden cross with the white back drape has been hung. This is the time of resurrection. The old has passed away; the new has begun. The new life in Christ has been made possible by the grace and power of God that overcomes all that separates us from God. So it is in thanksgiving and praise that we acknowledge who and whose we are as we make preparation to go out and to serve.

MEDITATION

In either dialogue or narrative form the pastor will issue the call to discipleship using John 15:16 and will remind participants of their resources for discipleship using John 15:5 and/or Jeremiah 17:7-9, and Acts 2:42-44.

1. The call to discipleship - John 15:16

"You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name." (NRSV)

Discuss the fact that God brought us here. We thought we came for many reasons, but God brought us here for a purpose. This time away has provided an opportunity for renewal, enlightenment, and preparation. This final day of retreat is a day of exploring how we might fulfill our purpose; bearing fruit, fruit that will last. Today we will explore "Sharing God's grace with the world." This pilgrimage has not been for us alone. The love of Christ we have experienced is to be shared. This love is to be lived out in our environments: home, family, golf course, board room, school, larger community, world...

2. Resources For Discipleship

A. John 15:5 and/or Jeremiah 17:7-9

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, but apart from me you can do nothing." (NRSV)

"Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when

heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.” (NRSV)

God does not send us out to do it all ourselves. Our strength and direction comes from God. As we leave we go trusting in the power of God who chooses to live within us. We need not rely on our human efforts along but on the grace of God that flows freely from the vine into the branches and from the stream into the roots as we stay in relationship. God does not desert us. Even in dry times God is nourishing those who are connected.

B. Acts 2:42-44

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common.” (NRSV)

God does not send us out to do it all ourselves, nor does God send us out to work by ourselves. Our human temptation is to work individually; independently, yet God calls us to community. We are strengthened in community. These past days we have had the opportunity to build Christian Community and to experience living in faith and love in the Spirit of Christ. We have had the opportunity and have experienced that power; perhaps in new ways. This same community is possible in our environments as we seek to establish it and it will enable us to share God’s grace and carry out our discipleship.