

IHM Direction Statement 2018-2022
Reflection and Discussion for Associates #7
We Desire to Be in the Midst of the Pain of Our World



IHM Direction Statement

We, Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and Associates rooted in God and the Gospel, search for prophetic ways to live our vowed and committed life in a world hungering for justice and meaning. We steep ourselves in prayer and contemplation, delve deeply into our brokenness and shadow, and embrace our giftedness and vulnerability, as we share in a life of radical interdependence. On fire with the passion to love unconditionally, we desire to be in the midst of the pain of our world and join with others in seeing and being the light that shines through the cracks of broken hearts. We use imagination, creativity, and fresh thinking to bring about God's dream for our beautiful, yet wounded world.

Our Direction Statement presents numerous challenges. It taps into a desire we would often prefer to deny. It's much easier to avoid the pain of our world, even though it surrounds us. Yet the unconditional love of Jesus impels us to nurture that desire.

“This part of our statement contains some very powerful words...desire...midst...pain. Any one of them would speak to us of the great honor and challenge to be with those who are in distress. And with the honor and challenge come the overflowing grace from a loving God for those who share in the pain of another.”

Song: *Be Born In Me*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsXOP7aQeqQ&feature=youtu.be>

Read - Pray - Reflect on these Scripture passages.

The following Scripture passages present situations when the pain of our world is evident. People long for a response. The choice is ours. Let us reflect and share how we can become aware and reach out.

Massacre of the Infants - Matthew 2: 15-16

“Out of Egypt I called my son....Herod ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem.”

The coming of Jesus was not without cost to the innocent. Yet he came into our world to walk among us and offered us hope. The plight of immigrants, victims of violence and poverty is evident in our world today.

In what ways do you desire to be in the midst of such pain, especially when it doesn't touch your personal life?

Good Samaritan - Luke 10: 29, 31-33, 37

“Who is my neighbor?.....A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, andhe passed by ... But a Samaritan traveler came ...was moved with compassion. Jesus said... “Go and do likewise.”

We often come across individuals we would rather avoid, for many reasons. Jesus gives us an example of how to recognize and reach out to someone in pain. It might be the pain of sickness, grief, alienation, rejection, loneliness or many other forms of suffering.

Share some examples of when you have shown a desire to enter into someone's pain.

Feeding of the Four Thousand - Matthew 15: 32

“My heart is moved with pity for the crowd, for they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry.”

Jesus expresses his pity for the people who have gathered to listen to his teachings. Their physical hunger is now apparent to him, and he desires to meet that need. We are called to be sensitive to the needs of those who hunger to be noticed and have their needs met. When have you been aware of someone's unspoken need and responded?

Road to Emmaus - Luke 24: 14-16, 35

“While they were conversing about all the things that had occurred...it happened that Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.”

These disciples were grief stricken as they conversed and tried to understand what they had just experienced. Jesus walks with them, listens to them and speaks to their hearts. All becomes clear in the “breaking of the bread”.

When have you experienced sharing your pain with someone and received a compassionate response or vice versa? In what ways does the Eucharist sustain you?

Attuning to the Spirit:

In what ways has your reflective sharing on these Scripture passages provided insight into the importance of your sustaining presence in difficult situations?

When have you been sustained by God as you accompanied someone dealing with something painful?

Our Direction Statement reminds us to be present, in whatever way we can, to the pain that surrounds us. Being “in the midst” is tough. It's hard. It's emotionally draining. But the desire is so much greater. It is always amazing to experience God's power and protection during these times. Amidst the helpless feelings, God provides words or silence. Empathy oozes from one heart to the other. God is at work!

As you reflected and shared insights about the pain of our world and individuals you encounter each day, you may have become more aware of a great desire to “be with” those who are suffering or to extend a gentle hand or a much needed hug.

Reflect and Share:

- *What kind of pain in our world or people you know can you alleviate in some way?*
- *When have you been in the midst of a painful situation? How did you manage?*

Sending Forth

Be aware of the times God places you in the midst of someone's pain. Allow God to take over.

Song: *He Will Carry You*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qh3WuenttBM&feature=youtu.be>

Source: Heart of Spirit Weekly Blog – Sr. Nancy Elder IHM