



COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES

“Our mission as Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scranton, Pa., is to follow Jesus as a community of disciples, aware that we are sent to be a clear and understandable prophetic witness to the presence of God in our world.” (IHM Mission Statement)

We follow Jesus as a community of disciples.

1. Mary & Elizabeth (Visitation)

Luke 1: 30; 36-37; 39-47

Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God.” During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to the town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.” And Mary said: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord...”

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in this passage?*
- *What do Mary and Elizabeth teach us about discipleship?*
- *With whom do you share, individually or as a community, “good news” of what the Lord has done for you?*
- *When do you seek opportunities to share with someone the recognition of the Lord’s presence in your lives?*

2. Shepherds

Luke 2: 8-12; 15-20

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock.

The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told to them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told to them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in this passage?*
- *What has been revealed to you as an IHM disciple? Who was the messenger?*
- *In what unexpected place and with whom have you discovered Jesus in some new way?*

3. Martha and Mary

Luke 10: 38-42

As they continued their journey he entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary [who] sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me.” The Lord said to her in reply, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.”

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in this passage?*
- *In what ways do you balance work and prayer in your life?*
- *Who are your companion disciples that help you focus on both priorities?*
- *How, when and where do you listen to the Lord?*
- *In what ways has belonging to the IHM community of disciples helped you maintain this balance?*

4. Ten Lepers

Luke 17: 12-19

As he was entering a village, ten lepers met [him]. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voice, saying, “Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!” And when he saw them, he said, “Go show yourselves to the priests. As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, “Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?” Then he said to him, “Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.”

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in this passage?*
- *What does this incident teach us about remaining a “community” of faith?*
- *They were united in their misery, but not their gratitude.*
- *What can we, IHM disciples, learn from these lepers in our life experiences?*

5. Boy with Loaves and Fish

John 6: 1-15

When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, “Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?” One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?” Jesus said, “Have the people recline.” Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted. When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, “Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted.” So they collected them, and filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves that had been more than they could eat.

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in this passage?*
- *When have you been surprised about what the Lord has provided from your simple resources and your willingness to share?*
- *As a community of disciples, when have you been nurtured by someone or something?*
- *When have you experienced the generosity of someone willing to share like this boy?*
- *What connections with the Eucharist does this passage present to you?*

6. Mission of the Seventy-Two

Luke 10: 1-3; 5-6; 8-9

After this the Lord appointed seventy[-two] others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest... Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household. If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'"

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in this passage?*
- *In your effort to be IHM disciples today, what needs "harvesting" in your life and in your family?*
- *The Lord sent them forth in pairs. Who are the wolves you encounter?*
- *When have you experienced peace?*

7. Blessing of Children

Mark 10: 13-16

And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it. Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in this passage?*
- *As a community of disciples, when have you brought children to Jesus?*
- *In what ways should disciples accept the kingdom of God like a child?*
- *Share some experiences of disciples providing opportunities for children . . .and parents to be blessed and embraced by Jesus.*

8. **Conditions of Discipleship** Matthew 16: 24-25

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Privileges of Discipleship Luke 10: 23-24

Turning to the disciples in private he said, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I say to you, many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.”

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in these passages?*
- *How can you relate to the conditions of discipleship from a community perspective?*
- *When have you experienced these conditions and been supported by community? What did you discover?*
- *In what ways have you been blessed by seeing and hearing as a disciple?*

9. **Galilean Women Follow Jesus** Luke 8: 1-3

Afterward he journeyed from one town and village to another, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Accompanying him were the Twelve and some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna, the wife of Herod’s steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their resources.

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in these passages?*
- *Where has your journey with Jesus taken you?*
- *What are the resources you provide for furthering the mission of Jesus?*
- *In what ways can you relate to this “community of disciples” in your life?*

10. The Upper Room

In these two passages, we tend to think of the twelve apostles. However, the word “disciples” is used and can remind us of our invitation to receive the Eucharist and to provide service to others in various ways in our daily lives.

The Lord’s Supper

Luke 22: 15-20

He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you

Washing of Feet

John 13: 4-5, 12-15

He rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist.

Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. So when he had washed their feet [and] put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, “Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me ‘teacher’ and ‘master,’ and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in these passages?*
- *As disciples, how do these Last Supper words resonate with your faith life?*
- *How does the Eucharist help you to promote the kingdom of God?*
- *In what ways do you follow this model of IHM “joyful, loving, hospitable, self-emptying spirit”? (from IHM Mission Statement)*
- *Receive & Serve are powerful words to remember from these passages. What personal message do they offer you to apply to your life of discipleship?*

11. Disciples on Road to Emmaus

Luke 24: 13-16, 27, 29-32

Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in these passages?*
- *When have you conversed with another disciple about significant things that happened in your faith life? What was that like for you?*
- *In what ways have you been aware of the presence of Jesus in relation to a scripture passage that was meaningful for you?*
- *When has your heart "burned" with a realization of Jesus in your midst?*

12. Appearance to Disciples in Jerusalem

Luke 24: 33-35

So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in these passages?*
- *Understanding led to action, so back to Jerusalem these two disciples went. When they arrived, Simon Peter was telling his story of Jesus' appearance. When have you listened to someone's story of faith and shared your own?*
- *What are some obstacles that prevent you from sharing your faith?*

13. The Commissioning of the Disciples Matthew 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in these passages?*
- *This is Jesus' final message to his disciples - Go . . . make disciples . . . baptize . . . teach! The eleven embarked on this mission. It continues today. We are charged with carrying out this command by teaching and making disciples. How do you, we, make disciples in today's world?*
- *When, where, and how do you see this happening?*

14. The First Community in Jerusalem Acts 1: 13-14

When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

- *What word, phrase, or insight struck you in these passages?*
- *This passage occurs after the Ascension and prior to Pentecost. It refers not only to the apostles, but includes Mary and other brothers (disciples). What hope does this give to you about coming together as disciples?*
- *What do you think Mary's presence meant to them?*
- *Why is prayer essential to the "community of disciples"?*

Summary and Challenge:

We go forth, following Jesus in our world today as a community of disciples (IHM Sisters and Associates). May we continually help one another to be aware of ways and opportunities that we are sent...from wherever we are...to be a clear and understandable prophetic witness to the presence of God in the world. That is our IHM mission, and we need each other to keep discovering ways in which this can happen.

May Jesus keep calling us, inviting us, and encountering us in new and challenging ways to reveal his presence among the people of this world.