

REFLECT

Henry David Thoreau famously wrote in *Walden* (a book that reflects on living in simple surroundings) that ‘The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.’ Some of us may relate to this sentiment. We may feel that things never seem to be just right in our lives. We carry disappointments; we are restless, perhaps discontented. We wonder if we will ever be truly happy. We go on the much-looked-forward-to holiday and find that our troubles have found their way into the luggage. We have the longed-for baby and find that it has changed our lives in ways that are more challenging than we expected. The much-desired job turns out to be more routine than we had hoped. And then there are the unexpected jolts brought by a health scare or the death of a loved one, which shake our meaning-making system. And all of this happens in the midst of the troubled, mysterious world in which we live.

All of this informs our lives as people of faith. Pope Francis notes that

Life is a journey, along different roads, different paths which leave their mark on us. We also know in faith that Jesus seeks us out. He wants to heal our wounds, to soothe our feet which hurt from travelling alone, to wash each of us clean of the dust from our journey. He doesn’t ask us where we have been, he doesn’t question us about what we have done. Rather, he tells us: ‘Unless I wash your feet, you have no share with me’ (Jn 13:8). Unless I wash your feet, I will not be able to give you the life which the Father always dreamed of, the life for which he created you. Jesus comes to meet us, so that he can restore our dignity as children of God. He wants to help us to set out again, to resume our journey, to recover our hope, to restore our faith and trust. He wants us to keep walking along the paths of life, to realize that we have a mission, and that confinement is never the same thing as exclusion.

—address to detainees at Curran-Fromhold
Correctional Facility, Philadelphia,
September 2015

So we journey on in this troubled, mysterious, beautiful world of ours, confident that Jesus is with us at this moment of time, urging us forward, and we are just where we are meant to be.

BECOMING A MISSIONARY DISCIPLE ...

Encounter

‘I invite 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 do to this unfailingly each day.’

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §3

- How can I accept this invitation to encounter Jesus in my daily life of faith?

Accompany

If we are to share our lives with others and generously give of ourselves, we also have to realise that every person is worthy of our giving.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §274

- How will I accompany others this week?

Community

The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §24

- How will I encourage others in my community to go forth this week in a missionary spirit?

Go forth

Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §127

- How will I accept the challenge of preaching the Good News in word and action this week to people and communities on the margins, locally and globally?

PRAY

Loving God,
Encourage me in my living and my loving.
Gift me with a gracious spirit,
in order that I may more readily respond to your call.
Amen.