



REFLECT

Daily life can be overwhelming. There are so many issues at play in these beautiful and troubled worlds of Australia, the church and beyond. And this is before we face our personal challenges. The worries of life can crowd in on us, causing our anxiety levels to rise. We may even feel as though we are unnoticed.

When we listen to this week's gospel story, we can imagine how the lepers must have felt: like the outcasts of their society, the ones who were not seen, the ones who carried the burden of their condition. They are aware of their own needs, and something in Jesus encourages them to call out. Perhaps this is because they knew that Jesus saw them. That Jesus heard their cries. That Jesus could respond to them. Perhaps this gospel is an invitation to us to remember the close connection between invitation, faith and hope; to remember that it all starts with an encounter, and that we will all respond differently to the invitation, depending on how ready we are to meet Jesus.

In reflecting on the joy of encountering Jesus, Pope Francis notes: 'I never tire of repeating those words of Benedict XVI which take us to the very heart of the Gospel: "Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, §7).

Perhaps this week we are invited to reflect on how we encounter others. How are we able to invite people to an encounter with God, an encounter with Jesus, through their encounter with us?

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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.

