

# In the footsteps of Jesus:

scriptural basis of formation

## INITIAL CALLING – EXCITE

*READ: John 1:21, 35.*

John the Baptist creates excitement when he identifies Jesus and says: ‘There is the Lamb of God’. The excitement created is enough for two of his disciples to follow Jesus. It is good to note that not everyone was excited as there were only two who were excited and curious enough to find out more about Jesus.

### THOUGHTS

We often experience excitement because the object/person of interest is of great value to us. In this case, the promised Messiah was what most Jews would be awaiting. So when John the Baptist made the exclamation, two of his disciples were excited and curious to find out more.

This excitement energized the two disciples to initiate the discovery phase of formation. The attraction they felt led them further into their search and Andrew eventually confessed that he has found the Messiah!

### REFLECTIONS

Let us consider what excites and motivates us to dwell deeper in faith. Recognize that aspect(s) and appreciate that often, God meets us where we are. Being excited about a particular aspect of our faith is a doorway to allow the Holy Spirit to take us deeper, from being a spectator to eventually be a proclaimer of the Good News.

## DEEPENING OF CALLING - ENCOUNTER

*READ: John 1:39ff.*

Jesus is the Lord of the encounter and He is the one who invites us to be with Him. The encounter touches them deeply enough for them to point others to Jesus. The encounter deepens with

Nathanael being exposed to the knowledge of Jesus.

### THOUGHTS

For any encounter to happen, the parties must connect from their depths. Otherwise, only a cursory contact takes place and the impression is, at best, minimal.

Let us look at how Jesus wants to meet us. When Jesus notices that the two disciples of John are in close proximity, he attends to their interest by allowing them to vocalize their curiosity. This connects with their deep desire for answers. He then issues an invitation to ‘come and see’; which is the invitation for the disciples to find out the answer for themselves.

In the encounter with the Lord, the disciples have different responses. As for Simon, he came to Jesus because his brother Andrew reported that he had found the Messiah. Jesus continues the encounter by addressing Simon: “You shall be called Cephas” which is a revelation of the potential that the Lord sees in Simon, a potential that marks a mission far greater than he can perceive at that point. Although Nathanael is skeptical, Jesus sees the goodness in him. By acknowledging Nathanael’s status as a learned man, Jesus builds a rapport that draws Nathanael’s confession, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.”

It is God the Father’s deep desire to have us in right relationship with Him. In all our encounters with Jesus, when He invites, He blesses us with graces to respond despite our shortcomings. This is the life-giving transformation of the heart that the Holy Spirit brings about with every surrendering of our human will to the will of God the Father.

### REFLECTIONS

We look at how Jesus drew the different disciples to a relationship with him and look at our own encounter with the Lord. What is Jesus inviting us to? How are we responding?

## INFORMATION – ENGAGE

*READ: John 4:4ff.*

Jesus leads the Samaritan woman to grow in her faith, by starting from what she believes and worships, to revealing who He really is and who she is.

### THOUGHTS

The woman in the story was nameless. Nameless people in scripture often represent more than the

literal eye can see. She represented the Samaritan people, a people considered as outcasts by the Jew. By being a woman and a Samaritan, she was the lowest in the society's hierarchy. Women were conditioned by the culture at that time to consider themselves 'chattels'. It was in this context that she encountered Jesus. This affirmed that formation is for everyone, even for someone whom others may deem unworthy.

Jesus restored her low self-esteem by speaking to her with respect and accorded her the dignity of a daughter of God. He also crossed boundaries by sharing the water bucket with her, affirming her of her worth as a person. After that, Jesus began instructing her. He acknowledged what she knew from her tradition – that is, Samaria's place in salvation history. Yet, Jesus went beyond the acknowledgement to inform her what she was unaware of –Yahweh's covenant with the Jews. Jesus led her from her understanding of 'water' to a yearning for the 'living water' by simply beginning from where she was and giving her something more. He waited for her question before engaging her with more explanations. In the acquisition of this new knowledge, Jesus invited the Samaritan woman to review her own life and context so as to help her to integrate what she learnt with her relationship with God. This is how Jesus led her to grow in her faith.

### **REFLECTIONS**

Consider the way Jesus imparted knowledge to the Samaritan woman and evaluate the way we are imparting faith knowledge. Are we sensitive enough to ensure that the weakest and the youngest among us are able to engage the teaching and grow in faith?

## **FORMATION – ENGAGE**

*READ: John 13: 1 ff.*

Jesus shows us the example of washing our feet and then asks us to follow.

### **THOUGHTS**

The action of foot washing in Jesus' culture was a very menial task. It was considered too lowly even for Jewish male slaves; only gentile slaves, wives, and children qualified. Jesus, by washing the feet of the disciples, was showing concretely by example how to serve one another. Instead of just giving instructions, he took off his outer garment and stooped low to wash the feet of the disciples. This was a master class on service because of Jesus' action of teaching by his personal example. As the disciples emulated the master, they began to recall what they heard and

the learning was deepened.

### **REFLECTIONS**

Let us reflect on what Jesus meant when he commanded his disciples to 'do as I have done'. Firstly, it is a reminder to us that for real learning to take root, opportunities have to be given for the learner to 'do' and practice. The assumption that people know how to take what they have learned and use it straight away is probably the reason why we do not see change or result after the teaching. How can we help each other to ensure that real learning can take place? Secondly, how can we impart the faith to others by concretely showing an example by our actions, as Jesus did?

## **DISCIPLER – EVANGELISE**

*READ: John 17:18 & John 21:15ff.*

As Jesus is sent, so he sends his disciples to proclaim the love of the Father. This is continued in John 21:15ff where Jesus asks his disciples to feed his sheep and feed his lambs and go where one would rather not go.

### **THOUGHTS**

Jesus prays for disciples throughout the ages. He prays that we be strengthened and delivered from temptation. He prays that we may all be one. He shows us how to live a full life through love. We cannot know Jesus and be attached to Him without allowing that love to extend to others; a self-sacrificing love. The Holy Spirit prompts us to do the works of love, to love as Jesus challenges us to do. To bring love to the poor, oppressed, persecuted and marginalized. This work of evangelization also includes the responsibility to love care for those in the Christian community, so that they can, in turn, be helped to extend love to others in the wider community of the society.

### **REFLECTIONS**

The motivation to reach out and do 'good' to others ought to come from the love of God. It is His love that excites, encounters and engages us to evangelise. What are you doing to bring His love to others? What can be done better?