

Faith Alive!

Witness Outlines and Reflection Questions

Section 6: Witness Outlines and Reflection Questions

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A Catholic Survey *A Guide for Discussion*

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4

- ___ 1. My local parish is an important influence in my daily life.
- ___ 2. An active Catholic lay person is someone who spends a great deal of time in church sponsored activities and ministries.
- ___ 3. When I think of someone having a vocation, I usually picture a priest, member of a religious community, or deacon.
- ___ 4. The major teaching of the Second Vatican Council regarding the role of the laity was to emphasize that lay people could now get involved in ministries at church once reserved only to the priest and nuns - such as becoming a Eucharistic minister, teaching religious education, and exercising leadership through parish pastoral councils and commissions.
- ___ 5. Helping people face problems in daily life can be as much a religious activity as leading a church sponsored Bible study.
- ___ 6. Experiencing God's real presence in the weekly parish celebration of the Eucharist helps me get through the week when God's presence doesn't seem as real.
- ___ 7. Teachers in Catholic school are engaged in a holy endeavor while teachers in public schools are not because they cannot explicitly teach matter of faith.
- ___ 8. Serving in community organizations can be as much an expression of faith as is serving on church councils and commissions.
- ___ 9. Fostering justice at work and in the wider community is as important to following the gospel as weekly participating in mass.
- ___ 10. I often find it difficult to determine how to apply certain gospel ideals to my daily life activities, including work.
- ___ 11. One of the primary responsibilities of our parish is to develop and support the laity in their daily mission to transform family, work, and public life according to gospel values.
- ___ 12. I would highly value any resources the parish could provide to assist me in better connecting my faith and daily life and work.

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An Introduction to Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer was developed centuries ago to help us with the listening part of communication with God, otherwise known as prayer. It has been reintroduced to western society as a prayer form. It is not intended to replace other forms of prayer. It is intended to invite God to be active in our souls. The guidelines are meant to be simple. They are:

1. Find a quiet place to sit.
2. Choose a word that for you is a sign that you want God to be present and active within you. Think of it as your “invitation word.” Some possibilities include Jesus, Lord, Father, Spirit, Cross, Resurrection, Love, Master, etc.
3. Sit comfortably and repeat your invitation word peacefully and gently. Let your mind and soul settle into a listening silence.
4. If you become aware of wandering or distracting thoughts during your prayer time, gently go back to your invitation word.
5. Conclude your prayer time with a few moments of silence. Alternatively, you may end by slowly reciting the Our Father, the Hail Mary, or the Glory Be.

Most writers recommend practicing Centering Prayer for two twenty minute periods a day, once early in the day and again around the evening meal time, to gain the maximum benefit. Even shorter times and once a day can be beneficial.

If Centering Prayer is to be done in a group, the leader might say or lead a prayer to the Holy Spirit asking for his help during the prayer time. If it is not distracting to the participants, gentle, flowing background music might be played during the prayer time. The leader would initiate the recitation of the prayer chosen to conclude the session.

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A Christian Vision of Work

Outline of Ideas for the Teaching Witness

1. Work is defined as any productive activity we do.
 - What feelings do many people often get when they think of work? (Ask for examples. Possibilities include: drudgery, effort, tired, frustration, what I have to do, etc.)
 - What feelings do people usually associate with spiritual experiences? (Ask for examples. Possibilities include: peace, joy, harmony, closeness, hope, strength, sense of meaning and purpose, etc.)
 - Why the dichotomy between the two? Possible responses include:
 - The sacred/secular split in thinking,
 - The misunderstanding in our country of the relationship between church and state/between religion and public life/between work and spirituality.
 - A past emphasis within the church on spirituality as an experience apart from ordinary, busy, messy, sinful, daily living.
 - A sense among many that spiritual activities occur only within or initiated by faith communities.
 - A tendency to focus primarily upon internal institutional church activities and ministries, to the exclusion of recent church teachings which emphasize the fundamental mission of the laity is to contribute to the transformation of the world -- including the world of work.

2. Our Christian faith/spirituality at its foundation is a way of seeing, recognizing God's presence in all of life, including work.

3. If we view work through the lens of faith, what do we see?

- A call and a mission to partner with God in exercising dominion (not domination) over the earth, "to cultivate and care for it" (stewardship), *Genesis 1: 28 and 2: 15*.
- The fundamental call/vocation: to listen to God, to be our best selves, to be who God created us to be, we are called to be obedient to His direction.
- The fundamental mission: to use the gifts and attractions God gave us to make a positive difference in the world (to further the reign of God, to do God's will).
- A recognition that sin, a falling out of right relationship, alienates us from ourselves, from God, from one another, from our work, *Genesis 3*.
- A belief that all of salvation history, beginning with creation, is the story of God's redeeming love that becomes fully expressed in and through Jesus. All the dimensions of our lives, including work, are redeemed as we open up to God's loving, healing, reconciling presence.
- An experience of covenant as the foundation of relationships and work (contrasted with the notion of a contract). *Exodus*.
- A challenge by the prophets to be just in all our works.
- The example of Jesus seeing his primary work as doing the Father's will, that is, furthering the reign of God (God's loving and reconciling presence within humanity), *John 4:34 and John 19:30*. Jesus as the servant leader, *John 13: 3-15*.
- Jesus' call to his disciples to follow his example, to be good and honest stewards—to have a servant's heart, to be willing to sacrifice for what is right and just, for the good of others, *Matthew 25*. Implications for our inner attitudes, ethical decision-making, and outer actions in the world of work
- St. Paul's reminder that we ultimately work for the Lord, *Ephesians 6:7*, that we are part of one another as the Body of Christ, that we are ambassadors of reconciliation.
- Doing good work understood as a way of gratefully giving back to God, who has loved us first—not a way of winning God's approval.

4. Church teaching focusing on the spirituality of work was given full expression in an encyclical written by Pope John Paul II in 1981, *Laborem Exercens*.

- Considers the idea of a new civilization based upon the spirituality of work.
- Work is meaningful and just only when the human person's worth is fully valued, when the worker's dignity has priority over productivity.
- Economic profit is necessary and justifiable but never at the expense of human dignity.
- Work is meant to have a personal, family, and societal value.
- Human activity is an essential ingredient in the building of the earth and the reign of God
- Work is a means by which people can grow in union with God and participate in the redemptive activity of Jesus Christ, a specific way of dying to oneself and rising as a more God centered and other centered person.
- People of faith are called to exercise their spirituality within the context of their daily lives, including work.
- To live in God's presence at work with awareness, integrity, justice and love is the essence of the spiritual life.
- Work ought to be available to people in such a way that basic human rights and duties are protected and promoted—the call to justice in the world of work.
- Work is not only for private gain, work is an essential force to achieve the common good.
- Work has the potential to build community by uniting people into a powerful solidarity.
- Work is an opportunity to partner with God in bringing about "a new heaven and a new earth."

5. It makes a profound difference how we view our work: whether we look at our work only as a career or through the eyes of faith as even more—a vocation/calling
- Career emphasis:
 - Marketing one's own talents for personal gain.
 - Striving to get ahead.
 - Focus on oneself.
 - Virtues are often competition, power.
 - The ultimate goal—personal success.

 - Vocation/Calling emphasis:
 - Using one's gifts to create a better world.
 - Making a difference through personal dedication.
 - Focus on community, common good.
 - Virtues are cooperation and servant leadership.
 - The ultimate goal—being faithful to God's loving will in contributing to humanity, to the reign of God.

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What spoke to me personally concerning this teaching on *the spirituality of work*?
2. Have I seen or could I see my work (activity) as a call, as spiritual?
Why or why not?
3. What if beginning this week I did my work with a conscious and consistent awareness of God's loving and guiding presence, how would this influence what I do, how I do it, why I do it?
4. How can I practically integrate this teaching more deeply into my overall spiritual awareness and my life at work?

Faith Alive!

Encountering Christ: The Human Heart of God

Outline I of Ideas for the Teaching Witness

1. Christianity is not centered in rules and rituals. Foundation of faith is relationships (love God, love your neighbor, love yourself).

- God understood and experienced as Trinity: a community of different Persons.
- The heart of all reality is relational: unity in the midst of diversity, recognizing and valuing our commonality and our differences.
- As individuals, organizations, as a planet and a universe, we are interconnected and interdependent.
- As humans we are made for relationship; we cannot develop a distinct identity except in and through the relationships in our lives.
- Human relationships are significant although these alone cannot fulfill us. We are ultimately made for a greater, transcendent love, one that is universal, unconditional, and everlasting.
- St. Augustine's realization: our hearts are restless until they rest in God.

2. Christianity reveals a God who initiates a loving relationship with us, who desires intimacy with us, who wants to liberate us from sin and death, who wants to transform us into faith-filled, loving people.

- God will not force divine love upon us—love of its very nature cannot be forced.
- Our Creator, throughout human history, has actively pursued us, doing all that God can to get us to open up to the influence of the divine Higher Power and Ultimate Love.

3. Jesus Christ is God's ultimate expression of divine love for the world, of active involvement in our lives, of calling us to be transformed by the Lord's healing, reconciling, inspiring, guiding Love.

- Jesus core message, "*The reign of God is at hand. Reform your lives and believe the Good News.*" (Mark 1: 14-15)
- Emphasis on God's breaking through into human history in a fuller way through Jesus to call us into a covenant relationship.
- Divine initiative is dependent upon a free human response: Our turning away from being ego-centered, our opening up to and aligning ourselves with God's loving rule. Thy kingdom come means, "My kingdom go." It means our cultivating an ongoing experience of God's presence through specific practices and disciplines, such as prayerful reflection in the midst of our daily lives.

4. At the heart of Jesus' teaching was the symbol of the reign of God. Taken from the Hebrew tradition, this symbol signifies what the state of affairs will be when God is recognized as the one on whom all of us set our hearts.

- As revealed in Jesus, God's will is our well-being. God wants the salvation (the wholeness, the healing, the reconciliation, the justice) of every person, of all of us together, of all creation.
- Examples in the gospel of people encountering Jesus, experiencing the presence of God's supportive and challenging love in and through him: the woman at the well, Zacchaeus, the man born blind, the lepers, the woman caught in adultery, the Pharisees, etc.
- The cross is the way the kingdom comes. Through our baptism we are joined to the dying and rising of Christ—the example and the pattern for the whole of our lives. We are to die to our self-centeredness in order to rise up to the call to love even to the point of sacrifice.
- Through Christ's physical death and resurrection we believe that death is not a senseless tragedy to be avoided at all costs but the extraordinary experience when we fully open up to and encounter completely the Christ who *is* Life. Throughout life we are learning to let go, to open ourselves to the Good Shepherd. Death becomes that unique moment when the "yes" I have said to God all my life reaches its climax.

- To acknowledge Jesus as our Lord and Savior is only meaningful insofar as we open up to his influence through the power of the Holy Spirit, to choose to live as he lived, and to order our lives according to his values.
- As church, we are called individually and together to *tell* and *live* the story of Jesus, to write the fifth gospel, so to speak. To tell the story of Jesus is to tell the story of *God with us* in the midst of our human experience.
- We are the Body of Christ, each called to be a vessel through which God's reign (loving rule) breaks through into daily life. The same Holy Spirit who anointed Jesus and worked through him is moving within and among us, calling for our cooperation.

5. Christian spirituality is a life orientation centered in God, influencing every aspect of a believer's life.

- We are to be *centered* in a personal and shared loving relationship with Jesus Christ, who first loved us. (*Spirituality begins as an interior conversion.*)
- We are to be transformed by our ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ in such a way that we see the world through God's eyes. Recognizing and cooperating with God's presence at the heart of all of human life, His love flows through us to others, and his spirit of integrity and justice becomes the way we live in the world. We realize that we are being *sent* into the world, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to make a difference according to gospel vision and values. (*Spirituality influences how we view the world and is the foundation for ethical living.*)

6. The journey toward living a deeply spiritual life within the Christian vision.

My journey is grounded in a healthy self-love rooted in God's unconditional love. With this grounding I am able to discover who I am with all my faults and limitations without being devastated—I recognize I am still loved and called to further growth. This awareness ought to lead to being able to accept the imperfections of others and lovingly call them to further growth.

- Become enlightened by the Spirit in order to be aware of one's own lack of freedom, one's own selfishness.

- Be conscious of and open to the love and power of the Spirit to guide, heal, and strengthen throughout the growth process—a divine/human cooperation.
- Develop an openness to the influence of the Spirit within relationships with other people of faith—share one another's freedom and un-freedom, gifts, and limitations.
- Refuse to be controlled by outside forces, seeing oneself as a victim. Recognize the greater influence of God's power and love.
- Be conscious of the pain/purification involved in growing spiritually, in letting go of self-centered emotions, attitudes, behaviors.
- Acknowledge that deep interior transformation does not happen superficially or instantaneously. There are no quick fixes.
- Growth in the Spirit should lead a person to deeper prayerfulness, greater appreciation for life, a deeper commitment to living faith and ethical values in daily life and work.
- Be aware of living out the Christian paradox, that is, a person saves one's own life by losing it, self-fulfillment comes through other-centered, self-giving and losing oneself in doing the Lord's work.
- Called to live in the world (total commitment to life, people, environment) but not be of the world (caught up in selfish attitudes and acquisitions).
- Encouraged to develop the ability to be reflective and contemplative, to be more aware of and open to the Lord's presence in the midst of daily activity. Ask oneself, "What might God be saying to me through what is occurring? How is the Spirit calling me to grow? How am I being prompted to respond? Will I?"
- Each person grows spiritually according to the uniqueness of this person here and now, in this situation, in this community.

Faith Alive!

Encountering Christ: The Human Heart of God

Outline II of Ideas for the Teaching Witness

1. Christianity is not centered in rules and rituals. Foundation of faith is relationships (love God, love your neighbor, love yourself).

- God understood and experienced as Trinity: a communion/community of different Persons.
- The heart of all reality is relational—unity in the midst of diversity, recognizing and valuing our commonality and our differences.
- As individuals, organizations, as a planet and a universe, we are interconnected and interdependent.
- As humans we are made for relationship, we cannot develop a distinct identity except in and through the relationships in our lives.
- Human relationships are significant. Yet, these alone cannot fulfill us; we are ultimately made for a greater, transcendent love—one that is universal, unconditional, and everlasting.
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- God will not force divine love upon us. Love of its very nature cannot be forced.
- Our Creator, throughout human history, has actively pursued us, doing all that God can to get us to open up to the influence of the divine Higher Power and Ultimate Love.

3. Jesus Christ is God's ultimate expression of divine love for the world, of active involvement in our lives, of calling us to be transformed by the Lord's healing, reconciling, inspiring, guiding Love.

- In the Incarnation, God became physical because we are creatures of the senses who, at one point, need a God with skin on, a visible, tangible expression of the divine.
- If God became a human being, then it is very important to see what kind of human being God became! If Jesus is *God with us*, then his story is an answer to the question, "Who is God?"
- Jesus core message was and is, "The reign of God is at hand. Reform your lives and believe the Good News." (*Mark 1: 14-15*)
- Emphasis on God breaking through into human history in a fuller way through Jesus to call us into a covenant relationship.
- Divine initiative is dependent upon a free human response: Our turning away from being ego-centered, our opening up to and aligning ourselves with God's loving rule. Thy kingdom come means, "My kingdom go." It means our cultivating an ongoing experience of God's presence through specific practices and disciplines, such as prayerful reflection in the midst of our daily lives

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- As revealed in Jesus, God's will is our well-being. God wants the salvation (the wholeness, the healing, the reconciliation, the justice) of every person, of all of us together, of all creation.
- Examples in the gospel of people encountering Jesus, experiencing the presence of God's supportive and challenging love in and through him: the woman at the well, Zacchaeus, the man born blind, the lepers, the woman caught in adultery, the Pharisees, etc.
- The cross is the way the kingdom comes. Through our baptism we are joined to the dying and rising of Christ—the example and the pattern for the whole of our lives. We are to die to our self-centeredness in order to rise up to the call to love even to the point of sacrifice.

- Through Christ's physical death and resurrection we believe that death is not a senseless tragedy to be avoided at all costs but the extraordinary experience when we fully open up to and encounter completely the Christ who *is* Life. Throughout life we are learning to let go, to open ourselves to the Good Shepherd. Death becomes that unique moment when the "yes" I have said to God all my life reaches its climax.
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- As church, we are called individually and together to *tell* and *live* the story of Jesus, to write the fifth gospel, so to speak. To tell the story of Jesus is to tell the story of *God with us*.
- We are the Body of Christ, each called to be a vessel through which God's reign (loving rule) breaks through into daily life. The same Holy Spirit who anointed Jesus and worked through him is moving within and among us, calling for our cooperation.
- We are to be *centered* in a personal and shared loving relationship with Jesus Christ, who first loved us.
- We are to be transformed by our ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ in such a way that His love almost naturally flows through us to others. We recognize that we are being *sent* into the world, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to make a difference according to gospel vision and values.

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Encountering Christ: The Human Heart of God

Sample Teaching Talk

by Robert Bender

Introduction

This is a story that happened in a country in the Far East with a lot of poor people. On a railroad track where the station was located there were many vendors selling various things. And there was one boy there with a cartload of fruit that he was selling. It was very crowded and some people came rushing along to catch the train just before it left. But as they rushed by, they hit his cart and knocked it over and all of the vegetables and fruits rolled everywhere. The youngster was very distraught and began to bend over to pick things up, trying to put it together again. As he was doing it, one person who had rushed by came back to help the youngster. Then he noticed something about the little boy; he was blind, which made it even more tragic. But, finally, he helped him put everything together back in the cart. And as he was ready to leave, the youngster asked him, “Are you Jesus? Are you Jesus?”

The story does not go on to say how the individual who helped the boy responded. Nor do we know for sure what motivated the person to return to help him. We do know, though, that no matter how the helper responded and no matter what might have motivated him to do so, the boy did indeed encounter Jesus on that day.

I want to share with you some ideas about how we encounter Jesus. These ideas come from a variety of sources and from me. In the end, all of this has to make sense for me as an individual and for you as an individual. I would be misleading you if you conclude that this all makes sense to me all of the time. I struggle with this all of the time. I take some solace that God is not through with me yet. I am convinced that the spiritual life is all about “seeing”. Somewhere scripture assures us that what we see only dimly now but when we enter the fullness of eternal life we will see clearly. I sincerely hope that this is so.

Sacramentality: Church as Sacrament

Our Catholic sacramental view unveils deep mystery in all that appears ordinary. It is our sacramental conviction that the infinite, invisible God is present and redemptively active in the finite, visible, human realities of this world, and especially in human persons who embody and practice the goodness and love of God. At the heart of this distinctively Catholic sacramental perspective is the belief that God's presence and redemptive activity have been supremely – and uniquely – embodied in the person of Jesus Christ, whose “mystical body” and fundamental sacrament the Church is. To say that the church is the sacrament of Jesus, is to boldly say that the church not only **REVEALS** or **MANIFESTS** the risen Christ, but actually **CARRIES OUT** and **ACCOMPLISHES** Christ's saving work. The Church does today what Jesus did in his lifetime: the Church forgives sins, heals peoples hurts, establishes God's kingdom of justice, and peace, and love in our world, leads people to know and love God, and helps folks in countless ways in their pilgrimage through this life. The Church as the sacrament of Christ mirrors Christ and makes Christ present today.

And before all else, **THE CHURCH IS THE PEOPLE**. Jesus formed a community around himself, animated it, and then left it his word, his spirit, and the Eucharist. That community, that body of believers (the body of Christ), is the Church.

We Are the Body of Christ

Scripture uses the expression the “*Body of Christ*” to mean three things: **JESUS**, the historical person who walked the streets of Palestine for 33 years, or so, more than 2,000 years ago, the **EUCCHARIST** which is also the physical presence of God among us, and the **BODY OF BELIEVERS** which is also the real presence. We Christians believe in a God in heaven who is also physically present on this earth inside of human beings and we human beings live out our lives in community, in relationship with one another. The foundation of our faith, therefore, is **RELATIONAL**. God is present in the normal flow of life within human relationships. If we believe that God is incarnate in ordinary life (and we do), then we should seek God within ordinary life.

The apostle Paul says simply and directly: “*We are Christ's body...*” (1 Corinthians 12:27 and 6:15). If we believe this, and if we see this, then we must become as St. Teresa of Avila so simply put it: God's physical hands, feet, mouthpiece, and heart in this world. We must choose to live our lives as he lived. Our task is to radiate the compassion and love of God, as manifest in Jesus, in our faces and our actions. We must give a human face to divine

compassion and forgiveness. We have to carry his incarnation forward in the circumstances of our lives.

The Kingdom of God

We are the Body of Christ. We believe that the kingdom of God broke definitively into human history through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And although we are a pilgrim people journeying toward the time when Jesus comes again and the kingdom of God is established in its fullness for all eternity, we are not just passing time idly. Each of us is called to be a vessel through which the kingdom of God breaks through in our daily lives. If you think about it, you have all experienced this breaking through of the kingdom of God. While this may have been in extraordinary manifestations of power or glory, it is even more likely to have been experienced through the small, everyday occurrences of our lives. Think about those times when you have received a small act of kindness for no reason other than you are loved. You have done this yourself countless times. At work, you may have stood up for someone with little power or authority and made them feel special. One time at my workplace employees pooled their unused sick leave and gave the hours to a fellow employee so she could visit her dying sister in England. I know that you have sacrificed mightily for the well-being of your children and I know that the first time you laid eyes upon your child you knew that you would move heaven and earth if you could to protect your baby from any misfortune and that you would gladly take on any illness or misfortune in her or his stead, if you could. People of faith understand these things as the breaking through of the kingdom of God. It is how we become Christ for one another. It is how we encounter Jesus in the ordinary circumstances of our lives. It is how we experience the human heart of God.

Magic Eye

I would not be surprised if these sorts of occurrences in your life are not necessarily felt to be **RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES**. Remember that the spiritual life is all about seeing and we must develop our capacity to see.

Let's look at this poster. At first glance, this appears to be a one-dimensional poster of pictures of children arranged in horizontal rows. And sure enough, it is. If, however, you train your eyes to look beyond what is on the surface, you will experience a depth to the picture that is not immediately apparent. While this may be difficult at first, after a while your eyes become almost immediately attuned to the depth within the picture to such a degree that

you cannot not see it. And soon you can access the depth experience easily for all “Magic Eye” posters.

To encounter Christ in the ordinary circumstances of our life, we must develop the spiritual discipline of seeing Christ in the ordinary circumstances of our life. It is our fervent wish that this weekend will equip you with a new or refined lens through which to interpret the circumstances of your day-to-day life, especially those human encounters through which we experience Jesus Christ, the very heart of God.

A King and a Peasant

I would like to finish with a final story. It is called: “A King and a Peasant.”

God decided to become visible to a king and a peasant and sent an angel to inform them of the blessed event. “O king,” the angel announced. “God has deigned to be revealed to you in whatever manner you wish. In what form do you want God to appear?”

Seated pompously on his throne and surrounded by awestruck subjects, the king royally proclaimed: “How else would I wish to see God, save in majesty and power? Show God to us in the full glory of power.”

God granted his wish and appeared as a bolt of lightning that instantly pulverized the king and his court. Nothing, not even a cinder, remained.

The angel then manifested herself to a peasant saying: “God deigns to be revealed to you in whatever manner you desire. How do you wish to see God?”

Scratching his head and puzzling a long while, the peasant finally said: "I am a poor man and not worthy to see God face to face. But if it is God's will to be revealed to me, let it be in those things with which I am familiar. Let me see God in the earth I plough, the water I drink, and the food I eat. Let me see the presence of God in the faces of my family, neighbors, and - if God deems it as good for myself and others - even in my own reflection as well."

God granted the peasant his wish, and he lived a long and happy life.

End - (Magic Eye Poster)

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Growing in a Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ

- Deal with the concept of a “personal relationship with Jesus Christ”—what does that mean to you? How do you define it? How do you “feel” it? How do you become aware of it?
- How did you come to and grow in this relationship with God? What role did the presence and example of Christ on earth play in developing your relationship—from your perspective? What about the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? What about the presence of Christ and the inspiration of the Spirit presented in the lives of others in your life?
- Where are you in the realization that growing in relationship with Christ is a lifelong journey, that spiritual development is an everyday, up-and-down, comfortable and uncomfortable process (a dying to self in order to be fully alive in the Spirit)? Share what reminds you of your developing relationship with Jesus.
- Acknowledge that sometimes you can be oblivious to the Lord’s presence and/or resistant to his will. Share when and how you get beyond your self-pre-occupation.
- Give witness to the positive difference the Lord has made in your inner attitudes, motivations, and feelings and in your outer actions. Talk about “When I let him in, when I am centered in his loving presence, and when I recognize I am sent to be an instrument of his integrity and love.”

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What in this talk spoke directly and personally to me?
2. When in my daily life do I find myself aware of the presence of Jesus Christ? What helps bring that awareness about?
3. Do I want to have a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ? If so, why?
4. How would my daily life be different if I were aware of Jesus Christ’s presence on a more regular basis?

Faith Alive!

In the Footsteps of Jesus: Sent to Serve and Do Justice

1. Reflect on the meaning of Service vs. Slavery.
2. My growing awareness of the call to have an “unselfish servant” sense in my attitudes and actions at home, work, and in the community (following the example of Jesus—*Philippians 2*).
3. Offer examples of being a servant to others, including at work.
4. Realization that service is essential yet does not go far enough. How I came to recognize the importance of fostering social justice, that is, trying to make a difference in the systems, structures, policies which negatively impact people's lives, especially the poor and vulnerable. (Emphasize the significance of individual's making a difference in their own work settings and everyday circumstances as insiders—relate an example of this).
5. My developing understanding of Catholic social teachings—calling for living sound moral principles grounded in a faith-based moral vision.
6. Convey the core themes at the heart of our Catholic social tradition (use personal examples of how any of these have influenced you and what you do).
 - Life and dignity of the human person.
 - Call to family, community, and participation.
 - Rights and responsibilities of individuals.
 - Option for the poor and vulnerable.
 - Dignity of work and the rights of workers.
 - Solidarity.
 - Care for God's creation.

7. Encourage participants to look within themselves and their work environment (whatever productive activity they do) to determine if there are social justice concerns they ought to become more aware of and willing to address.

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What valuable reminder, insight, or challenge did I receive from experiencing this presentation?
2. Who especially impressed me? Why?
3. Do I need to have a greater attitude of service in any part of my life—at home, at work, or in the community? If so, what can strengthen my servant attitude and actions?
4. Is there a particular justice issue I am feeling prompted to better understand and to act upon? If so, what is the issue and what first steps can I take at work or within the wider community to respond?

Faith Alive!

Lectio Divina: Listening for God's Word

When Jesus heard about the death of John the Baptist, he withdrew by boat to a deserted place by himself. The crowds heard of it and followed him on foot from the towns. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity, and he cured their sick. As evening drew on, his disciples came to him with the suggestion:

“This is a deserted place and it is already late. Dismiss the crowd so that they may go to the villages and buy some food for themselves.”

Jesus said to them: “There is no need for them to disperse. Give them something to eat yourselves.”

"We have nothing here," they replied, "but five loaves and a couple of fish."

"Bring them here," he said.

Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and two fish, looked up to heaven, blessed and broke them and gave the loaves to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the People. All those present ate their fill. The fragments remaining, when gathered up, filled twelve baskets. Those who ate were about five thousand, not counting women and children.

Matthew 14:13-21

Have one member of the group read the passage aloud slowly and reverently. The other group members should listen to God's Word as it is proclaimed, *not read along*

- As you listen to God's Word, what do you hear within yourself?
- How does God's Word speak to your life right now?
- In listening to God's Word, how do you feel? Excited? Confused? Anxious? Hopeful? Wondering? Joyful? Sad? Try to name what you are feeling now.

- *Remain in the silence* with what you are hearing and feeling in the presence of God.

Have another member of the group read the passage aloud *slowly and reverently*, the others listen.

- As you listen to God's Word, what word or phrase stands out for you?
- Allow that word or phrase to take root in you by silently repeating it within yourself.
- When you are ready, you are invited to reverently share that word or phrase aloud *without any further comment* on it.
- *Return to the silence* holding what you have heard in the presence of God,

Have another member of the group read the passage aloud *slowly and reverently*, the others listen.

- As you listen to God's Word, what word or phrase stands out for you? It may be the same as before or a different word or phrase.
- Allow it to take root in you by silently repeating it within yourself.
- As you hold that Word in the presence of God, what do you think God is trying to say to you? ...to ask of you? ...to invite you to? ...to affirm you in? ...to challenge you with? ,...to embrace you with?
- When you are ready, *briefly* share this with your group: Other group members should reverently listen, *but not comment* on what is shared.
- After you have shared, *return to the silence*.

Have another member of the group read the passage aloud *slowly and reverently*; the others listen.

- As you listen to God's Word, what do you want to say to God about what you have heard?
- When you are ready, you are invited to offer a prayer to God *in response to the Word that you have heard*.
- After offering your prayer, *return to the silence* holding what you have heard in the presence of God.

Faith Alive!

Liturgy in Life: Strengthening the Connections

- How have I grown in my appreciation for and commitment to liturgy, especially the celebration of Eucharist? Reflect upon ways in which my openness to the Lord in Mass and through prayer and sharing with others has deeply influenced my daily life in some way.
- Reflect upon my growing awareness that all of life is sacred, is in some way a sacrament. How does this experience of the Lord's real presence on Sunday at Mass with others open my eyes, heart, and soul to his real presence on Monday (everyday)?
- Illustrate, give examples, of how my weekly preparation for the Sunday liturgy has enhanced my experience of the Eucharistic celebration.
- Give examples or practical ideas for how I practice being more mindful of the Lord in the "liturgy of daily life." What practical reminders in my everyday, ordinary life experiences do I use to open myself up to God's ever present healing, reconciling, inspiring, guiding love?

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What valuable reminder, insight, or challenge that I received from this presentation do I want to remember?
2. How would my daily life be different if I were to recall frequently that my daily life activities served as my liturgy of worship, love, and thanksgiving to my God?
3. What practical reminders, rituals, and actions can I build into my daily routine to remind me that Jesus is alive and celebrated in the liturgy of my daily life?
4. What have I done or might I do to be more open to God's word speaking to me in my daily life?

Faith Alive!

Liturgy and Life: Being Centered and Sent

Outline of Ideas for the Teaching Witness

- 1. A need to overcome the sacred-secular split in looking at and experiencing life**
 - Eucharist understood by many as "the once a week experience of the Lord's real presence in my life."
 - The rest of the week is viewed as living in the secular world. The operational belief of many is that God is not experienced in every day, ordinary, fast-paced, and at times sinful life.
- 2. A call to a deeper faith consciousness of the sacredness of all of life, a realization that God cannot be contained to a particular day (Sunday), or to a particular place (the physical church).**
 - Eucharist is meant to be experienced as an expression, a celebration, a deepening of the Lord's real presence in all of life.
 - Liturgy is meant to transform us in such a way that we more clearly see and cooperate with God's presence in our everyday living and working. Such a spiritual centeredness and perspective is the foundation of our loving attitudes and ethical values authentically lived on a day-to-day basis.
- 3. Liturgy reminds us of our deepest identity as church: We are the people of God becoming the body of Christ sent on mission to the world.**
 - Emphasis upon the church as an experience of being in *communion* with God (Father, Son, and Spirit), with one another, with all of creation:
 - A focus upon the interior spiritual relatedness to one another as church which is expressed in our deepening solidarity/community/communion.
 - We experience a part of our core identity not primarily as separate, distinct individuals or groups but as a people who are interconnected

and interdependent, who are together centered in God.

- At Eucharist we are called to experience communion not only as the food we share but as the body of Christ we are together becoming (quote from St. Augustine).
- The experience of being the church only as a communion/community is incomplete. We are also sent on a *mission*, to be a sign and an instrument of the reign of God—of God's justice, peace, wisdom, and love transforming the world.
- The two dimensions of church as communion/community and as mission are inseparable and reciprocal. Genuine communion flows into mission (A truly caring community wants to share its love with others. Faith without works is lifeless). Central to the church's mission in the world is our own living in communion as fully as possible (we as church are called to be a sign of how God wants the entire world to relate and to serve). Also, a people on mission who are not centered in the human and divine love or communion have a greater chance of getting too caught up in their own egos or becoming exhausted, disillusioned, or cynical from trying to do everything on their own.

4. Foundations for deepening the liturgy-life connections

- Second Vatican Council's *Constitution on the Liturgy* called for "a full, conscious, and active participation" by all in the liturgy. Such involvement needs to flow from and back into a full, conscious, and active participation in all of life, being centered in and cooperating with God as the abiding presence through it all.
- RCIA journey serves as a model for each Christian's lifelong conversion integrating life-centered evangelization, catechesis, community, personal and communal prayer, liturgical experience, and call to justice and service.
- We are *the church gathered* for worship, to share our common story as proclaimed through the scriptures, to center ourselves in God remembering who we are and whose we are, to share a common meal which expresses and deepens our unity with the Lord and with one another, to be formed and encouraged as missionaries sent to make a difference in the world.

- We are *the church scattered* into our various mission fields of work and home, school and wider community involvements, to foster gospel love, integrity, and justice

5. Opportunities for deepening the liturgy-life connections

- Realize the implications of the call to center our lives in Christ, to offer our entire lives with Christ to the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit in liturgy and in daily life.
- Experience at the heart of liturgy and life the fundamental pattern of dying (with Christ) and rising (with Christ), a readiness to die to oneself in order to experience resurrected, vital, other-centered life in this earthly existence and beyond.
- Experience Eucharist as a gift reminding us that God's love, at the heart of all of life, is a gift, is grace. Genuinely experience life as a blessing to be celebrated and given thanks for at Eucharist.
- Be aware that Eucharist is a communal prayer, reminding each of us that our overall relationship with God is not merely a private matter, that we are not to go through life as spiritual Lone Rangers.
- Recognize Eucharist as God's calling us into communion in the midst of our diversity that we may experience life as a coming together of our differences to enrich one another, that we may do our part to foster unity amidst diversity wherever we are, to overcome all unjust discrimination and division, to become builders of community.
- Eucharist expresses, celebrates, and deepens God's healing, reconciling, nourishing, guiding, challenging love which is ever present to us and for us and desires to work through us for the common good.
- God's word proclaimed in the scriptures encourages and challenges us to be more aware of and centered in God's word which breaks through into our everyday lives.
- The dismissal by the priest or deacon at the end of mass, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord," is meant to be an essential and powerful sending forth of everyone as missionaries into our daily life mission, fields of work, home, school, and wider community involvements. What we have received as a gift, God's love, we are called to give us a gift, to share with others—especially with "the least among us." We become the body of Christ sent on mission to the world

- We look at life, at one another, at what we are to do through the eyes of Christ and we respond with the heart and spirit and justice of Christ. We are centered in Christ and sent by Christ into the world.

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What spoke to me personally concerning this teaching on *the liturgy-life connection*?
2. Have I experienced an occasion in which liturgy deeply influenced my life? If so, describe the situation. What contributed toward bringing about this impact upon my life?
3. How has my daily life in any way influenced my experience of liturgy?
4. What if, beginning at my next celebration of the Eucharist, I were to be as open as I could be to God's transforming wisdom and love during the Mass, what changes, if any, would this require of me? How am I being called to more actively participate in the liturgy?

Faith Alive!

Resources for Deepening In Faith

Outline of Ideas for the Teaching Witness

- My growing awareness of the need to draw upon resources for my ongoing faith commitment and growth.
- How these resources have strengthened me and helped me to better live my faith in daily life.
- Recognition that different people may need to draw upon various resources suitable for them for their spiritual growth.
- Weekly celebration of liturgy, including preparation through reading scriptures ahead of time, etc.
- Prayer styles such as centering prayer, charismatic prayer, devotions such as the rosary, meditation, lectio divina, etc.
- Regular reading with mind, heart and soul -- Scripture, religious and spiritual books, other good literature viewed through the eyes of faith, etc. Reference the display provided by the retreat team.
- Discovering inspirational resources in films, television, on the Internet, etc.
- Coming together regularly with others for prayer, mutual support, accountability (could be in a small group or a one-on-one conversation with a friend)
- Personal recommendations categorized in some way. For example:
 - Printed materials (books, pamphlets, periodicals, etc.)
 - Audio-visual materials (e.g., radio, television, videos, CDs)
 - Internet based materials such as web sites and listserves.
 - Personal physical reminders
- Provide an experience of *lectio divina*.

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. Which of these resources have I been using regularly?
2. Which resources had I known about but forgotten until today?
3. Which resource(s) are new to me?
4. What would it do to my life, if I utilized one of these resources in my daily/weekly routine? Would I like that?
5. What resource(s) am I going to use in my daily life?

Faith Alive!

RESOURCE LIST: WAYS TO KEEP GROWING SPIRITUALLY

As an individual

- Finger rosary (1 decade)
- Lector at Mass
- Down on your knees the first thing in the morning
- Journal
- Home Eucharistic ministry
- Start and end days with praise and thanksgiving
- Say a prayer for person who cut you off on the freeway
- Say a short Thank You to Jesus each day
- When outside, find God in nature sunset, flowers coming up, trees
- CD/tape for inspiration
- Surrender your worry about what you can't control, past or future
- Make room for sanctuary (when someone is stressed/depressed)
- Contemplative Prayer and meditation
- Rosary
- Adoration of Blessed Sacrament
- Spend time in an empty church
- Pray for someone who is really bugging you, each day
- Sit in silence
- Approach Sunday liturgy with the intention of leaving with one practical thing that you can put into practice during the week.
- Pin St. Christopher on vision "pray for us"
- Spiritual music
- Thanksgiving and praise when we don't know what to pray.
- Spiritual Director

- Appreciate art as worship
- Volunteer with underprivileged kids

As part of a group

- Prayer Group – small faith group
- Rosary gathering—group meet before Mass
- Music ministry group
- Retreats with others
- Find positive people with which to surround yourself
- Walks around the block/exercise with someone and talk as you walk
- Youth Missions
- Couple faith sharing group (support group with strong theme of faith)
- Join with other seekers and believers
- Small Christian Communities (faith groups)
- Do volunteer service to the community

Through the media

- ◆ 7:30 a.m. Sunday – Joel Osteen – Channel 5
- ◆ 103.3 Christian music
- ◆ EWTN TV—Mother Angelica
- ◆ 95.5 The Fish
- ◆ Rair Zachanus (WCRF Sunday's 2 pm) speaker author

Through reading

- Reading books based on our faith
- *God Calling* by A.J. Russell (book of inspirational readings)
- *Staying in the present* (written like a parable: *The Present* by Ken Blanchard.)

- *Awareness* by Anthony Domello (book)
- *One Bread One Body* (book)
- *Prayer of Jabez* (book)
- *Mother's Treasury of Prayers* (book)
- *Pray with the Heart!* Medjugorge Manual of Prayer
- *Centering Prayer in Daily Life and Ministry* by Thomas Keating & Gustave Reininger (Editor).
- *Centering Prayer: Renewing an Ancient Christian Prayer Form* by M. Basil Pennington
- *Centered Living* by M. Basil Pennington
- *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis
- *Fr. Allender's Hopes*
- *Home Sweet Home* – Scott Hann
- *Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren
- Chuck Stanley, Chuck Swindell
- Fr. Ben Groeshel
- Authors – Matthew Kelly, Henri Nouwen, Max Lucado
- Prepare weekend readings and study before Sunday
- The Word Among Us
- Bible stories/Bible study
- Ligourian magazine
- Magnificat magazine
- Living Faith booklet
- New American Bible – Bible Compare.com
- Bible next to the toilet
- Catholic Digest
- At Home with the Word
- Motivational booklet on email address
- Daily reflections (i.e. Give Thanks for Blessings and Pray for Guidance)

Through Internet Websites

- www.vatican.va (the official Vatican website)
- www.nccbuscc.org/ (National Conference of Catholic Bishops)
- www.dioceseofcleveland.org
- www.livingfaithatwork.org/ (Living Faith at Work: information and dialogue aids)
- www.osjspm.org/ (Office of Social Justice, Diocese of St. Paul, MN)
- www.appleseeds.org/religfav.htm (Fr. Brian's Favorite Bookmarks)
- www.ohiocathconf.org/home_frameset.htm (Ohio Catholic Conference)
- www.christophers.org/3minlink.html (The Christophers: Three Minutes a Day, short daily reflections)
- www.americancatholic.org/ (Has a daily Minute Meditation on the home page)
- www.magnificat.net/ (an online Catholic magazine)
- www.wau.org/ (daily meditations and a magazine)
- www.sacredspace.ie/ (Sacred space, a prayer and reflection site)
- www.comtemplativeoutreach.org (information and guidance on forms of contemplative prayer)
- www.kyrie.com/cp/ (information about and instructions for Centering Prayer. Links to additional related sites)
- www.thecentering.org (dedicated to teaching the method of centering prayer, arranging prayer groups, etc.)
- www.ewtn.com/ (Eternal Word Television Network, Catholic teachings and more)
- www.catholicnews.com/
- www.catholic.com
- www.Catholic.org

Faith Alive!

RESOURCES FOR FAITH IN THE WORLD

by William Yoho

In 1 Corinthians, 13:11, Peter writes: "When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things." We are now at a point where we are asking you to take your faith out into the world and apply it in the everyday, coming back to the church to be renewed and refreshed in that faith. But before you go out there, you need to ask yourself: Do I have the knowledge of my faith and of how to pray that I need out there in the world?

Too many of us will find that the faith that we have inside us is not necessarily the Catholicism of the third millennium. It may not even be the faith of the post Vatican II church.

I heard a sermon recently in which we were told of a four step plan for implementing our faith. The four steps are "Vision - Attitude - Actions - Skills." They describe how to accomplish a goal. First, we need to establish the goal - to set the vision. Then, we need to develop the attitude that will cause us to accept the vision as being possible. With the attitude established, we need to determine what actions are necessary and what skills need to be acquired. We do this much in our own jobs. We try to stay at the forefront of what we do. In my field of law, I spend several hours a week making sure that I know what the law is. But I realized that I was not keeping my knowledge of my faith up to date. My purpose today is to share some resources for keeping your faith knowledge up to date.

I divide the spiritual resources into three groups: learning, reflecting and experiencing.

The items in the first or "learning" group are books and resources to give you a deeper understanding of the Church and its teachings. The primary book is the Word itself - the Bible. Everyone should have at least one copy of the Bible that looks well used. Personally, I like to read from different Bibles, and so I have a New American Bible and a Jerusalem Bible, as well as two different German Bibles. Of these, the first is the traditional Luther translation and the second is a recent ecumenical translation. An important factor of Catholicism, however, is the rich teaching tradition of the Church. Complementing those, I have a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, a copy of the documents of Vatican Council II, and a wonderful text by Fr. Richard McBrien, Catholicism. That last work will tell you about the rich teaching tradition which I just mentioned. I also include in this category our own diocesan publication, the Universe Bulletin. Another very interesting read is a recent book by Fr. Andrew Greeley entitled "The Catholic Imagination."

The "reflection" works tend to be daily prayer sources. There are a number of daily prayer

sources, including Christian Prayer, which is a "lay" version of the Order of the Hours, The Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis, and a relatively new monthly prayer magazine called Magnificat (www.magnificat.net). Other sources are "Bible reflection" works, such as The Word Among Us (www.wau.org), Living Faith (www.livingfaith.com), God's Word Today, and Our Daily Bread, which is a Protestant bible study guide. The works of Thomas Merton, Fr. Henri Nouwen and many others certainly also fit into this group.

The "experiencing" works are really in two subgroups. The first of these is the weekly or monthly Catholic periodical, such as the Jesuit magazine America, the St. Anthony Messenger (www.americancatholic.org), and, again, the Universe Bulletin. The second group of resources is a group of Catholic websites. A prime site among these is Sacred Space, a prayer and reflection site of the Irish Jesuits (www.jesuit.ie/prayer/). At the end of the prayer experience there are a number of additional prayer/reflection sites listed. Another excellent location is the Eternal Word Television Network site (www.ewtn.com).

I find that my prayer style and reading interests will vary day by day, so I like to have a number of resources to draw upon. If you find one specific source to particularly suit you, that works too. The important thing is to have a source that you can go to daily and to use it.

Faith Alive!

Spiritual Path of Love

- My growing awareness of God's real presence in the ordinariness of everyday life and relations.
- Focus upon the relationships in my life—family and friends, co-workers, acquaintances. How has human love in ordinary circumstances been a reminder and experience of divine love?
- How has my experience of God's love influenced the ways in which I appreciate, accept, challenge, support, and forgive others?
- Illustrate the importance of our being really present to one another in the midst of our busy lives. How do I become *centered* again in taking the time to value each moment? How do I remember that I am *sent* to love each person right here, right now? How do I stay open to other people's love for me?

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What in this talk spoke directly and personally to me?
2. How have I experienced God's love in and through any significant human relationship in my life?
3. If I were to be more consistently aware of God's deep abiding love for me, how would that influence the ways I relate to others?
4. In what way is God calling me within my current life situation to be more loving?

Faith Alive!

Spiritual Path of Work

- My growing awareness that my work is a call and opportunity to cooperate with God in expressing my gifts to make a loving and just difference in the world.
- My responsibility is to become a leader, an influence, at work.
- My recognition that as a lay person I have not simply a job or a career but a vocation and a mission, that my ultimate employer is the Lord. How such a perspective on my work influences what I do, how I do it, and why I do it.
- Illustrate with examples of how I have been unaware of God at work in my work and become more conscious of his presence in a situation in hindsight. How has such a belated awareness helped me to be more aware of and cooperative with God in the moment?
- What spiritual disciplines do I practice at work or could I practice at work to be more *centered* in the Lord and more consciously *sent* to live gospel integrity and love.

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What was valuable in this witness for me to hear and reflect upon?
2. Why is it important for me to have a stronger sense of my work connecting with my faith?
3. How can I deepen my sense of purpose, my awareness of serving the Lord in my work?
4. What specific ways am I being called to foster greater integrity and caring at work?

Faith Alive!

Spirituality of Daily Living

Outline of Ideas for the Teaching Witness

1. The Genesis account of creation

- One God out of love created the universe, our world, ourselves. And God saw that it was good.
- Called to be conscious of the symbolism—God created humans out of the ordinary dust of the earth.
- Recognition of the sacredness of all creation and the splendor of the ordinary.
- Awareness that God cannot be contained to a certain place or a certain moment.
- Sin as failing to depend upon, trust, and align oneself with God. Instead, it is wanting to be like God in order to be in control, putting our own ego/self-will at the center.
- Through sin we fail to recognize and cooperate with God who is present in the whole of life

2. Throughout the Hebrew scriptures ordinary people, who often feel inadequate, are called to be God's instruments and prophets.

- Abraham and Sarah—beyond childbearing years.
- Moses—"I am in inadequate of speech."
- Ruth—an "unclean" Gentile.
- David—the youngest son, an ordinary shepherd boy.
- Amos—a dresser of sycamores.
- Jeremiah—"I am too young."
- Isaiah—"I am a man of unclean lips."

3. The awesome mystery of the Incarnation: God becomes fully human in and through Jesus of Nazareth.

- The best way for God to reach us was through the human.
- We have a transcendent yet down-to-earth God.
- The divine continues to come through what is most deeply and authentically human (when we are living and loving the way our Creator intended us to).
- As revealed in Jesus, God can work through and even use human suffering and sin—*God is with us* (Emmanuel) through it all.

4. Spirituality begins primarily as a way of seeing, recognizing, and being transformed by God's real presence in the midst of our human experiences.

- We have not been formed to see God in everyday, ordinary experiences.
- Ask people to name what most people tend to think of when they think of spiritual experiences. The usual answers are activities such as going to Mass, praying the rosary, reading the Bible, going on retreat, experiencing a beautiful moment in creation. Ask, “What does that leave God out of?” Obviously, most of life, including the ordinary and the routine.
- Need to overcome our sacred/secular split in thinking, also our tendency to identify experiences of God as happening only in extraordinary ways (such as is often the case when we focus only upon the extraordinary aspects in the lives of the Saints or when we keep searching for the next wonderful religious experience to have).
- Jesus, a carpenter for many years, picked down-to-earth, ordinary people including fishermen to be his disciples, had many ordinary moments with them and others, including over meals. Most of their experiences were not in synagogues, were not among the priests and scribes.
- Jesus taught through many parables that were down-to-earth and ordinary—the sower and the seed, the shepherd seeking out the lost sheep, the woman looking for the lost coin, the tree not bearing good fruit, the mustard seed, the workers in a vineyard, etc.
- St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians remarked that they were not considered wise and powerful and important. "But God chose the foolish of this world to put the wise to shame. He chose the weak of this world

to put the powerful to shame" *1 Corinthians 1: 27* (St. Paul was himself a tent maker).

- "There is one God and Father of us all, who is over all, works through all, and is in all" *Ephesians 4: 6*.
- "God is love and those who abide in love abide in God and God in them" *1 John 4: 16*
- "Just to be is a blessing, just to live is holy" Abram Heschel.

5. Called to be aware of God not only in moments of quiet, serene contemplation but also in the midst of busy, messy, sometimes ambiguous daily life.

- Need some solitude and quiet to read Scripture and other spiritual books in order to become more familiar with how God is active in human life. Also, need some time to reflect upon one's daily life experience and see more clearly how God is speaking through the outer and inner events of one's life.
- We are encouraged to develop the ability to be reflective and contemplative, be more aware of and open to the Lord's presence in the midst of activity. Ask ourselves, "What might God be saying to me through what is occurring? How is the Spirit calling me to grow? How am I being prompted to respond? Will I?"
- Let God break through our self-absorption, self-consciousness and hurried thinking.
- Recognize there is a secular attitude in the culture. We can all get caught up in ignoring, resisting, or denying God's presence in certain situations in life.

5. God is the energizing, healing, reconciling, guiding, challenging presence at the core of our individual and shared humanity.

- Our faith, our spirituality, calls us to pay attention in the daily ordinariness of life to God who is ever present, to acknowledge the Lord's presence, and to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in following two fundamental spiritual paths: the spiritual path of love and the spiritual path of work.

Faith Alive!

Reflection Questions Complete Set

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THE SPIRITUAL PATH OF LOVE

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What in this talk spoke directly and personally to me?
2. How have I experienced God's love in and through any significant human relationship in my life?
3. If I were to be more consistently aware of God's deep abiding love for me, how would that influence the ways I relate to others?
4. In what way is God calling me within my current life situation to be more loving?

Faith Alive!

A CHRISTIAN VISION OF WORK

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What spoke to me personally concerning this teaching on *the spirituality of work*?
2. Have I seen or could I see my work (activity) as a call, as spiritual? Why or why not?
3. What if beginning this week I did my work with a conscious and consistent awareness of God's loving and guiding presence, how would this influence what I do, how I do it, why I do it?
4. How can I practically integrate this teaching more deeply into my overall spiritual awareness and my life at work?

Faith Alive!

THE SPIRITUAL PATH OF WORK

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What was valuable in this witness for me to hear and reflect upon?
2. Why is it important for me to have a stronger sense of my work connecting with my faith?
3. How can I deepen my sense of purpose, my awareness of serving the Lord in my work?
4. What specific ways am I being called to foster greater integrity and caring at work?

Faith Alive!

LITURGY AND LIFE: BEING CENTERED AND SENT

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What spoke to me personally concerning this teaching on *the liturgy-life connection*?
2. Have I experienced an occasion in which liturgy deeply influenced my life? If so, describe the situation. What contributed toward bringing about this impact upon my life?
3. How has my daily life in any way influenced my experience of liturgy?
4. What if, beginning at my next celebration of the Eucharist, I were to be as open as I could be to God's transforming wisdom and love during the Mass, what changes, if any, would this require of me? How am I being called to more actively participate in the liturgy?

Faith Alive!

LITURGY IN LIFE: STRENGTHENING THE CONNECTIONS

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What valuable reminder, insight, or challenge that I received from this presentation do I want to remember?
2. How would my daily life be different if I were to recall frequently that my daily life activities served as my liturgy of worship, love, and thanksgiving to my God?
3. What practical reminders, rituals, and actions can I build into my daily routine to remind me that Jesus is alive and celebrated in the liturgy of my daily life?
4. What have I done or might I do to be more open to God's word speaking to me in my daily life?

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS: SENT TO SERVE AND DO JUSTICE

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What valuable reminder, insight, or challenge did I receive from experiencing this presentation?
2. Who especially impressed me? Why?
3. Do I need to have a greater attitude of service in any part of my life—at home, at work, or in the community? If so, what can strengthen my servant attitude and actions?
4. Is there a particular justice issue I am feeling prompted to better understand and to act upon? If so, what is the issue and what first steps can I take at work or within the wider community to respond?

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RESOURCES FOR DEEPENING IN FAITH

Questions for Reflection and Dialogue

1. Which of these resources have I been using regularly?
2. Which resources had I known about but forgotten until today?
3. Which resource(s) are new to me?
4. What would it do to my life, if I utilized one of these resources in my daily/weekly routine? Would I like that?
5. What resource(s) am I going to use in my daily life?