

April Reflection Exercise

Preparing your heart: Take as much time as you need to become centered and interiorly at peace. Become aware of God's presence and welcome it. Then offer yourself to God and to the action of God's Spirit in this time of reflection and prayer.

Ask for the grace: of wisdom to choose the means that will help us respond to the Spirit's call.

Listening to the Word:

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles^[a] from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. (Luke 24:13-45)

First Exercise:

- Read and reread slowly the story of Emmaus, letting yourself enter into the experience of the disciples as Jesus helps them explore and enter more deeply into the meaning of his life with them.
- When you are ready, pick up the mindmap of our March discernment, along with the desires for the CRC.
- As you reflect on the mindmap be attentive to your interior responses to it. Does this picture of religious life in Canada give you more energy, awaken your love and zeal more? Can you confirm this fruit of our discernment?

Second Exercise:

- Take up now the analysis of needs and desires presented by the CRC team.
- As you review and reflect upon this material in light of the mindmap and our common desires for the CRC
 - what seems more central to helping our congregations to fulfill the vision of religious life in Canada that has emerged from our discernment?
 - What seems less central, though it may still be helpful?
 - What is practical and even important, but less significant to the vision?

Sharing conversation as with a friend:

- At some point, you may feel drawn to share the fruits of your ongoing reflection with Jesus, or Mary, or perhaps with the founder or foundress of your community. Take time also to listen to what they have to say to you, and let this conversation lead you deeper.
- When you sense that the time of conversation is coming to an end, give thanks for what you have been given.

Make a short note:

- Write down a short account, no more than ten lines, of the fruits of your prayerful reflection: what priorities for fulfilling the vision have emerged for you from among the many things the CRC might do? This short note will form the basis for your sharing in the first round of small group spiritual conversation.