

# IMPACT

**Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.**

## Impact this month

**This month, take time in prayer to reflect on your relationship with Jesus.**

**Is Christ an important part of your life? Is the Lord *the* most important in your life?**

**In what ways does your faith direct your life? What are the consequences of discipleship for you at this time?**

**How do you find joy, purpose, and meaning by putting faith into practice?**

**How might God be inviting you to give your heart and mind to Jesus more fully?  
What will be your response?**

## Lord, to whom shall we go?

For Jesus, it probably felt like it was a long time in coming. The disciples had been journeying with him for months. They had witnessed Jesus healing and forgiving, heard his teaching, and experienced the miraculous multiplication of loaves and fish. They had not yet told him that they believed in him, however. Not until many walked away, too challenged by Jesus' insistence that he is the bread of life, that his flesh is food for the life of the world. Jesus had waited a long time to hear the apostles declare their commitment to him.

For the disciples, it might have felt like everything happened quickly. They had likely talked about their experience of Jesus with each other, reflected on all they saw and heard, and wondered if he was the One for whom they waited and longed. Yet, coming to believe in him could not have been easy. He was not what they expected of the Messiah. Proclaiming their faith in Jesus would put them at odds with religious authorities and might have separated them from their families and friends. Still, the miracle of the loaves had changed the way they saw Jesus and the life he offers. When faced with the option of staying or going, they could not imagine leaving. "We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."

Jesus waits for our faith as he did the apostles who were with him that day. God has created each of us with the freedom to accept Christ's offer of love, mercy, forgiveness, and peace. It is up to each of us to respond to this great gift. Christ is always with us, ready for our deepening commitment as disciples, ready for us to follow.

We may become committed to Jesus over a long period of time, or something may prompt us to take a leap of faith, seemingly all at once. Being baptized or confirmed does not guarantee that we will truly be disciples - followers of Jesus - in a real and lasting way. We may need a "flash of insight - a certain way of seeing" - by which we view the world and our relationship to it in a fresh, new light." (SDR, p. 39) For the apostles, it was the miracle of the loaves and fishes. For us, it might be receiving Holy Communion after many months, a conversation with a trusted friend, a time of insight during prayer, a sense of peace in the midst of turmoil.

Living life that is directed by faith is consequential. It can be a life filled with joy, purpose, and meaning. Through faith, we may be called out of ourselves in service of others. Like the apostles, however, our decision to follow Jesus may prompt awkward moments with or even separation from family or friends. Even in the midst of these challenges, we, too, may find ourselves unable to imagine life any other way. The offer of Christ's life and love is too great to forsake. With the apostles who were with Jesus that day, our hearts may cry out, "Lord, to whom shall we go?"





## Magnify

And Mary said:

“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Luke 1: 46-55 (NRSV)

## Make God's goodness and mercy visible

As Mary and Elizabeth greeted one another, seeing in the other the great and astounding work of God, Mary cried out in praise, “My soul magnifies the Lord.”

We know what a magnifier does - picture a small object under a magnifying glass or an even smaller organism under a microscope. Something difficult or impossible to see with our unassisted eyes is made visible, perceptible. Magnified, it is made clear.

Mary is the perfect model of discipleship. Through her, people in every age have come to know her son, to see clearly, know, and believe in God's saving love.

St. Ambrose said, “If only Mary's soul might dwell in us all to praise the Lord; if only Mary's spirit might dwell in us all to exult in God...For ‘Christ is the image of God’ (2 Cor 4:4) and therefore the soul who does something righteous and holy glorifies that image of God in the likeness of which it has been created. Thus too, by glorifying it, the soul participates in a certain manner in its greatness and is raised up by it. It seems to reproduce this image in itself through the brilliant colors of its good works and to imitate it in a certain way by its virtues.”

What would it be like for our souls to magnify the Lord? Like Mary, we would ponder many things in our hearts, reflecting on the saving grace of Christ's presence within and among us. Like Mary, we would be ready to say “yes” to the call of Christ, even when doing so takes us into the unknown. Like Mary, we would know and respond to the blessings in our lives. God's goodness and mercy would be made visible through our words and actions, our attitudes and ways of interacting with others. Let us learn from Mary, our Mother and magnify the Lord today and every day.

*Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.*