

NATIONAL FAST 2024

THE JOURNEY BEGINS
DAY 1 & 2



The Journey Begins: Day 1 & 2

Introduction

Every January for the past nine years, our Vineyard Canada Community has engaged in a time of fasting and prayer. This practice has helped us as a family to reset our spiritual compass as well as experience a refreshing of both our minds and our spirits as we face a new season. The Lord has always been faithful to meet us both as individuals and as a people while imparting a fresh sense of purpose and direction. May we once again experience the Presence of the Holy Spirit as we lean in to listen and to pray.

Our Fast Journey updates are provided simply to assist in your engagement in the fast over the next ten days. They will also be a source of common practice that will be gleaned from by the hosts of our online gathering each morning. Enjoy!

1.The Invitation

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and bumble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Consecration: Preparation and Surrender

Spiritual Direction Exercise

Silence

Take a few moments to become still, settling into this time and space of prayer
Silence

Awareness

Become aware of the loving presence of the Trinity here, now.
the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are with, around, and within you.
Silence

Reflection

Mark 10:21: Jesus looked at him and loved him
Imagine Jesus looking at you, and loving you.
Silence
How do you feel as Jesus looks at you and loves you?
Silence

May God bless you to experience, always, Jesus' long and loving gaze upon you.

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Posturing Liturgy

Leader:

Know that the Lord has set apart the godly ones for himself; the Lord will hear when I call to him. Stand in awe and do not sin. And when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.

Response:

Lord, we come to you in awe and in silence - to search and to be searched.
You hear us when we call to you.

Leader:

You are the Light of the World. Bring your sacred light to the depths of our souls. Illumine the dark enclaves and every empty cavern. Where there is darkness, let there be light.

Response:

You are the light that warms our hearts. You are the flame that burns within.
In your light we see light. We surrender to the light of your grace and mercy. Fill us with your holy presence. Set us apart for yourself. Consecrate us for your glory. Amen.

Moments of Silence

2. Anchoring Reflection: "Come to Me"

Focus:

As we have been collectively preparing for and anticipating these 10 days together as a National Family, we sense that we are to lean into the words of Jesus found in Matthew 11:28-30 as our primary focus - "The Great Invitation". This 'Great' passage is set in the context of two other 'Great' passages often referred to in the gospel of Matthew. We will soak ourselves in a different translation of this text every two days, along with a quotation from Tish Harrison Warren's beautiful book *Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life* (IVP 2019)

The first passage, the Great Commandment postures us to love God and love people as a lifestyle. The second passage, the Great Commission positions us in a missional mindset for making disciples of Jesus. It's the third passage, **the Great Invitation**, which describes a way of daily living that welcomes the strength, wisdom, and guidance of Jesus to carry out the first two. As we consecrate ourselves to the Lord, bringing our true selves to Him together, we say "Come Holy Spirit."

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Scripture

The Great Commandment, Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

The Great Commission Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

The Great Invitation, Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

Reflect

What might it look like for you today to respond to the invitation of Jesus “Come to me?”

Quote

“Rich Mullins, one of my favorite writers and musicians, said that when he was a kid he’d walk down the church aisle and be “born again again” or “rededicate” his life to Christ every year at camp. In college he’d do it about every six months, then quarterly; by the time he was in his forties it was “about four times a day.” Repentance is not usually a moment wrought in high drama. It is the steady drumbeat of a life in Christ and, therefore, a day in Christ.”

Tish Harrison Warren *Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life*

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3. Common Prayer

Magnificent Father
Creator of everything on heaven and on earth
We fall to our knees and pray

Strengthen us by your Holy Spirit
Not with a brute strength, but a glorious inner strength
That Christ might live in us as we open the door to our hearts and invite You in

Christ, make a home in our hearts as we trust You

Plant our feet firmly on love that we would be able to receive, together, the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love.

Empower us to reach out and meet you in your love.
Empower us to experience the height and breadth and depth of Your love for us,
that surpasses knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God.

We believe you are able to work within us and are able to accomplish within us abundantly far more than we could ever ask or imagine.

Thank you, that you do this not by pushing us around but by Your Spirit working, deeply and gently within us.

Glory be to God in the Church!
Glory be to God in Jesus, the Messiah!
Glory be to God through all the generations!
Amen

Please Note: Throughout the fast we encourage you to send into the VC team what you are hearing and sensing the Holy Spirit may be speaking to us as a family. Please send your contributions to the listeningteam@vineyard.ca

During the live call please submit "in the moment" brief contributions on the chat wall and any longer submissions in email form to the above address. Thank you for leaning in and listening. Our team is regularly reviewing & considering what is coming in as well as comprising summaries that are woven into our daily zoom gathering. Bless you as you continue to lean into Jesus during these days!