

# NATIONAL FAST 2024

THE JOURNEY ENDS  
DAY 9 & 10



# The Journey Ends: Day 9 and 10

## 1. The Invitation

**Commissioning:** Sending, Obedient and Joy

### 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**

John 20:21-23: Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." As the Father sent Jesus, Jesus sends you.

How do you imagine Jesus' facial expression and body language as he sends you in this way?

*Silence*

May God bless you to go in the fullness of the Spirit and the fragrance of forgiveness in your heart.

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### **Posturing Liturgy**

#### **Leader:**

Gracious Lord Jesus, you are the King of heaven and earth. Your kingdom is real but not fully seen. You hold the times and the seasons in your hands. You are the King of the now and of the not yet.

#### **Response:**

We are the people of your kingdom. Help us to live more according to your kingdom and less like the realm of this world.

#### **Leader:**

Grant us courage to bring you to where the world touches us. Open our eyes to see the harvest.

#### **Response:**

We say yes to going into the fields. Empower us by your Holy Spirit to bring your kingdom to the people and the places where your kingdom is not yet. Prepare us Lord for your service.

Recreate us with your rest.  
Strengthen us with your joy.  
Give us your feet for the journey.  
Clothe us with your humility.  
Soften our eyes with your compassion.  
Anoint our hands with your healing.  
Give us your voice to speak the Truth.  
Enlarge our hearts to love as you love. Amen.

#### **Moments of silence.**

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### 2. Anchoring Reflection: “Work with Me”

#### Focus:

We have work to do. That’s a beautiful thing, and something that is inherent in the creation story, and not something that merely came because of our fall and rebellion. As we have mentioned before, we work from a place of rest. In the first covenant we rest after our work, in the second covenant, because of the resurrection of Jesus, we work from our place of rest.

It’s interesting that this Great Invitation from Jesus to come to Him, rest in Him, learn from Him, and to walk beside Him is given in the context of animals working together. The oxen are not prepping themselves for the ox pull at the exhibition. They are not being groomed for the local parade. The specially fitted yoke is that fields can be tilled, seed can be sown, wheat can be harvested, and children can be fed.

Jesus said ‘pray for more workers in the fields for the harvest is ready’ Matthew 9:38. We do have the specific work of making disciples, healing the sick, caring for the vulnerable, strengthening local churches. We also have specific vocations of raising children and grandchildren, building houses, pastoring churches, developing software, keeping financial records, growing businesses, providing employment, keeping our communities safe, volunteering as retired people, educating students, being a student. It’s all work and it all can be tiring, or boring, or discouraging. Don’t believe the hype, it’s rarely ‘exciting’. But it can be deeply meaningful and done with love and joy, especially when we do it with Jesus. He understands work.

#### Scripture

##### Matthew 1:28-30 (Wuest)

Come here to me, all who are growing weary to the point of exhaustion, and who have been loaded with burdens and are bending beneath their weight, and I alone will cause you to cease from your labor and take away your burdens and thus refresh you with rest. Take at once my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find cessation from labor and refreshment for your souls, for my yoke is mild and pleasant, and my load is light in weight.

#### Reflect

What might it look like for Jesus to be alongside you at your work?

#### Quote

“My works and worship don’t earn a thing. Instead, they flow from God’s love, gift, and work on my behalf. I am not primarily defined by my abilities or marital status or how I vote or my successes or failures or fame or obscurity, but as one who is sealed in the Holy Spirit, hidden in Christ, and beloved by the Father. My naked self is one who is baptized.

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

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### 3. **Common Prayer:** Ephesians 3

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

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Thank you for participating in this year's Fast. May God continue to guide and direct us as a family and may we flourish in our commitment to follow in his Way!

**Please note:** we will continue to welcome contributions until **Wed, Feb 7th**. A summary will be sent to Pastors & Key leaders to distribute. Please do not post on any public or social media platform. Thank you for your discretion.

**Additionally:** We want to acknowledge our appreciation of the thoughtful material provided in our Journey Updates by the VC Listening Team members, Larry Levy (Halifax NS) Terry Long (Ottawa ON) Nathan & Charis Rousu (Edmonton AB), Suhail Stephen (Winnipeg MB)

We would also like to express our gratitude to all those who participated in our zoom gatherings including those carrying worship, those facilitating the chat wall, those summarizing and collecting contributions to the Listening Team, as well as our hosts. Thank you! Thank you!

Grace & Peace,  
Anita Ruis VC Spiritual Life Coordinator  
(on behalf of the Vineyard Canada Foundation's Team)