

NATIONAL FAST 2024

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES
DAY 7 & 8



The Journey Continues: Day 7 & 8

1. The Invitation

Impartation: Refreshing, Filling, Getting Ready

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 20:19-23: On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked [...], Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 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."

Imagine Jesus saying "Peace be with you!" Showing you his hands and side. Breathing on you. Giving you the Holy Spirit.

Silence

May God bless you to receive the gift of Jesus' peace, his wounds, and his Spirit.

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Posturing Liturgy

Everyone in unison:

Your fragrance awakens us.

We follow the ancient path of pilgrimage to linger again at the foot of your cross. And it is here that we find true life even as your own dripped from your body. So costly and yet so freely given. Your words torched the darkness, "It is finished." And in a heartbeat our hearts were fused to yours for eternity. You are the living fountain of life itself. We are captured again by your beauty and cannot look away. We echo the words of David:

"Worship the Lord in the beauty of his holiness.....

"You make known to me the path of life;
you fill me with joy in your presence..."

"You breathed fragrance, and I drew in my breath, and I now pant for you; I tasted and now I hunger and thirst for you; you touched me and now I burn for Your peace."

Amen (St. Augustine)

Moments of silence.

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Moments of silence.

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Moments of silence.

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2. **Anchoring Reflection:** “Walk beside Me”

Focus:

This 10-day rhythm of beginning a year with fasting and prayer has been a practice for us in Vineyard Canada for many years now. Fasting and prayer are not only practices of ancient Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, and the early church, they have shown to be linked to many great awakenings and revivals throughout church history. Fasting and prayer seem to have a unique way of imparting greater clarity, sharpened focus and turning dull hearts into hearts on fire. God seems to respond to even the slightest movement towards him when we become deliberate with times of fasting and prayer. The invitation from our passage to walk beside Jesus provides the opportunity for Him to pour new life into us through the Holy Spirit.

Again, we dive into this idea of being yoked to Jesus. He says, "My yoke is easy." The word "easy" is in Greek *chrestos*, which can mean well-fitting. In Palestine ox-yokes were made of wood; the oxen were brought, and the measurements taken. The yoke was then roughed out, and the oxen brought back to have the yoke tried on. The yoke was carefully adjusted, so that it would fit well, and not chafe the neck. The yoke was tailor-made to fit the ox.

Jesus understands our unique personalities, our gift mix, our struggles, and temptations. He has a particular calling for each of us in the unique season we are in. Life is hard, but His yoke is especially made to fit well so that He does the heavier lifting. And we learn to walk beside Him, step by step.

Scripture

Matthew 11:28-30 (New Testament for Everyone)

“Are you having a real struggle? Come to me! Are you carrying a big load on your back? Come to me—I’ll give you a rest! Pick up my yoke and put it on; take lessons from me! My heart is gentle, not arrogant. You’ll find the rest you deeply need. My yoke is easy to wear, my load is easy to bear.”

Reflect

Do you tend to rush ahead or lag behind in this invitation to walk beside Jesus?

Quote

“The kind of spiritual life and disciplines needed to sustain the Christian life are quiet, repetitive, and ordinary. I often want to skip the boring, daily stuff to get to the thrill of an edgy faith. But it’s in the daily life of the Christian faith—making the bed, doing the dishes, praying for our enemies, reading the Bible, the quiet, the small—that God’s transformation takes root and grows.”

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

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!