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**DISCIPLESHIP: (A SERIES OF RETREAT
CONFERENCES)**

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A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this Long Essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, meditations, reflection and creativity. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Ecclesiastical Degree of Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit.

Signed..... *AMEL PAA*

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This Long Essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed.....

Name of Supervisor..... *Helmut Lammert, S.P.*

Date..... *24/01/06*

DEDICATION

First and foremost I, dedicate this work to my deceased parents for receiving me as a gift from God, instructing me in Christian way and having me baptized in Christian Religion (Catholic Church). And to all people of goodwill who keep on guiding and supporting me to discover the Love of God. God bless all of us.

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Introduction

The term disciple-*mathetai* is rather broad. It includes 'apostles,' 'the twelve,' [c.f. Mt 10:1; 11:1; 13:10, 14:15.22.29, Lk 6:40, 19:16], 'The multitude' or 'the crowd' that trails Jesus, Lk 6:13.17, 19:37 etc. Discipleship is an offer and invitation which Jesus makes to any persons and everyone he chooses; apostles Mk1:16-20 or otherwise Lk 9; 23 and the responses by those called/chosen/invited. Discipleship is an act of God, miracle by divine grace; c.f. Gen 18:14, Zech 8:5-8. A person receives a call to discipleship only in obedience and surrender c.f. Mk 1:16-20, 2:14-17, 3:23-29 Acts 9:1-22.

Discipleship and following of God involves whole nation- Israel is called and chosen, groups-apostles, special groups-singers of temple liturgy c.f. IChron. 25:8, families-Simon Peter and his brother James, individuals- Judas Iscariot. Part of this discipleship is follow me, walk after me. This goes on to explain relationship between realities of higher and lower orders, teacher-pupil expressing deference and service of the taught to the teacher or leader-follower indicating loyalty and service of the latter to the former, Jesus-disciple relationship. The new discipleship demands understanding like which Jesus himself shows to his disciples. It is inspired by Jesus and demanded by him. This new discipleship does not fit with the usual rabbinic phenomena prevalent then. Let us have a glimpse of how it is in comparison with the new discipleship that Jesus brings:

Disciples of Jesus

Jesus chooses disciples

Jn 15:16 Mk 3:13 Lk 9:59

Jesus binds his disciples to himself

Mk 3:14

Community life with Jesus

Mt 10:24-25

Jesus sends to proclaim the kingdom

Lk 9:60, Mk3:14, Mt 4:19

Disciples of Rabbi

Disciples choose rabbi

Disciples are committed to Torah

Discipleship is a step away from Rabbi

The duty of disciples is to learn the law, traditions and become experts etc.

Jesus calls each person to discipleship. In his time he called groups, individuals- the rich young ruler. And he calls you and me today. The disciple is a person called by God- Jesus to be with him and to be sent out [vertical and horizontal dimensions]. Jesus does not have a specific age which he prefers. Each age is preferable for discipleship. He calls young people as well as older people. He calls different people to different ministries in the church and the world. Jesus calls some people to a very specific ministry in the church and others to very specific professions/ ministries in the secular world.

This retreat wants to speak to hearts about discipleship both for lay young people and candidates for religious life and ministry. Retreats are special moments to reach out to people. They can be powerful, life changing events for young people. They

have proved to be effective in evangelizing and community building. A retreat provides an environment go grapple with faith issues and learning ways to pray and live. People have opportunities to share their faith stories and build relationship of trust. A retreat can awaken in young people the sense that they have a central place in the church. It assists the young people to discover that the church needs their gifts ad talents and calls them to fuller participation.

Again a retreat is a chance for everyone to have lots of fun- a chance to help the young people realize that they do not need computer games, televisions or recreational drugs to have fun. Fun is encouraged in retreats whichever topic may be. The first three conferences are directed to a group of lay young people and how they respond to the discipleship of Jesus amidst all their giftedness and temptations. And the second series of retreat conferences are directed to a group of candidates for religious life. The young people who join religious life think that discipleship waits till they make their final profession and get ordained to the ministry. The two conferences want to show them that discipleship begins immediately a person is called by Jesus. Most young people hold to the fact that discipleship is a reserve for the older people. We want to tell them that it is not necessarily so and that young people are disciples of Jesus. It is time after high school, college, or university, early in employment, jobless etc. They are still grappling with proper self-identity, testing their values, developing character, deciding who they are. This retreat will try to translate the message of Christ into action for everyday living. We need also to encourage them to take what they have learned and live it.

FIRST CONFERENCE:

GROUP: LAY (YOUNG PEOPLE)

TOPIC: YOUTH IS A GIFT OF GOD

Youth is a treasure at hand. A story goes that a certain man of Baghdad dreamed one night that in a certain house in a certain street in Cairo he should find a treasure. To Egypt accordingly he went and met in the desert with one who was on his way from Cairo to Baghdad, having dreamt that in a certain house in a certain street in Baghdad he should find the treasure; and lo, each of these men had been directed to the other's house to find a treasure that only needed looking for in his own. Truly young age is a treasure in itself. Again this age can be compared to a buried treasure. Another story goes that a farmer on his death bed summoned his four sons and told them that he was leaving his farm to them in four equal parts. "I have very little ready cash, but you will find that the greater part of my wealth is buried somewhere in the ground, about a foot and a half from the surface. I have forgotten precisely where." Then he died. The four sons set out to work on the fields and dug up every inch of them, searching for the treasure the father had buried. They found nothing. But they decided that so long as they dug up all the ground, they might as well sow a crop and reap a good harvest. That season, after an abundant harvest, the four boys again began digging in search of the buried treasure; as a consequence their farm was turned over more thoroughly than any other farm in the area. And of course they reaped a fine harvest. After they had repeated this procedure for several more years, the four sons finally realized what their father had meant when he told them that his wealth was buried in the ground.

Most of the world is young. All of the older people have been young. For some of you here is a time of study, just finished school, some employed or unemployed, some are learning to use free time, deepening friendships, falling in love, considering marriage or joining religious life. This is the time when you are involved in leaving home; in learning to do things on your own; like spending money, in learning what becoming an adult means. Parents have many expectations from you, often pushing you beyond your capabilities. You are faced with many tremendous opportunities and challenges, offered by mass media, peer pressure and so on. A story is told of how to keep on jumping for opportunity. A famous businessman was giving a speech to a group of rising young men. During his speech on several occasions he gave his advice: "Jump at the opportunity." After he had said this three or four times, one of his audience arose and, apologizing for interrupting him said, "How do you recognize the opportunity?" To which the businessman replied, "You don't. You keep on jumping and one day you find you've got it."

You have more questions regarding Christian values and many of you do not know where to find answers. It is just the time in your life when you need help and guidance, when you need the power of the gospel, to guide, inspire and sustain you in your struggles and hopes. You dream good dreams. You need help and guidance to face reality. Given the needed support, guidance and challenge you can close the gap between the ideal and the reality you experience in life. Hope is what you need today. Sometimes in your daily struggles you are disappointed because those who are supposed to be people of hope do not reveal Christ to you.

Many of you are disgusted at the adults who just sit back and talk of peace and love when around you are jealousy, exploitation, ethnicity, child abuse, unemployment and injustice. You are critical of or question some values of your milieu and what is happening here. Some of you are impatient and want to discover new things. This should not disappoint or scare you, for these belong to the nature of youth. You want to show that you are independent and have your own ideas but in fact you need adult guidance. This guidance is accepted and even appreciated when offered in a way that will gain your confidence.

You are deeply religious though spiritually starved. You are not impressed by doctrines but Christ as a person. You want to know more about him. You want to pray but in a more spontaneous and lively way. You like to read Christian books, to see religious films and have Christian posters in your rooms. You have a need to belong to a group, to have friends with whom you can share your struggles and faith experiences and who would accept and understand you because you are in the same situation. You have a lot of leadership potential. What you need is to be challenged or stirred up.

You are the present and future of the church, country, society, and race.

For the church to have a future it must ensure that you feel part of it. It is the duty of adults to encourage you to see the truth of life, death and resurrection of Jesus and Christ and use him as a pattern for your lives. It is part of the roles of every parent, family member, teacher or “the significant Other” to acknowledge you to share your joys and sorrows, to accord you the dignity due, being created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26). You are worthy listening to; spending time with; your hopes and

dreams are worth striving for. Youth suicides disturb adults. Giving you a reason to live by, journeying with you is faith that has power.

Each of you has a unique and valuable contribution to make to God's world. Each of you is special. Since the beginning there has been no one like you. Individually no one in the universe can reach the quality of your combination of talents, ideas and feelings. God has made each of you special for a purpose in the world. He has a job for you that no one else can do. Out of the billions of applicants only one is qualified, only one has the combination of what it takes and that one person is you. New dreams, new duties and responsibilities lie ahead of you.

Follow your dream. I have a friend named Fred who owns a horse ranch in Kitale. He used to let me use his house to hold fund-raising for youth clubs. The last time I was there he introduced me by saying; I want to tell you why I let Charles use my house. It also goes back to a story about young man who was the son of an itinerant horse trainer who would go from stable to stable; race track and race track, farm to farm and ranch to ranch, training horses. As a result, the boy's high school career was continually interrupted. One time he was asked to write a paper about what he wanted to be and do when he grew up. That night he wrote a seven-page paper describing his goal of someday owning a horse ranch. He wrote about his dream in great detail and he even drew a diagram of 200-acre ranch, showing the location of all the buildings, the stables and the track. Then he drew a detailed floor plan for a 4,000 square-foot house that would sit on the 200-acre dream ranch. He put a great deal of his heart into the project and the next day he handed it in to his teacher. Two days later he received his paper

back. On the front page was a large red F with a note that read, 'see me after class.' The boy with a dream went to see the teacher after class and asked, 'why did I receive an F?' the class teacher said, 'This is an unrealistic dream for a young boy like you. You have no money. You come from an itinerant family. You have no resources. Owning a horse ranch requires a lot of money. You have to buy land. You have to pay for the original breeding stock and later you'll have to pay large stud fees. There is no way you could ever do it.' Then the teacher added, 'if you will rewrite this paper with a more realistic goal, I will reconsider your grade.' The boy went home and thought about it long and hard. He asked his father what he should do. His father said, 'look, son, you have to make up your own mind on this. However, I think it is a very important decision for you.' Finally, after sitting with it for a week, the boy turned in the same paper, making no changes at all. He stated, 'you can keep the F and I will keep my dream.' Fred then turned to the assembled group and said, "I tell you this story because you are sitting in my 4,000-square-foot house in the middle of my 200-acre horse ranch. I still have that school paper framed over the fireplace." He added, "The best part of the story is that two summers ago, that same school teacher brought about 50 children to camp out on my ranch for a week." When the teacher was leaving, he said, 'look, Fred, I can tell you this now. When I was your teacher, I was something of a dream stealer. During those years I stole a lot of kid's dreams. Fortunately you had enough courage not to give up yours.' Don't let anyone steal your dreams. Follow your heart, no matter what.

The other success formula is 'let each one of you be himself.' The young person who encounters the most difficulty is the one who tries to act like somebody else. A

young person who 'puts on an air' and tries out new personality hardly succeed. There is no need to desire to be someone else because God has given each one of you talents and depths of personality he has given to no one else. Each of you has irreplaceable part in the divine plan. Exert your personal touch to heal the wounds of a world that needs the contribution only you can give.

There is a great need for patience and calmness with life when you are young. Rushing may jeopardize and indeed jeopardizes your future. Remaining calm and using common sense, Jesus will keep you on the right road. If you drop something pick it up; retaining order in mind will help you take better care of yourself and others. If you open a door close it; it is important you complete each task you begin. If you make a promise keep it; your integrity gives you distinction. When you borrow something pay back; this shows you respect the rights of others.

You, at this youthful age are also called to the plans of God; to worship him, love him in his word, rely on him, work for him and look to Jesus as model of life. In you God rejoices, in you he sees those to whom the future of his kingdom is guaranteed, his kingdom will continue and God assures his protection to you "for if the upright is God's son God will help him and rescue him from the clutches of the enemies" Wisdom 2:18. God is available to you, God has gifted you in very tremendous ways: with young age, opportunities, health, skills, energy, enthusiasm, without tribal, nationalistic and political biases, ability to be together, gift of friendliness, smile, lots of time, creativity, natural talents etc. And you should be grateful.

And Jesus himself says ‘...let all the children (you here now) come to me...for such belongs the kingdom...’ you are the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven and he continues to warn other people ‘unless you become like these little ones you will never enter the kingdom of God....’ therefore youthfulness is a sacred period of life in ones life and in the eyes of God. There is a Swedish proverb that sums up living up to your better nature;

- “fear less, hope more;
- “eat less, chew more;
- Whine less, breath more;
- Talk less, say more;
- Hate less, love more.

Therefore in this retreat and especially in this opening conference we want to focus on your abundance of gifts and energies. We shall focus on how the devil may tempt you to misuse these gifts of energy, creativity, innocence and so on.

Youthfulness, energy, sharpness

You are a gifted lot. Gifts of youthfulness and energy. They sound so ordinary in day to day living and yet are gifts from the loving Father in heaven. You are filled with what seems like unending energy which makes you play and work long hours with less fatigue. When you look around in the world of sport, it is dominated by young people. The excellence that is exhibited is marvelous. Two teenagers broke down the front door of a burning house in South B, and helped save the lives of an elderly couple. The 18 year boys, driving past the house shortly after midnight, saw smoke coming from the

living room windows on the first floor. The youths shouted to the occupants of the three storey house and succeeded in awaking the husband and wife who were fast asleep upstairs. Then the alert teenagers, seeing there was no time to lose, forced their way through the front door and were able to lead the frightened couple down the smoke-filled stairway. God has blessed every young person with a bit of hidden greatness.

Honesty/faithfulness/reliability/trustworthy

It is widely believed and we want to be part of this belief tonight that you are more honesty, reliable and trustworthy in many of your undertakings at your age than any other age group. If you are well prepared you go into life with all these virtues. Our retreat wishes to stress these very ordinary things in a very extraordinary and dramatic ways. Recently, young cab driver in Nairobi showed that honesty is always possible even when it is not easy. The cab driver found a plastic pouch containing 100,000 shillings in cash on the floor of his taxi after he had taken an elderly woman to the bus terminal. He immediately turned it over to police. It was claimed by a 70 year old housewife who said it was her life savings. Four days later another young man working on a road gang found a wallet containing 10,000 shillings. He lost no time in getting the wallet with its contents untouched into the hands of the nearest police. Countless examples like these offer heartening evidence. That God gives you power to do something to unfortunat trend toward dishonesty, corruption and disloyalty.

Resourceful and enterprising

You have exhibited your resourcefulness and enterprise. That when you are entrusted with a particular task sky is the limit for you. You invest a lot into it and want

to excel to all possible levels. A story is told of how a young person on her first try at deep-sea fishing landed a 240 kg tuna. It was four times her weight. Most persons have to wait for something unusual to discover that they possess greater physical, intellectual and spiritual power than they ever imagined. Some go through an entire lifetime without ever knowing what untapped greatness was hidden within them. You may seldom, if ever, have an opportunity to test out your prowess as a deep-sea fisher. But you don't have to wait even overnight to put your ability to work at another type of fishing- at being a '*fisher of men*'. Be on the lookout for opportunities to be of service to those in trouble. If you do, you will probably surprise yourself by what you personally can achieve with God's help to supply what is lacking in them. You discover your latent ability by doing more than you think you can do. I was reading a medical journal the other day and I came across a report that two secondary school seniors doing cancer research made a significant contribution to knowledge of the disease. The 19 year olds, a boy and a girl, took part in a KEMRI training institute at Nairobi University. Their work- sometimes lasting 10 hours a day- was so productive that it continued beyond their school break. They obtained what one doctor described as tremendous results in advancing the theory that cancer may be a tearing -down instead of a building-up process, as most authorities had believed. What commended these teenagers to older medical men was their freshness of approach which was not tied down to preconceived notions. Although they may not often surprise their elders in such outstanding ways, young people respond remarkably to encouraging direction. You are a co-worker with God when you tap the intellectual resources of those to whom the future running of the

world is entrusted. The sage says “receive my instruction in preference to silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than corals” Prov. 8:10.

Readiness and availability

You are always ready and available for any assigned tasks. This is the time you want to be around, get involved. I know when I invite you invite for games, work, club activities, trips, music you will come in great numbers. And if there is some work to help you are readily available. You readily accept the word of God. This could be a reason among many why the new Pentecostal churches have a large number of young people as members. You are so receptive to new ideas and things; that without proper guidance you may do things including illicit. This aspect of availability and readiness is a great gift from God.

Creativity and innovativeness

You are so creative, innovative and you capture at every opportunity and make progressive steps. One interesting thing is that you are ready to give yourselves the best now. A story is told of a young man who spent 30 years trying to decide upon a career ended up in a Nairobi court not long ago, on charges of stealing a bicycle. He told the judge that when he left school at the age of 17, he thought it would be a good idea to take a little time off to figure out what he should do with his life. The man now 47, confessed: “I am still looking around. I have never yet started on a job.” While most of you would not dilly-dally for 3 decades before choosing a worthwhile career, others may neglect to devote themselves wholeheartedly to genuine tasks. Whether you are a

student, employed or not give your best to your daily opportunities. You add a divine meaning and purpose to your life if you do.

Innocence of life

You are still innocent of adult life and its consequences. You are not so tainted by negative adult behaviours but can. You are still discovering what is good and what is not. With a good retreat like this one you will definitely choose only what is good for yourselves.

SECOND CONFERENCE:

TEXT MT 4:1-11; JESUS TEMPTED AS WE ARE

TOPIC: WRONG MEANS FOR RIGHT END.

In your striving to follow Jesus, you must be ready to face the malicious reality presented to you in the person of Satan. There is a war which cuts the entire human history of man into two opposing camps. Christ is on one hand inviting you gathered here this morning to travel along the path which he himself has passed in suffering, death and triumphantly rising to newness of life and the devil on the other hand who is the father of lies and enemy of our human nature seeks to deceive and mislead you at every turn of event.

Listen to how he begins:

- Gen 3:4-5 “.....no you shall not die, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.....”
would you like to listen to such deceptive and misleading voice?

Again hear what he answers when asked:

- Job 1:7 “....where do you come from?” he answers, “from roaming the earth and patrolling it”
- Job 1:8 “.....have you noticed my servants [a list of all young people e.g. Peter, John, Charles, Jane, Mary]. There are no other people on earth like them blameless and upright, God fearing.....” and Satan answers back “ is it for nothing that your servants are God fearing... Have you not surrounded them and their families and that they have your protection?”

This kind of scenario goes on and on. But what we want to reflect on is the entire deceptive ways that are a trap for you young people.

You live in a society of advancement, freedom and pluralism. You need to stop and look at what is being created, before you press the self-destruct button. Humanity cannot be the sole measure of all things. As a young person you need something deeper against which to measure yourselves. This something is the divine in life a search for God in your personal religious experiences. You need to have faith in the future to make sense of the present. You need to hold on to what is best from the past and build on it in the present, so there is something worthwhile for the future. I would like to see life measured against the standards of the gospel message of Jesus Christ. One of the reasons this life-giving message has not been fully heard is because it is buried in rules and regulations.

When we look at the teaching of Jesus, we see freedom of choice, human dignity respect for life, people being loved, forgiven and healed. We see oneness of creation. The rules and regulations older people burry these teachings under are irrelevant to you. A common and famous story of eaglet among chickens tells it all. There was once eagle that laid an egg. A farmer found it and put it under the hen. The eagle hatched out along with the rest of the eggs and grew up in the chickens. All his life he did what they did. When they clawed at the earth for worms and insects he did the same. Years passed and the eagle grew old. Walking aimlessly around he looked up and saw a magnificent bird soaring high overhead: wonderful wings, proud head, sharp eyes, this glorious bird rode the winds, swooped and soared again. This filled the earth-

bound eagle with longings. “That,” said the chicken with worm in its mouth ‘is eagle, marvelous is it not?’ of course he belongs up there and we belong here scrapping the earth. The eagle disappeared but eagle that lived within chickens never forgot the memory of that day. It was in him to the end as he lived out his days as a chicken. The majestic bird in flight troubled him; it stirred energies in him he couldn’t name. You experience such energies, questions, thoughts and doubts that well up inside you from time to time.

May be right now you have rejected the message of Jesus for some reason. May be you are searching for answers in science, drugs and sex. To begin to find answers for those deep questions you will have to open up to the message of Jesus. Human life is broken and wounded but it is not corrupt and there it retains a natural orientation to the message of Christ. Jesus takes into account the efforts you make in everyday life. He is merciful, loving and compassionate. He invites you to achieve your fullest capacity for love of him in the human situations you daily find themselves in.

The consequence of personal autonomy.

A certain young man had reached the age of marriage and so his parents suggested that they should find him a bride. To their surprise, he refused, saying that he would find his own wife. “All right”, said the parents, “but if you find no suitable bride, don’t blame us.” The young man stuck to his wish, and the next day he set out in search of a girl. This was, of course, a very foolish thing to do. Everyone in Kenya knows that parents, elders are much wiser than their children, so their advice should always be taken.

Inescapably, the young man walked into disaster. He arrived after a long journey, at a village where there lived a tribe of creatures who looked like normal people. In reality they were a clan of powerful sorcerers with two mouths, one for talking and one for eating. The front mouth was used only for talking; the eating mouth was situated at the back of the head, hidden under their long thick tresses of kinky hair. Unsuspecting, the inexperienced young man walked into this village, and when asked what his business was, said that he was looking for a wife. A man has to know very little of this world if he is satisfied with a wife whose mouth does nothing but talking, but this youngster was. The girl's name was Welewele, and she was very beautiful - so far as the superficial observer could see. The young man produced the money for the bride-price, to the satisfaction of her father, and took his bride home with him.

When they arrived in his village, all the people rejoiced and cried: "Welcome home!" At the bridegroom's family she would not eat anything at all. She pretended not to be hungry, but in reality she did not want to show her second mouth. The next day she went to the forest with her sister-in-law to collect firewood. In the forest, the women dispersed and each started collecting by herself. As soon as was alone, the newly married began chanting:

I am Welewele

They think I am a woman

No one has yet noticed

What my hair is hiding

At once horns began to grow from her head and she turned into a beautiful antelope. She bent her graceful neck and started grazing hungrily. When she was satisfied she resumed her human appearance and joined the women who were coming back. The next day they all went to the river to fetch water. Welewele took her water jar, but she walked to another part of the river, beyond a bend, where she could not be seen. She changed into a stork, singing:

Tata nabanji, pick up the toads!

At once the toads appeared from all sides; she picked them up and ate them, swallowing them whole. When she had had enough of this amphibious food, she changed back into a 'woman' again and joined the others.

The person who began to suspect her was her mother-in-law, who noticed that she never ate but grew leaner. So, she told her daughters that they must keep a close watch on their sister-in-law when they were out together, but without being seen. So, one day the eldest of the sisters followed Welewele from afar until she suddenly saw how her brother's wife changed into an antelope and ate grass! The next day the second sister hid in the bushes near the river and saw to her alarm that the beautiful Welewele turned into a tall stork and picked up toads for dinner. The girls ran to their mother and told her what they had seen. The mother told her son, but he refused to believe her so she told him to go and see for himself. He did. One day he followed the women to the woods and hid in the bushes, where he could see his wife change into a beautiful antelope. After she had changed back into a woman, he repeated her song:

I am Welewele

They think I am a woman

No one has yet noticed

What my hair is hiding.

And lo! The woman changed back into an antelope, for the song was the magical formula for her metamorphosis. Without further ado, the young man took her back to her village, returned her to her parents saying they had deceived him with a wild animal. “I was looking for a wife, not for a game.” He demanded his money back, all that he had paid as bride-price. The marriage having thus been annulled, he went back to his parents, offered his apologies and declared himself willing to marry any girl they would select for him. This shows that no youngster should imagine that he can decide on important matters for himself.

Peers play an increasing crucial role in determining your value system. You are unlikely to be active participants in isolation. You need the support and the friendship of peers who are like minded and who are driven by same goals, youth activism, enables you to make friends and strengthen your networks. However excessive peer pressures can be fatal and negative. Like the story above.

The temptations of Jesus: Mt 4:1-11

This text in Matthew is a story about the temptations of Jesus by the devil in the desert. Jesus is remembered as one who being like us in every aspect but sin, faced and endured temptations. Do you believe in this story? Do you believe in the devil? And his existence? Does the story embarrass you; Jesus who is God could allow temptations

against himself? Christ's exposing himself to temptation proves that he not only believed in the devil but was eager to confront him.

“...if you are the son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread....”

The devil is subtle too in choosing the place; the desert: arid unpeopled, wilderness, it is easy here to fall into frustration, depression, to feel a desolation, affliction, feel lack of companionship, feel lack of human sympathy, lack of admiration. In such conditions, it is easy to fall victim to sensual temptations for nature then inclines us to look for pleasures to compensate for the feelings of sadness and desolation.

Satan plays on the character, particular dispositions, needs, desires, and circumstances of his intended victim. He masks evil under a show of good. Had Satan merely suggested that it would be a good thing for our Lord to eat, now that his fast was accomplished, there would have been nothing evil in the suggestion. Where he goes wrong is to urge our Lord to use his supernatural powers for this purpose. It is wrong for various reasons. It is wrong to seek food for oneself by miraculous means when it can be obtained by ordinary human means; grace is not a substitute for nature. It works in and through nature, healing and perfecting nature and raising it to a higher level. You are to give glory to God in all that you do, all the natural activities of everyday life, your eating, drinking, your work and play for while are natural, they are also engraced. Our Lord was tempted to use his messianic power for his own purposes (you can get trapped when you are tempted to misuse your power, potentials e.g. premature sex, premature and early pregnancies, abortions, drug addiction, violence etc. You could use Jesus'

answer when faced by challenges of life. Jesus' power was for the good of humanity not his own advantage. Your power or giftedness is for all people not yourselves 'if you are really the son of God'. This was an attempt to goad Jesus into the vanity of demonstrating his power.

Someone in this group may ask 'the power was his to use for the doing of good; it was good that he should satisfy his hunger; what then was wrong in Satan's suggestion? In obedience to his Father the Word had taken on himself the form of a servant. It was not for him therefore to satisfy his own human needs in superhuman ways. Had our Lord adopted this he would stand guilty of the very evil he had come to correct, the evil which had been in man's original sin; the arrogant assumption that the satisfaction of one's own needs, desires, ambitions is more important than doing the will of God. Eve was lured into obeying a lust for self aggrandizement instead of obeying God's command. Had Jesus turned the stones into bread he would have been doing the same thing Eve and Adam had done.

"...then the devil took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the temple.....if you are son of God, throw yourself down, for scripture say he has given angels orders about you and they will carry you in their arms in case you trip over a stone"

Satan knows how to draw victory out of defeat. You may avoid one pitfall only to find that in subsequent self-gratulation and overconfidence you fall into another. After the first defeat he again induces Jesus with another temptation [if you are son of God, cast yourself down...]. This is an arrogant attempt to force God to act. The

temptation of being elevated higher than others can lead one to see himself as being different and more important than others. When the devil takes you to the holy city and you stand on the top of the temple it means you look down and see holy places, courts of the temple, holy men, priests of the temple, look at Pharisees and see their long faces and proud assumption of superiority. The city of Christ's temptation was the holy city the city of priests, scribes and Pharisees. There is danger in being set upon a pinnacle because of what you see from there and still more danger in the fact that you can be seen from there. If you are in a position of greater authority, you are greater danger. It is terrible thing to be responsible to God for another human being, as parents are responsible for you, as brother and sister are responsible for each other, friend is responsible for friend.

The devil knows the bible. He quotes it. While Jesus quotes the bible to instruct, Satan quotes it to lead astray. Satan himself had been thrown down (cf Lk 10:18, Rev. 12:4) but he wants Jesus to do it by himself. Evil suggestions may promise a grand prize of fame or fortune but comes with a painful price. God works differently; 'he has put the mighty from their seats and exalted the lowly....'Lk 1:52-53. Satan cannot do us any spiritual harm unless he induces us to do it by ourselves. He quotes a carefully chosen psalm which tells of God's comfort, constant care, power to protect from every danger, faithfulness. If Jesus acts upon it he will be guilty of a presumption and vain glory, if he refuses it will perhaps mean lack of confidence in God. Satan's argument is flawed; he applies what the psalmist says of a just man who needs the care of angels to keep him from harm, to Jesus who does not. The angels' protection is promised to the just man

and not the son of God, not because the Father loves his son less, but because the son is in no need of the sort of protection given the just man.

Secondly, you cannot simply expect God to protect you from danger if you deliberately put yourself. Many young people have deliberately failed to act according to their capacities in anticipation that when things go wrong God will intervene. No one can shoulder it for you. During the years I have been traveling about the countries it is only natural that I have picked up a number of illustrative stories, some of which are true and others obviously only 'stories' but with a moral as is the following on shouldering own responsibility. A certain priest, giving a mission, made it his business to talk with one of the men of the parish who had been pointed out to him a backslider. He had not been in conversation with him very long before he realized the man was indeed extremely lax as far as the practice of his religion went.

"Don't you ever go to mass on Sundays?" he asked.

"Well, it is like this, Father," replied the man. "I am very busy and work hard all week. When Saturday afternoon comes, I go out for a game of golf. And you know how it is, Father. And after the game is over we usually have dinner, and when that's finished, we settle down to a game of bridge. To be quite frank with you, it is usually well after midnight when I get back home, and I am tired that I don't manage to get to mass. "But my wife is a wonderful woman, Father. She goes to two masses each Sunday, and I think that will do for both of us." "H'm. Do you ever say any prayers at all?" queried the priest. "Well I cannot say I am very good at praying, but my wife is marvelous. She says two rosaries every day and I think that will do for both of us." "Ever go to

confession?" was the next question. "No, not often, Father, but my wife goes twice a week, and I think that ought to do for both of us." Seeing that the man was not likely to be persuaded to return to the practice of his duties, the priest left him. The story goes on to relate the good wife died shortly afterwards and went to heaven. Six months later the husband died and followed her. At the gates of the Eternal City, the husband was stopped by St. Peter who started to question him. "We cannot let anyone in here unless he has proved himself worthy," explained the saint. "Tell me, when you were upon earth did you attend to your religious duties?" The man began to hem and haw, so St Peter asked him, "Did you go to mass on Sundays?" "Well, St. Peter, it was like this." And he gave to the saint exactly the same line that he had given to the priest some few months ago. "I see. Ever go to confession?" again the same reply as had been given to the priest. "And what about your prayers?" "Afraid I wasn't much good at them, but my wife, bless her, used to say two rosaries every day and I thought that would do for both of us." "Your wife must have been a very good woman doing so much for both of you. What did you say your name was?" The man told him. "Oh yes, of course. Now I remember. Your wife came in here six months ago." "That is right," said the husband as he prepared to pass through the Golden gates. "But unfortunately," continued St. Peter, as he gently pushed him outside, "she came in here for both of you. Good morning. No one can save your soul for you. It is personal responsibility resting on each of your own shoulders.

Thirdly, this is temptation to self glory. Jesus is not the sort of a person to earn cheap glory by playing to the gallery. If Jesus were to cast himself down from the

heights, this would not only compel wonder and admiration of the crowd but would also fit exactly with their conception of what the messiah was to be. The gospels point to what would later on happen to Jesus: the crowds would seek to make him their king, distort the meaning of his miracles, would be for ever ask for a sign, people at the time wanted a saviour who dazzles them by display of worldly power, political messiah to free them from oppression.

This teaches you that you are never to seek glory for yourselves or others unless it is such that will ultimately give glory to God. It is the name of God to be given glory. To seek honour for ourselves apart from or defiance of God's will is not to honour but dishonour him. This temptation comes to you daily in various forms from the petty vanities which lure you into forgetfulness of God to pride and ambition which can make you defy God. God is not glorified by light reflected from you. You achieve glory by God's light from himself. Do your part and avoid short cuts. Do not look for private revelations, miracles, prophecies, little cults of your own.

Your youthfulness can be a channel for temptation. As good as it is, this stage of life can be an occasion of sin. Take no chances. A story is told of three men made an application for a post of driver. The prospective employer, wishing to test them spoke as follows: "I want a very good driver, so you must allow me to ask you some questions. Let us presume that you are driving me in my car along a mountain highway. On one side there rises up the sheer face of the mountain. On the other side there is a ravine more than two hundred feet deep. How close could you drive that car to the edge of the ravine?"

The first man answered that he could drive the car within a foot of the edge of the ravine. The second said he thought he could drive within eight inches of it. "And you?" the prospective employer asked of the third man. "I should drive as near as possible to the side of the road farthest away from the ravine," was the reply. "Then you are the man I engage," said his employer. "I don't want anyone taking any chances with my life. Don't take any chances where your morality and spiritual life are concerned.

Satan can fan our zeal, generosity, enterprise and urge us to attempt things which are imprudent, beyond our capacities only to lead us to self destruction. It better to be careful and consult people on what you wish to do to avoid tragic consequences. There is milk for babies and meat for adults. You should never rush to take decisions and this is best illustrated by a story of certain young man who set out on a journey in search of a wife. One day, at nightfall, he lay down to sleep under a tree. The next morning, at sunrise, he woke up to find a young girl at his side. She was extraordinarily beautiful, perfect and shapely except for one feature: she had a horn. She said: "Wake up, dear man; I will be your wife, if you want me. There is only one condition: never reproach me for my one fault." Behind the girl he saw houses, rows of them, and many people busy harvesting and herding cattle, where the previous night there had been nothing but trees as far as the eye could see. The young man accepted the girl's proposal and took her for a wife. The people of that country made him their king and they lived happily for many years. The man told his wife: "Every night when I come back from my work, I want a dish of porridge." Every time he returned home since that day, there was a dish of steaming porridge waiting. One fateful day however, it was not there. The

man called his wife-the-horn., and demanded his porridge. She said: "I am sorry but the houseboy broke the pot and swept away all the flour. There is no one left." The man was furious. "You stupid horn-bearer!" he exploded. It was said. The houses, the cattle, the people sank into the ground. Trees rose up instead. The last one to disappear was his wife, smiling sadly. He was alone in the forest. He had lost his temper and lost his luck. Hasty action is dangerous.

"Jesus answers, it is written, you shall not put the Lord your God, to test....."

God has appointed certain means to use in achieving his purposes for us. We are not to exaggerate their importance or treat them as all sufficient. We are not to ignore or belittle them; they are to be used, and if we fail to make use of them when we can and should we tempt God. There are circumstances in which ordinary means are lacking; food and water. But only in such cases may we look for such extraordinary help. Jesus fed people miraculously when he was with them in a desert place and there was no food available by ordinary means but when they were near a town he dismissed them to find food for themselves in the ordinary way.

Dangers from which the angels will protect the just are dangers against which there is no natural escape, evils which no foresight or reasonable care can avert for example what the psalmist calls snare of the hunter, arrow that flies by day, the pestilence that infests the darkness. Where ordinary means are available and sufficient let us not expect a miracle. St Paul says, let he who does not work not eat. If Jesus wishes to come down from the roof top of temple let him walk down the steps. If you want to get down walk down the stairs or take the lift. In day to day affairs you should

not neglect the ordinary, natural ways of satisfying your needs; finding food, drink, clothing, shelter and other needs of life. You should not live for God by despising your God-given reason. You should not by pass ordinary means. Holiness is attained by ordinary discipline. You should use the ordinary means to survive. Patiently seek for employment, business etc. You turn to crime not (burglary, pick pocketing, illicit peddling of drugs, flesh etc) to earn a living now that proper employment is unavailable or is long in coming.

“... again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all kingdoms of the world.....”

The devil is not easily discouraged by failure of one kind or another. He returns; this reminds us of the Delilah and Samson. Delilah persists till she traps Samson- cf Judges 16. The devil has persistence of a fly which you wave away but still comes. In the first temptation, the devil comes feigning sympathy for Jesus who is hungry, next he wants to help to promote Jesus' work and now he comes forcefully and takes Jesus to the high mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus is taken up to see by his eyes. We are more easily moved by what we see than what we hear about. Hawkers in the streets of Nairobi know how to induce customers to look at their wares thereby lowering their sales-resistance. Eve was shown the fruit Gen 3:6, sons of God saw and lusted after the beauty of the daughters of men Gen 6:2. It is not sinful to look at the beauty of created world. We praise and thank God for it. To despise them would be to despise their maker. But you must have self mastery; remember the story of Lot and his wife. The world today is full of damage done by greed, ambition and lust for

power, sex, money, prestige etc. And unfortunately you are caught up in the mess of such nature.

He who would not cast down from the temple rooftop would not come down from the cross when they called him to do so. He would draw all creature with a cross not a crown. This kind of temptations appear more often in our daily living; you will find well intentioned but foolish parents who in their determination to make their children follow some particular vocation go far beyond bounds of parental guide to persuade their children to choose a certain form of life only to end in utter catastrophe, cult of ignorance in the name of innocence: withholding knowledge because knowledge is dangerous.

Cynics say every man has his price. Satan may not necessarily and always take us up such heights; perhaps a mole hill will be enough from which to arouse our greed, ambition and lust. We may steal and say the sum is so small and negligible or it's in good cause, if we cheat or defraud or trick somebody we may call it legitimate. Whatever little you see from the mole hill may be under the influence of Satan. We may be careless in small matters never to realize we are doing evil. Peter in his cowardice began by following Jesus from afar then denied him and declared he knew him not.

THIRD CONFERENCE:

TOPIC: LESSONS FROM TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS

Temptation or opposition is not entirely bad. It helps bring out the best. When a pilot is taking off in a plane, unless there is some very serious reason for doing otherwise, he always takes off into or against the wind. The opposition from the wind gives lift to the plane and assists it in rising from the ground into the air. Opposition, in the shape of temptation, suffering, or unfavourable situations, gives us the opportunity or rising superior to them.

This age (youth) attracts lots of attention. For good purposes and for bad purposes. It an age that temptations abound in many forms. You live in a volatile world which seeks to have everyone and everything resemble it. And since you are a vulnerable group, you are at a greater risk both as individuals and as a group; there is individual psychology versus mob psychology, identity crisis, models in life, choices to make, careers to choose etc. You do not know whom you are and are shopping around for whom you want to be. This is the moment the devil comes in with lots of offer. False offers camouflaged as genuine. For you this is the moment you must look to God and especially at the temptations of Jesus. He was also young when the devil tempted him. The devil wanted Jesus to be what he could not, seek false glory and false trust.

The devil often seeks to use our own particular propensities to tempt us. When we think of the story of our Lord's temptation we can for practical purposes, when applying it to our own experiences, think of the devil simply in terms of those evil suggestions and impulses, rising up within us with which we are so familiar. The book

of Job says it all ‘... the life of man upon earth is warfare...’ Job 7:1. Matthew reports it in Jesus own life. And Christ’s temptation cannot but be of vital interest to us because in a sense his temptation and his victory were also ours. He transformed us into himself when he willed to be tempted by Satan. Jesus asks the crowds, ‘what did you go out into the desert to see?’ because at that time Jerusalem, all Judea and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him....’ Mt 3:5 Jesus could be asking young people today as they set out to follow him into the desert of life and to watch as he prays, fasts and finally enters into combat with Satan. What exactly are young people going to see? We live in a fallen, twisted world because of the cunning of the serpent. The world that is so seductive of young people to resemble it.

Luckily enough it was decreed from the beginning that the first step in the work of recreation should be the humbling of the serpent, his head bruised by the seed of the woman that the work of restoring humanity might follow step by step of its fall. For this purpose the son of God appeared ‘that he might destroy the works of the devil...’ 1 Jn 3:8. So it was that Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert to meet his adversary and to show dramatically that the power of hell could not prevail against the strength of Christ. This personal experience of the Lord is given to us to underline its practical importance for us. Underlines the fact that it has much to tell us that we need to know- about God’s love for us, about the struggle which this life involves for us, about our hope of victory and the means we should adopt to overcome the adversary.

Christ’s victory is the guarantee of our own; but that does not mean that we have no more fighting to do. On the contrary life on earth is warfare. Satan’s object in

attempting to master Christ was to keep humanity within his power, he failed, but it is still open to him to redeem his failure by continuing to corrupt and destroy individual human beings more so young people. Whenever we are overcome by the load of temptations and fall we must rise up. Christ's victory is our victory. It is not enough to say you cannot give up a bad habit. To say I cannot conquer that temptation. I have always ended up on the losing side. "I am not going to try any more. Every time I go to confession I have the same old list to tell. So I may as well stay away altogether." This is rather a ridiculous way of looking at things. Let me explain what I mean by referring you to something which happens each day. Every morning you take your breakfast, I presume. But by lunch time you are hungry again, aren't you? Would you therefore argue this way to yourselves: "It is not a bit of use my eating breakfast because I am only going to be hungry again by noontime. My breakfast evidently doesn't do me any good." Of course you wouldn't. You are hungry at noontime, not because of your breakfast, but in spite of it. If you had had no breakfast, you would have been twice as hungry by lunchtime. In very much the same way we fall into sin not because of confession, but in spite of it; and if you didn't go to confession at all, you would be infinitely worse off. What seems like defeat may bear victory. A remark made by a king whose troops were constantly being defeated is worthwhile remembering. Some kind of the king's military advisers were trying to persuade him to withdraw from a war which was going against him. To their arguments the king made this reply: "Gentlemen," said the ruler, "my enemies are teaching my soldiers how to fight. Out of their defeats my

men are reaping a rich harvest of experience which will stand them in good stead in the next encounter. A lost battle," he added significantly, "does not mean a lost war."

Christ's temptation is unlike ours. The scripture records that he went voluntary to meet his enemies. His going into the desert and his forty days' fast almost give the impression that he was challenging a hesitant adversary to come forth and do battle. For us temptation is something which comes upon us against our will, whereas for Jesus it was a contest entered into willingly and even eagerly. The devil chooses such a time for his attacks because he knows that someone is likely to be vulnerable after being raised to spiritual heights. After 40 days nights of fast. The devil knew Jesus was faint from hunger and Satan could find a weakness in him. This shows us that we should anticipate temptations and make intelligent provision against them which are sure to come. If we fail to look ahead to the time of aridity- identity crisis, models, mob psychology, choices of life- means that if this moment comes it will take us by surprise we shall have no defenses prepared and we shall be easy prey to temptations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF TEMPTATIONS IN LIFE.

Testing Virtues of the Just.

This happens in order to prove the just. The bible is full of other instances where the just people are tested. Abraham's faith was tested (Gen 22:1-12), the manna given to Israel was to show whether or not they would walk in God's law (Ex 16:4), Israel's wanderings were to manifest what was in their hearts whether they would keep the commandments or not (Deut 8:2) Moses says to his people "Yahweh your God is testing you to know if you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and all your soul"

(Deut 13:3) or not. 'And this appears to be the lot of all the just for we read of them that God has tried them and found them worthy of himself' Wis. 3:5

Young people are tempted to be what they are never meant to be and not to be what they are meant to be. Not so much to show God true disposition of the heart, he already knows it but for enlightenment of the person tempted and perhaps to others. A person sometimes will rash and attempt things far beyond his strength at other times he will fall easily into despair, imagining himself unequal to something which is well within his powers. It is a moment that each person must stand up to be counted. Each one must stand up and bear witness to his convictions. It is a difficult moment though but it is worthy of the attitude of Christ. This is best illustrated by a story about standing up to be counted that I heard many years ago. When Khrushchev pronounced his famous denunciation of Stalin, someone in the Congress Hall is reported to have said, "Where were you, Comrade Khrushchev, when all these innocent people were being slaughtered?" Khrushchev paused, looked around the hall, and said, "Will the man who said that kindly stand up!" tension mounted in the hall. No one moved. Then Khrushchev said, "Well, whoever you are, you have an answer now. I was in exactly the same position as you are now." It calls for a lot of courage to stand up for virtues.

To check ruinous tendency to pride.

Temptations remind us of our own frailty and dependence on God. St Paul says 'therefore that I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an

angel of Satan to keep me from being too elated' II Cor 12:7. It puts checks and balances to our pride.

To show powerlessness of the devil.

Temptations may be permitted to show their powerlessness against the grace of Christ. This is made clear in the book of Job. God said to Satan, 'did you pay attention to my servant Job? There is no one like him on earth. A sound and honest man who fears God and shuns evil. The just man may be exposed to trial for the confusion of the powers of evil.

To strengthen a person.

A man's capacities will grow when demands are put upon him which tax his energies and call forth his strongest efforts, for generally speaking he will be likely to exert himself only as far as he must. The same sort of thing is likely to happen in the soul when demands are made of it; and for that reason the absence of temptation can in some circumstances be a greater danger than temptation itself. God allows the just to be tempted to show them the greatness which grace bestows on them. God gives the just the consolation of knowing they are of sufficient worth to have aroused the anger of the devil; just as at other times he would perhaps give us subtle warning by letting us go on long untroubled.

Jesus was led into a 'desert'- wild tract of country; a bare rugged range of hills, scarred with innumerable ravines cut by the torrents, a great expanse of barren sand and desolate. It was a desolate and solitary place, Moses went up to the solitude of the mountain top before receiving the law from God's hands, the Baptist lived his early life

in the wilderness as a preparation for his ministry. The desert in one sense or another is a necessary condition of spiritual development. It is good thing to withdraw at times to where we can attempt to live at a deeper level, to be aware of the hidden things above all of the hidden presence; so when the cock crew and made Peter aware of his betrayal he 'went out and wept bitterly.' Being alone was a help to his repentance and his sorrow and so led to the deepening of his understanding and faith and love.

Many people know moments of crisis, of challenge which they can only face and think out alone; and there are times when God seems to strip his servants of all their resources, even the help and guidance of their friends so that they rely for once only on him. To go into the wilderness therefore is to risk, or invite, a meeting with evil spirits and this is what our Lord does. Have we not been taught to flee every occasion of sin? Indeed we tend to think of all our troubles, temptations as due to some external cause, and so try to escape them by running away from them. And sometimes, of course we are right; troubles do come upon us which are none of our making e.g. identity crisis; and sometimes, therefore the right and sensible option is to run away. But flight is not always a remedy for temptation. If it is Satan with whom we are at issue we shall not escape him by running away for there is nowhere where we can take sanctuary. But in any case fleeing would not for the most part save us, for we carry our tempter within ourselves. There are some temptations due to our own unruly impulses- young people experience this so often, want to experiment with sex, drugs; alcohol etc. There is unwritten law which says that when imagination and the will are in conflict the imagination always wins.

There are other occasions when to refuse to face a temptation is merely a sign of laziness or cowardice or procrastination; an issue is involved about which sooner or later we shall have to reach a decision and the longer we refuse to face the issue the longer it will haunt us and in so doing drain us of resources which could be put to better, more productive uses. There are times when we try to imitate the boldness of our Lord in going out to meet temptation.

Physical endurance

Our Lord's fast was a long one. For forty days Jesus ate nothing. It was severe and there is an outstanding example of physical endurance. Both Matthew and Luke seem to suggest that it was not till the end of the forty days that Jesus was hungry. Why did Jesus endure this long and exhausting fast? In the immediate context, the most obvious reason was to provoke Satan to attack him. It was in order to be tempted that he went into the desert. And Satan thought he would break him at this time of his physical weakness. In our Lord's parable it is while the farmer is asleep that his enemy comes and sows weeds among his wheat. In the beginning of the story of mankind it is while Eve is alone that the devil tries his wiles on her. There is a practical moral lesson for us here. Some conditions of mind and body do in fact make us an easy prey to temptation. In times of extreme bodily fatigue or mental tension we are much more readily open to suggestion than when we are well and strong in body and tranquil in mind. It is misguided to adopt penitential practices which undermine health and therefore their ability to work for God. It remains true that our Lord's example is there to remind us of our need to arm ourselves against temptations by fasting and self-denial. He himself

says that there are some devils that are only to be driven out by prayer and fasting; and the church underlines our need of self denying practices by its yearly Lenten fast. Today it is true modern conditions may absolve very many from the duty of fasting as such, but there are other equivalent ways of exercising self-denial and so of achieving that discipline without which we in the habit of giving way to every passing whim and desire we shall be in no position to exercise self control in the moment of temptation. Jesus is tempted after baptism teaches us that grace received from God should not be allowed to lie idle. Our baptismal grace empowers us to exercise it. It should not lie fallow.

For growth of faith.

Far from signifying sin or failure, life's inevitable trials are viewed as opportunities for persons to prove the genuineness of their faith and obedience. But enduring trials does not necessarily make one acceptable to God. By his endurance of testing and victory Jesus opened up the path, and now Jesus gives guidance and fortitude to those who wish to travel on it. In summary we can acclaim:

- From the father of lies comes the hope that young people can be more than they are.
- From the father of lies comes the desire to possess more than we need.
- From the father of lies comes the desire to possess the goal of life of fame and honour.
- From the father of deception comes the desire of being esteemed, loved and sought after.

- From the father of deception comes the desire of being praised, honoured and preferred.
- From the father of deception comes the desire of being consulted, approved and noticed.

The temptations of Jesus in the desert by Satan bring into clear daylight the profound opposition that exists between the standard of Christ our Lord and that of the devil.

Conclusion

Speaking of the temptations to turn stones into bread reminds us of the widespread wish for that sense of security which plenty of resources can provide. Look at what is happening in parts of the world. When people begin to create and accumulate resources and wealth they stop trusting in God. They stop finding meaning in God. In the temptation to throw oneself on the ground borders on the dangers of an excess of trust which may lead to presumption. The last temptation is seen as choice of evil means in order to attain good ends. Christian faith is not served by mass conversions induced by compulsion, sword or violence. You do not convert people forcefully or certain parents who impose a vocation on their children.

FOURTH CONFERENCE

GROUP; POSTULANTS

TEXT: MARK 3:13-14

TOPIC: THE CALL

The call of Christ is a personal invitation to join him in accomplishing the will of his Father. Though Christ does not ask of the same for all men. For “there are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit; and there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of workings, but the same God who works all things in all; Cf 1 Cor. 12:4-6. Various, too, are the responses of men. For some the answer is nothing more than a brief display of good will and intention, others go beyond this, but they settle for half- measures and compromise and then there are those whose watchword is the prayer ‘O Lord.....I have freely offered all these things.... To be with you... to be sent out.’

The call of a person to discipleship implies two elements; an internal decision by God in favour of some one and external call in time and space. Jesus himself says as recorded by John “you did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you....” Jn 15:16.19; 6:70; 13:18. The source and origin of every call is from eternity before a person realizes it. Isaiah admits that the Lord calls him from the womb and from here he named him. Cf Isa 49:1. And in the case of prophet Jeremiah we get to know that Yahweh knew him before his formation in his mother’s womb and before Jeremiah was born Yahweh consecrated him. And even the psalmist is amazed at the foreknowledge

of God. He confesses out loudly that his parts were formed and knit together in his mother's womb and Yahweh knew so well cf Ps 139:13-15.

In the New Testament, John the Baptist's call is even more interesting. From the womb he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. Cf Luke 1:15. Paul is too amazed how God sets him apart. Gal 1:15. The womb is very important in discipleship. It is in the womb that word becomes flesh as John says in his gospel. God sets his chosen ones on the way of the vocation to his work even before a person is born. God's choice comes before birth which is kind of internal and is materialized by an external call to the discipleship. [At this point, I may allow 2 or 3 volunteers to share the story of their call]. God calls whom he pleases. The bible is full of other stories of those called from various occupations; Abraham-herdsman; Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter-fisherman; rich young man; Paul- tent maker, Levi tax collector etc. And as you gather here each of you has a specific type of life; some have just finished school, some still at school, some have employment; teacher, banker, trader, driver, fishermen etc. The call comes to everyone; tax collector Mk 2:14-17; fishermen Mk 1; 16-20; rich young man Luke 18:18; scribes-disciples of the law Mt 8:19. Some accept, some reject it. And all have this freedom of choice. Those who accept "as he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea.....Jesus said to them "come and follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." They abandoned their nets and followed him. Mk 1:16-20. Those who reject "...but one by one began to excuse themselves. The first said to him, "I have purchased a field and must go to examine it" ... and another said I have purchased five yoke of oxen and am on my way to evaluate them.....and another

said, “I have just married a woman, and therefore I cannot come.” Luke 14:15-20; 18:23. Those who accept are promised the Kingdom. Therefore a call is a gift/grace from God. A disciple is one called. Nobody can lay claim to this call. It is a gift from God.

Conversion; Repentance and Believe.

It is ultimately necessary for a disciple or a would-be disciple of Jesus to enter into conversion of life. All gospels speak of the centrality of conversion of life for a worthwhile discipleship. In the gospel of Mark, John the Baptist starts off to call people back to radical obedience to God’s ways by acknowledging their sinfulness and turning back to life in God. When Jesus appears he says “...repent and believe in the Good News” Mk 1:15. Jesus also connects this urgent command ‘repent’ to ‘believe.’ Conversion and faith become intimately connected.

Therefore it is impossible to separate conversion from following Jesus, believing in Jesus or being his disciple. The central message from Mark is conversion. Christian Conversion is a process of following Jesus, becoming a disciple, believing in Jesus, having faith in Christ. In fact what Jesus does first in the gospel of Mark is to build on what John the Baptist has already started. He calls the first four disciples –Simon and his brother Andrew; James and his brother John to see how far they have repented and turned away from their former ways of life.

Conversion of life comes from the inside. Most of us have seen the painting of Christ knocking on the door of a house with the words below the picture: “Behold I stand at the door and knock” but there is another moral behind the painting of the

picture. When the artist had finished the painting, he took his little son into his studio. "Son, he said your daddy has just painted this new picture. "Do you like it?" The little fellow regarded it seriously for a few moments. "Oh yes," the boy spoke up, "It is nice but you made a mistake, daddy. You have forgotten something. "I have made a mistake, forgotten something? Tell me. "What did I forget and where did I make a mistake?" "Well," replied his son triumphantly, "You forgot to put a latch on the door and the man cannot come in." His father smiled and then said, "No son. Your daddy didn't make a mistake. There is a latch on the door-but it is on the inside. Unless you personally, open the door of your hearts to Christ, he will be forced forever to stand on the outside. The latch is in your hands. In order for any one of us to be converted, he/she must search for God where he is easily found. Sometimes we end up searching for God in the difficult places. In such situations, the search becomes elusive. A beautiful story is told of a neighbour who found Nasrudin on hands and knees. "What are you searching for, Mullah?" "My key." Both men got on their knees to search. After a while the neighbour said, "Where did you lose it?" "At home." "Good Lord! Then why are searching here?" "Because it is brighter here." We end up searching for God where it is obviously difficult to find him or where he is not easily understood. We seek for repentance, belief and faith in wrong places.

Many things can be used to test our faith. A story is told of how dry bones may be used to test our faith. A Christian scholar who held the bible to be literally true was once accosted by a scientist who said, "According to the bible the earth was created some five thousand years ago. But we have discovered bones that point to life on earth a

million years ago.” Pat, came the answer: “When God created the earth five thousand years ago, he deliberately put those bones in to test our faith and see if we would believe his word rather than scientific evidence.” After we have found God he may wish to test the strength of our faith.

Why convert? Because the new order of the kingdom is breaking in upon you and, if you want to be part of it, you will need to undergo a fundamental transformation. Jesus makes the need for conversion from the beginning. We need a rebirth, to be remade before are ready and equipped to participate in the kingdom. In the bible conversion means “turning” to convert to return, bring back, restore, turn around conversion means to come back, to come home again, to wander no longer in sin blindness and idolatry. Turn around involves stopping and proceeding in a new direction. The assumption from the teaching of John the Baptist through Jesus and apostle is that we are on wrong path and we need to turn back.

In summary, conversion begins with repentance. Repentance conjures up feelings of being sorry or guilty for something. Repentance turns us from sin, selfishness, darkness, idols, habits, bondages and demons. Having began with repentance, conversion proceeds to faith. The call to repentance is the invitation to freedom and the preparation for faith. Repentance is turning from, and faith is turning to. Repentance is seeing our sin and turning from it; faith is seeing Jesus and turning towards him. Together repentance and faith form the two movements of conversion. Faith is turning to belief, hope and trust. As repentance dealt with our past, faith opens

up our future. Faith opens us to the future by restoring our sight, softening our hearts, bringing light into our darkness. We are converted to compassion, justice and peace.

Faith and discipleship

After Jesus has constituted his group of helpers he sends them out. But before he releases them, he moves with them around the villages. In these movements, he goes into the synagogues teaching and healing, he casts out the devil, cures Simon's mother-in-law who is down with a fever, people bring to him relatives and friends possessed with demons and he releases them from these bondages. He gets up early to pray in the deserted place. His disciples look for him. He asks them to accompany him to preach. Eventually after sometime he reconstitutes the 12 disciples whom he calls apostles to be with him and to be sent out. The work Jesus does cause fear, incomprehension and faith among his disciples. One more surprising thing is that while at various instances the disciples fail to recognize Jesus, demons do. Here this: "... and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?" Mk 1:24; "Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, "You are the son of God!" Mk 3:11; "... And he would not permit the demon to speak, because they knew him" Mk1:34.

Still the disciples seem oblivious to this recognition. Even after explaining the parable of the sower disciples display their incomprehension. In calming the storm as the sea disciples still lack faith; "...why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" Mk 4:40 and they are left puzzled "...who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? Mk 4:41. Some amount of trust is important. A story is told that on Pope Pius XI's desk, there used to be a framed picture of Our Lord quelling the storm at the sea and

saying, "Peace, be still." The reason for that picture's presence on the pontiff's desk was this. After he had been elected pope, Pius went into the study of his famous predecessor, Benedict XV, one of the greatest popes of modern times. To walk in the footsteps of such a brilliant and holy man was a task of no mean magnitude. The world was torn by the First World War. In many places the church was under persecution, and as the magnitude of the task which confronted him dawned upon him, the Pope fell on his knees and began to pray. As he looked up he saw this picture resting on the desk in front of him. "Our Lord can still calm the storms of a troubled world," he murmured. And that picture remained on his desk till the day he died. Trust in the invisible divine power is essential step.

Some disciples are unable to make a firm commitment to Jesus. They are overcome by fear. It is not easy to be a disciple, to follow Jesus, to apply the message of conversion to oneself. Discipleship is a risk venture. The big opponent of faith is fear. Jesus says; "if any man wants to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" Mk 8:34. Discipleship means recognizing that it is not only preaching to others and somehow not applying the same message to oneself. Those who want to follow Jesus must watch out. You may fail to understand Jesus; you may become afraid to change your hearts, attitudes, your very lives and decide to follow the path that is rocky and potholed.

Conversion is marked by the sign of the cross. It applies to all disciples. It is a challenging choice. One musician has sung; 'the roads diverged to the wood and I took the one less traveled and it has made all the difference.' Conversion as a necessary

recipe for discipleship is a journey that must begin from the head to the heart. God's word 'repent and believe' must take off from the head to the heart. It is the longest daily journey. To understand the word and recognize the Lord passes through moments of sadness and despair, questioning and seeking, conversion and dialogue, table fellowship and hospitality, sacramental moments. From the non-recognition in the story 'on the road to Emmaus to recognition in the breaking of the bread. When you journey with the Lord and discover the meaning of words of scripture 'repent and believe' you become bearers of joyful message and this is what has gathered you here in this postulancy house.

Disciples: Repent and Believe.

In the gospel of Mark, Jesus' first words declare "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news. Mk 1:15. Jesus' proclamation elicits a response that Jesus describes with a double imperative: repent and believe. Repents means to change ones mind, to turn away from something- turn away from your former ways of living and doing towards new ways of living and doing. What one is to turn towards is specified in the second imperative 'believe' which means to be convinced of something. It is a conviction regarding Jesus' proclamation that is required, a commitment to the good news. In using parables, Jesus requires a response, force a decision from the hearer-parables are performances of the kingdom of God. They reveal double activity. First is the action of the storyteller who relates the parable than the reaction of the hearer. Who acts on the message of the parable.

FIFTH CONFERENCE

TEXT: MARK 3:14

TOPIC: CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP

1. TO BE WITH HIM

This is the first condition of discipleship. It is the vertical/upward aspect of discipleship. To be a disciple of Jesus is first and foremost to be attached to him, to surrender oneself to him and his values. To identify with Christ to be with him means to be obedient to the will of the Father. To trust in divine providence. Providence comes to us in various ways in various means. To have total unwavering confidence in him. Trust in his ways though strange as they may be and as they always are, just trust. His ways are indeed strange and we shall never be able to fathom them. All we can do is to leave things trustfully and in confidence in God's providential care.

A story is told of how some years ago a missionary, who was preaching a course of sermons in a certain parish, was asked by the pastor to visit one of his parishioners whose husband had recently died. Up to that time she had been an exemplary catholic, but, from the moment of his death she had become bitter and complaining against God. She had refused to attend to her religious duties on the grounds that God was cruel to take her husband from her when she loved him so much. The missionary went to her home in the hope of showing her the foolishness of her attitude. He pointed out that she had been very happily married for over thirty years, that she had been blessed with a splendid family, all good Catholics, and that therefore she had much for which to thank God. All to no avail. The woman raved and ranted

against God and assured the missionary that she would have nothing more to do with religion. So the missionary left the house. On his way back to the rectory, the priest met a friend who happened to know the dead man very well since they both worked for the same firm. The missionary made some remark about the sad plight of the wife. "Father," said the other, "it was just as well that God took him when he did." "Why do you say that?" queried the missionary. "Well, I happen to be connected with the firm for which the dead man worked, and if God hadn't taken him the police would have done so. That man's books showed defalcations to the extent of several thousands of shillings. Yet, before that became known he was taken ill, and I happen to know that he sent for a priest and made his peace with God before he died. If he had lived he would certainly have been arrested and sentenced. So it seems to me that God, in His goodness, wanted to save his wife from the awful disgrace of seeing the man she loved standing in the dock and eventually ending up as a criminal. Not only that, but he gave that man time to repent of what he did. And yet she can't see why God took her man. If she only knew the whole story she might think differently, but to tell it to her would break her heart. After this, Father, I am never going to question what God ever does because he knows best." In this kind of situations, trust in God still takes priority.

To be with Jesus means to be faithful-even to the cross. To be with Jesus means to be a conqueror. Remember the desert experience. Jesus wins against the devil. To be with Jesus means to overcome the natural impulses, feelings that come into the way of what God is asking of us. To be with him means to forgive- remember how he forgives. The example of the soldier whose ear Peter chops off. To be with him means to be

merciful. The mercy of God is explained in a beautiful story told that years ago a Kenyan atheist challenged God to prove his own existence, and he made the challenge by reporting it in this way: “I entered the so-called house of God,” he wrote, “and there standing before the altar, I spoke as follows: ‘I deny that you God does exist, and I will never submit myself to you or your commandments. But I wish to make one final experiment. Here I stand before you. If you do really exist, strike me dead with your lightning. If the lightning comes, I shall know I am being justly punished for my pride. I wait for it. But if it does not come. I can walk out of your house in perfect health, proof without doubt that God does not exist. We may wonder why God did not take up that challenge and strike this blasphemer down. But no. God’s ways are not ours, for that same atheist in later years entered the Trappist monastery in Londiani, Kericho district where he spent the rest of his life in penance. The mercy of God had been following him all those years until one day it at last caught up with him. How many of us dared to such a dwell would not go physical or (mis)use the power of office to teach a lesson to the poor fellow? Jesus is merciful even to foolish people, to poor people, sick, lepers, crippled, marginalized people [women, widows and children]. ‘Let children come to me’; he calls out,

To be with Jesus means to detach oneself from this world. The son of man does not have even a place to lay his head. To be with him means to be compassionate. He feeds the hungry, heals sickness, and forgives sins. To be charitable is the order of the day. It is common to hear Christianity and the church taken to task for being far too concerned about the spiritual needs of man, while not sufficiently concerned about his

material needs. That same charge has even been laid at the door of Christ himself. Yet it is most unjust. Our Lord was always concerned with bodily needs of men, as the gospel will readily prove. Most of his miracles were concerned with the restoration of men to bodily health. He made the lame to walk, the deaf to hear and the blind to see. He restored the dead to life; on one occasion specifically so that the young man of Naim might once again be the support of his widowed mother. When people were hungry he miraculously fed them. When they were deep in sorrow he consoled them. And all of his disciples followed in his footsteps. In the Acts of the Apostles we are told how arrangements were made for some to serve at tables in order that others might be fed. St James in his epistle says, "If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? Jam 2:15-16. Today the church has its hospitals for the sick, orphanages for its poor little ones, and homes for the aged and the feeble. Catholic charities abound so that those who are in bodily need shall not go uncared for. The church today practices the charity taught by Christ himself. The spirit of sharing must always prevail in the midst of disciples of Jesus. It is customary in religious communities for the brethren to attend to the comfort of others before attending to their own. One day, at supper, one of the brethren discovered a dead cockroach in his soup. So, very quickly, he called the brother who was serving and whispered to him, "Brother, I notice the Father superior has no cockroach in his soup. Please give him mine." Being with Jesus also means capacity to feel for others. Father Charles was listening to one of his parishioners telling him of the ill fortune that had

come upon the Joseph family. The mother had recently died, the youngest child was desperately sick and the father had been out of work for almost four months; in consequence, the family had been subsisting on the bare necessities of life. "I feel for them very much, Father," said the parishioner. To which the priest made reply, "Well, I hope you have felt in the right place-the pocket." The feelings for others of discipleship must come from the right place.

In order for a disciple to be truly with the Lord he must be longsighted in regard to his neighbour. I am reminded of a story which is told concerning an elderly lady who went to see her doctor. "And what is wrong, madam? She was asked. "Well, it is like this, doctor. I cannot see further than the end of the street on which I live, and I am afraid I'm losing my sight." The doctor then examined her eyes. "Madam, the trouble with you is that you have never tried to see beyond the end of your street. Go home and look over the landscape as far as you can see." This being with Jesus is a vertical aspect of discipleship. This is intimacy and dependence of the disciple to abide in him. Mark's gospel is not only thinking of those who follow the historical Jesus and his time. Mark is catechizing new converts therefore 'to be with him' transcends space and time to include all followers of Christ- to identify oneself with the Lord's way of life. Paul puts it correctly 'it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me' Gal 2:20. there must be total transformation of one's personality; get rid of all that may be a hindrance to the following of Jesus, of being with him and cling to all that will facilitate the symbiotic union with him. How do you get rid of all the obstacles i.e. denial of self; refuse self-centredness, self-aggrandizement, self glory.

These behaviours claim our attention from Jesus. Jesus expects that in order to be with him one abandons or sacrifices his own natural allegiance to self, self claims, self interests, inordinate desires and ambitions. This radical self surrender of their egos signifies a freedom which is only possible only when a person commits unreservedly to Jesus. Again Paul puts it so well when he says “crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires” Gal 5:24. Passion and desires in themselves are not evil but when they drive a person to lack of charity for others they become evil and this is what Paul means. John also puts it so well “being born anew” Jn 3:7. A step further this discipleship consists not only the radical renunciation of oneself and one’s sins but also in not establishing one’s life by oneself but resolutely accepting death and allowing oneself to be established and ruled by Christ. This total commitment involves; ‘carrying one’s own cross’ after the example of the saviour himself Mk 8: 34, Mt 8:38. From the cross salvation comes. A little but very inspiring story is told that one evening, during the war General Smith was approaching a camp with a group of men, but no one knew the password for the day. Volunteers were sought who would try to ascertain it. One man was at last chosen and the dangers he faced were pointed out to him. The General Smith wrote a message: “To the General of the camp. Please acquaint bearer with the password of the day.” He signed it and then gave it to the volunteer who immediately set off for the camp. As the rider approached the camp, he was seen by the sentry who at once raised his rifle and challenged him. Not receiving the password, the sentry put his rifle to his shoulder, and the volunteer, thinking that his last hour had come, made the sign of the cross. Immediately the rifle was lowered and the sentry called out,

“Advance friend.” The sign of the cross had been chosen as the password for the day. Some guys take the cross literally. It is not what many people do on Good Friday; (they carry the wooden cross along streets, crucify themselves- common in South America) but the daily fasting of the consequences of true discipleship in one’s life through suffering, martyrdom and death. This is day to day moral heroism, social heroism and financial heroism. Renunciation of material possession that provide false security. A discipleship that invites disciples to further divest from all the trappings that make one self-complacent, secure and supine- money, wealth, properties, power, prestige, education etc

The bible provides many examples of great individuals whose course of life changed after the call- Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John who were all fishermen left their only means of sustenance and survival, their nets, their boats and their father in order to go and be with Jesus. This ‘to be with him’ changes course of life and requires radical turnaround. It is Jesus who first shows this radical self-emptying “Son of Man does not have a place to lay his head” Luke 9:58. He does not cling to his divinity, Phil 2:6-7. We need to reshape our human life by the transcendent influence of Christ. Within this aspect of personal rigorism, scripture develops two attitudes to wealth; moderate/prudential use as is indicated in Luke 3:11,10:35-37, 12:33, 14:13 and a radical renunciation Luke 5:11, 14:33, 18:22. There are other several accounts of people selling off their possessions and giving out to become genuine disciples, cf Acts 2:45, 434-35. This is not equal to doling out money and property but sharing them with discretion. Sharing of goods and almsgiving is essential component of discipleship and

a good path to being with Jesus. Jesus instructs his disciple the 12; give everyone who begs from you Luke 6:17.30-31, to the disciples he says sell your possessions and give alms Luke 12:33 and to the rich young man he proposes “sell all....give to the poor” Luke 18:22.

Together with self denial, detachment from material, possession, the disciple is also expected to leave behind persons whom he cherishes. Jesus demands from those he call absolute break from natural bonds. This will remind you of the story of the fellow who wanted to go and bury his father. To him Jesus suggests, “leave the dead to burry their dead” Luke 9:60. To that who desired to bid bye to his family Jesus answers, “no one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God; Luke 9:62. The sons of Zebedee left their father and followed him Mk 1:20, Mt4:22 and Luke 5:11.

One more surprise is the list of people to be hated in comparison to God. Jesus insists on scale of values with regard to natural affections within the context of discipleship. Love of God must supersede all other loves. Between natural affection and loyalty to Christ, the disciple should be ready to act towards what is dearest to him as if it were an object of hatred. When a person is attached to God he/ she become non-attached to every other things and persons. This sounds like renouncement series: self, things and persons. It is prelude to and consequence of discipleship. This triple renunciation [self, things and persons] is expressed clearly in such texts as “leaving behind” and “following” usually go together cf Mk 1:17-18, Mt 4:19-20, Luke 5:10-11- abandoning of self, goods and persons is ordained immediately to the following of

Jesus, the former only makes meaning in relation to the latter. You separate from one and acquire some greater good;

- Mt 13:44 “he sells all Buys that field” [treasure]
- Mt 13:46 “he sold all..... bought it” [pearl]
- Mt 19: 21 “sell.....you will have treasure in heaven”
- Luke 18:22 “sell what you have.....treasures in heaven”

Freedom from all bonds is freedom for heaven. For Jesus outer freedom leads to inner freedom.

2. TO BE SENT OUT

This is the second condition. This is the horizontal aspect of discipleship. Every disciple of Jesus is not simply a companion, he is also a co-worker. The following are some of the examples for call and commission to others [world]

- Mk 1:17 “follow me..... I will make you.....fishers of men”
- Mk 3:13-14 “he called..... to be sent out to preach”
- Luke 5:10-11 “they followed him..... you will be catching men”
- Luke 9:59-60 “follow me.....proclaim the kingdom of God”
- Mt 28:19-20 “go.....makes disciples.....teach them”
- Mk 16:15-16 “go..... preach the gospel”

After renouncing self, goods and people, are means to the goal of proclaiming the kingdom. St Paul says he was called in order he might preach to the Gentiles; Gal 1:15-16. Jesus says of himself “let us go to the next towns that I may preach there also for that is why I came out” 1:38, 13:10 Luke 4:43. He does not wish to proclaim the

kingdom alone; he empowers the twelve Mk 3:15, 16:15-17 Mt 28:19-20. Following the example of Jesus, the twelve preach the good news not only in Jesus' lifetime on earth Mk 6:12-13, Luke but also after his death and resurrection. Paul cries out "for necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" I Cor 9:16, Col 1:28. Barnabas and Philip preach and bear witness to the kingdom Acts 8:5, 14; 27. The spirit who anointed Jesus to preach the good news to the poor Luke 4:18-19 is also commissioning every disciple with similar gift and challenge, task etc.

The scriptures highlight essential aspect of the call to discipleship by underlining

1. Jesus as the unique disciple of the father who assumes the proclamation of the good news as his duty; Luke 4:43-44
2. The twelve as closer disciples are sent to preach the kingdom of God to cast out demons, heal, cure; Luke 9:1-2, Mk 3:14-15, 6:7 Mt 10:1
3. The larger group of disciples are commissioned to preach and heal; Luke 10:1-20
4. The unknown disciple is asked by Jesus to go and proclaim the kingdom of God; Luke 9:60

The mission of Jesus is also the mission of the disciples "as the Father has sent me even so I send you Jn 20:21; 17:18

Task of the present day disciple

In a world/society afflicted with hatred, ethnic tensions and clashes, injustice to the vulnerable groups of people, child molestation and abuse, domestic violence, financial misappropriation and malpractices, unemployment of young people, religious

indifferences and scandals, bribery, the disciple must take cudgels and act assiduously. Power of darkness that we have named above wield their demonic power through individual human avarice and as well as insidiousness of the structures (social, political and financial) The disciple's task must be to heal the many that are sick with diseases of avarice, manipulation, hatred, discrimination and cast out the demons of injustices to bring about harmonious existent in peaceful environment. Discipleship is a gift and grace. It is God who calls a disciple and guides him. This offer is extended to all not curtailing in any way the freedom of people to decline the call

Conclusion

God sees something in somebody which is so crucial in the spreading of his kingdom. After the call that involves 'to be' and 'to be sent out', a person should know in which ways he is to live out this call. The person who is called must be made aware of the consequences this call brings to his life.

1. Attitudes must change: if at the moment of the call a person is a fisherman, banker, student, unemployed his attitudes must changes. He must rediscover the person of Jesus and his new purpose which is to bring to him to those around us by means of the new power and job. Since the call is a gift and grace one needs to acknowledge without reservation this gift and use it well
2. Stewardship of time, talent and treasure: upon the call our time management must be geared towards this gift. If as a fisherman or banker or student or unemployed young man, you spend most of your free time drinking alcohol, visiting, chatting away the hours etc, this must be reviewed and seen in line with

the new status of discipleship. Like Jesus our time and talents must not be seen as personal but for others and ministry.

3. Responsibility and commitment: responsibility and commitment must accompany our response to the call. Because the job has been entrusted to the disciple he must be keeper and in charge of this job on behalf of Jesus himself. He must be manager of what has been entrusted to him. We must be faithful and loyal and manage the job of discipleship according to Jesus' own intentions. Any steward accepts delegated authority and is accountable to the owner for how it is done in fulfillment of the responsibility delegated. Any steward is also responsible to other stewards, commitment to fellow human beings. Others are equally called to the same stewardship.