

**MARY AROSE
AND WENT
WITH...**

haste

National Office for Vocation: Catechesis for WYD

Encounter : A meeting that changes us

1

"Arise! I make you a witness of what you have seen" (Acts 26:16)

Paul Tells of His Conversion

"In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

What can we learn from this?

Conversion - isn't always about a total turning of direction, it's not about being one religion and turning to Christianity for example. It's about recognising we've a change in heart.

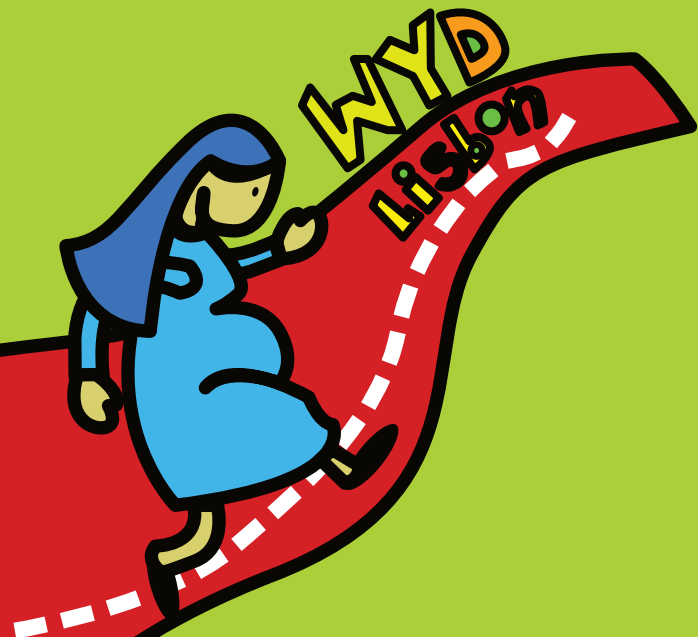
This change of heart comes from an experience which has touched our hearts and changed it.

Ask yourself, what has touched my heart in this World Youth Day experience?

It might be an experience or prayer, or something you have learned in catechesis, a new friendship or deepening of an existing friendship, or just the experience of being with so many people who are like you from all over the world, who want to know Jesus better, to follow him more closely, to do something for him and his kingdom.

Whatever has touched your heart, let it change you, it is a gift from the Holy Spirit.

Try to think, how has this changed me?



In what way will my actions, my lifestyle, my prayer, my relationships be affected by this experience?

I am a new person today because of this.

This is how God communicates to us, subtly, almost imperceptibly, but concretely too... our heart feels his presence, sometimes acting in other people whom he places on our path, walking alongside us.

Jesus says to us too: "rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you."

Today, pay attention to those people who will walk alongside you.

Think of what Jesus is asking of you in this... have you to receive the gift of the other person, or will you be the gift to that person?

Discipleship : How do we follow Jesus?

"Young man, I say to you, arise!" (Lk 7:14)

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son

Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

What can we learn from this?

Notice, Jesus' disciples went with him. They were first-hand witnesses to his walking, eating, preaching, miracle working.

Today, keep your eyes open, and see...

Where is Jesus walking among us?

Remember, Jesus is the Risen Lord now, and lives in us (see 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 27)



How is he with us as we eat and share our mealtimes? In the joy? In the tiredness? In the heat? In whatever we are living in our life today?

What miracles of life can we see happening around us?

What do you want to say to Jesus?

Jesus said to the young man, "Young man, I say to you, arise."

This young person was dead, his mother was heartbroken. Jesus felt sorry for her to see her pain.

Death, in poetic terms, can be many things as well as actual physical not-alive-anymore.

We all have areas in our life which are dead or dying... in a good sense and a not-so-good sense. For example, we might have addictions which are dead or dying in us... and that is a good thing, or we might have hope, that is dead or dying in us, and that's not so good. Jesus calls you to life... Jesus says to you, arise!

Reflect on the areas in your life, in which Jesus is calling you to life.

Jesus wants to give you back to those who love you most, who care that your life is joyful and overflowing with love and energy.

This is discipleship.

It is following the call to life, as much as it is the call to follow Jesus's footsteps.

Mission : Share Jesus

"Mary arose and went with haste" (Lk 1:39)

Mary Visits Elizabeth

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."



What can we learn from this?

Mary was carrying in her womb, and in her heart, Jesus.

This was her Good News, that she wanted to share with somebody who would understand her joy, who would share in her joy, who would celebrate with her.

Can you be the one who will listen to another's joy? Share in their happiness and celebration, just like Elizabeth? Sometimes the greatest gift we can give a person, is the freedom to share what is most precious to them, their joy!

The Jesus she was carrying, was the fruit of her womb, as well as that which God had put in her.

Mission isn't just about a message which God asks you to carry and share, it's about you making that message concrete, actual, alive, breathing, and life-giving. It's for you to nurture, protect, integrate and grow that message.

How can you make that message, - that Good News, which God has shared with you, and asked you to carry in your heart and give it life, - part of your personal life-story?



Discernment : Thinking with God

Discernment is the sifting through of our thoughts, the treasures of our hearts, the signs of the Holy Spirit within us to work out what God is inviting us to. Sifting means, we keep some things, and let go of other stuff.

It might seem a difficult thing to do, but we do it all the time in our daily lives. Will I go to MacDonalds or Pret? Both can seem good, but it depends on the little things behind that decision... we are weighing up lots of little micro choices that we hardly even notice... so in this example, do we want to be healthy? How much are we willing to pay? What is the length of the queue? Do I want hot or cold food? How close is it? Do I have the time and energy to go there? What did I eat yesterday or this morning? How hungry am I?

We also do it for the bigger things in our lives... for example, shall I live in a small expensive place in the city near my work, or will I live in a nicer house and commute to work? Again, whichever you decide, will have positives and negatives... some people might say making a list of the positives and negatives and see which has more will help you decide.

Christian discernment is inviting God to help you make that decision.

God created us with free will, and he will not go back on that original gift, but we know, since God loves us, he will help us make better choices which will lead to our happiness and fulfilment.

Discernment: Doing it with God

5

Sit down in a quiet place, where you can be alone with your thoughts.

1. Take some time to remember that God holds you in love, that he wants to journey through life with you. Thank God for all the little miracles he has done in your life, and bring to mind some of them that give you joy. Ask God to be part of your life, of your decisions, in your own words.
2. Write down some of the things that make you happy... deeply happy, not like, "a bar of chocolate" but things that really make you feel more yourself, the kind of person you want to be.
3. Write down who inspires you, who you would like to be more like, or even bible passages that are your favourite.
4. Are there any characteristics which match or link in points 2, and 3? (Miracles in your life, things that generally make you happier, inspiring people or scriptures).
5. What realistic, concrete choices could you make in your life to have more of these things in your life?

It is helpful to keep a note of these responses in a journal or something, and to do this often, even every day. You will eventually come to see recurring themes that will clarify your thoughts. It is really good to talk to someone about this at some point. So, for example, you will realise if you feel you should get married, you need to talk to your potential spouse about it, but you could also talk to your parents or close friends, or your priest. If you are thinking about becoming a nurse or a teacher, perhaps you should speak to somebody who understands the profession. If you are thinking about being a priest, or religious, there's no harm in asking them to talk about it, especially since these ways of life are less common and you might not know all the ins and outs of it. Then, again, go away and Do Discernment with God.



The way we live our lives in the light of God's invitation, is called our Vocation. To discover our vocation helps us see that our lives have purpose and are designed for our own happiness and the good of society. When we build up the kingdom of God in this way, we become more like Jesus our Lord, and learn to be a blessing in the world we live in.



6

Project for Life

A project for life is kind of a plan of where you want to grow in your spiritual life.

The thing is, when we decide we want something, it's like the gospel says, before you build a house you have to sit down and plan how you want it (see the Gospel of Luke, chapter 14, verse 28).

1. Sit down, and again like the discernment stages above, open your heart and talk to God. Ask him to help you understand the direction that would be good for you to go. Ask the Holy Spirit to be in your mind and heart as you plan things together.
2. Remember not to be over ambitious - that is just pride. God invites you to grow, but within what is doable for you, a little at a time. Think about the parable of the new wine in old wineskins, (see the Gospel of Matthew chapter 9).
3. Write down concretely what you're going to do to grow in your spiritual life, with specific times, deadlines and evaluations.

So, for example, if you go to Sunday mass once a month, perhaps you might try going every Sunday.



Example:

Spiritual Project for Life 2023 (Make a new one each year)

7

Scriptural Inspiration: **"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."**

(Gospel of John, chapter 15, verse 4)

Objective 1: I want to be closer to Jesus in my daily life.

How: To make this easier for me to be close to Jesus I will:

Attend Sunday mass every week to receive the grace of Jesus through the Holy Eucharist.

Receive the grace of Jesus' forgiveness in the sacrament of reconciliation once every 6 weeks.

I will pray at least for 15 minutes every morning, and for 10 minutes before going to bed.

Evaluation: Once every 3 months I will review how I have kept my resolution and evaluate my commitment to being close to Jesus in my daily life.

Objective 2: I want to express my love for Jesus by serving my brothers and sisters, and I realise I feel better when I am kind to others and help build up community.

How: To do this I will:

In response to God's commandment to honour my mother and my father, I will visit my grandparents at least once a week, so they know they are loved and cared for.

In response to Jesus' invitation to love my neighbour as myself, I commit to being a friend to one person who I know doesn't have many friends.

Evaluation: Once every 3 months I will review how I have kept my resolution and evaluate my commitment to being close to Jesus in my daily life.

