

DAY 6 "Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last" John 15:16b

Genesis 18:1-5 Abraham hosts the angels at the Oak of Mamre

Mark 6:30-44 Jesus' compassion for the crowds

MEDITATION

When we let ourselves be transformed by Christ, his love in us grows and bears fruit. Welcoming the other is a concrete way of sharing the love that is within us.

Throughout his life, Jesus welcomed those he met. He listened to them and let himself be touched by them without being afraid of their suffering.

In the gospel account of the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus is moved with compassion after seeing the hungry crowd. He knows that the entire human person must be nourished, and that he alone can truly satisfy the hunger for bread and the thirst for life. But he does not wish to do this without his disciples, without that little something they can give him: five loaves and two fish.

Even today he draws us to be co-workers in his unconditional care. Sometimes something as small as a kind look, an open ear, or our presence is enough to make a person feel welcome. When we offer our poor abilities to Jesus, he uses them in a surprising way.

We then experience what Abraham did, for it is by giving that we receive, and when we welcome others, we are blessed in abundance.

"It is Christ himself whom we receive in a guest."

[The rule of Taizé in French and English (2012) p. 103]

PRAYER

Jesus Christ,
we desire to welcome fully the brothers and sisters
who are with us.

You know how often we feel helpless in the face of their suffering,
yet you are always there ahead of us
and you have already received them in your compassion.
Speak to them through our words, support them through our actions,
and let your blessing rest on us all.

QUESTION

- "Will the people we welcome day after day find in us men and women radiant with Christ, our peace?"
- What are people hungry for in our community?

DAY 3

"Love on another as I have loved you"

Colossians 3:12-17

John 13:1-15; 34-35

Clothe yourselves with
compassion,
kindness, HUMILITY,
gentleness of patience.
Colossians 3:12b

MEDITATION

On the eve of his death, Jesus knelt to wash the feet of his disciples. He knew the difficulty of living together and the importance of forgiveness and mutual service.

"Unless I wash you," he said to Peter, "you have no share with me."

Peter received Jesus at his feet; he was washed and was touched by the humility and gentleness of Christ. Later he would follow Jesus' example and serve the fellowship of the faithful in the early church.

Jesus wishes that life and love circulate through us as the sap through the vine, so that Christian communities be one body. But today as in the past, it is not easy to live together. We are often faced with our own limitations. At times we fail to love those who are close to us in a community, parish or family. There are times when our relationships break down completely.

In Christ we are invited to be clothed in compassion, through countless new beginnings. The recognition that we are loved by God moves us to welcome each other with our strengths and weaknesses. It is then that Christ is in our midst.

"With almost nothing, are you a creator of reconciliation in that communion of love, which is the Body of Christ, his Church? Sustained by a shared momentum, rejoice! You are no longer alone, in all things you are advancing together with your brothers and sisters.

With them, you are called to live the parable of community."

PRAYER

God our Father,
you reveal to us your love through Christ
and through our brothers and sisters.
Open our hearts so that we can welcome each other
with our differences and live in forgiveness.
Grant us to live united in one body,
so that the gift that is each person comes to light.
May all of us together be a reflection of the living Christ.

QUESTIONS

- What would it look like for the churches in Wells to be more compassionate within our community? Where is compassion most needed in the world today?
- How do our churches need to be more compassionate with members and visitors?

DAY 4 "I do not call you servants any longer... but I have called you friends"

Luke 11:1-4

Lord, teach us to pray

Romans 8:26-27

The Spirit helps us in our weakness



MEDITATION

God thirsts for relationship with us. He searches for us as he searched for Adam, calling to him in the garden: "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9)

In Christ, God came to meet us. Jesus lived in prayer, intimately united to his Father, while creating friendships with his disciples and all those he met. He introduced them to that which was most precious to him: the relationship of love with his Father, who is our Father. Jesus and the disciples sang psalms together, rooted in the richness of their Jewish tradition. At other times, Jesus retired to pray alone.

Prayer can be solitary or shared with others. It can express wonder, complaint, intercession, thanksgiving or simple silence. Sometimes the desire to pray is there, but one has the feeling of not being able to do so. Turning to Jesus and saying to him, "teach me", can pave the way. Our desire itself is already prayer.

Getting together in a group offers us support. Through hymns, words and silence, communion is created. If we pray with Christians of other traditions, we may be surprised to feel united by a bond of friendship that comes from the One who is beyond all division. The forms may vary, but it is the same Spirit that brings us together.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

your entire life was prayer, perfect harmony with the Father.

Through your Spirit, teach us to pray according to your will of love.

May the faithful of the whole world unite in intercession and praise,
and may your kingdom of love come.

QUESTIONS

- Jesus lived as an example of what it means to 'live in prayer'. If prayer is the foundation of our relationship with God how much time and attention could you give to your personal prayer life?
- What specific need in our community can you commit to pray for over the coming year?
- What have you learned from praying with other Christians? What might God want you to learn from the practices and traditions of others?

DAY 5 "You have already been pruned by the word..." John 15:3

Deuteronomy 30:11-20 The Word of God is very close to you

Matthew 5:1-12

Blessed are you

MEDITATION

The Word of God is very close to us. It is a blessing and a promise of happiness. If we open our hearts, God speaks to us and patiently transforms that which is dying in us. He removes that which prevents the growth of real life, just as the vine grower prunes the vine.

Regularly meditating on a biblical text, alone or in a group, changes our outlook. Many Christians pray the Beatitudes every day. The Beatitudes reveal to us a happiness that is hidden in that which is unfulfilled, a happiness that lies beyond suffering: blessed are those who, touched by the Spirit, no longer hold back their tears but let them flow and thus receive consolation. As they discover the wellspring hidden within their inner landscape, the hunger for justice, and the thirst to engage with others for a world of peace, grows in them.

"Pray and work that God may reign. Throughout your day let the Word of God breathe life into work and rest.

Maintain inner silence in all things so as to dwell in Christ.

Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes, joy, simplicity, mercy."

[These words are recited daily by the Sisters of the Grandchamp Community]

PRAYER

Blessed are you, God our Father,

for the gift of your word in Holy Scripture.

Blessed are you for its transforming power.

Help us choose life and guide us by your Spirit,

so that we can experience the happiness which you want so
much to share with us.

QUESTIONS

- If our churches were to live the "Beatitudes" each day what difference would this make to the communities we serve?
- What does it mean in our world today to be blessed by God?