



Religious Education Congress 2017  
Julianne Stanz  
Transformative Adult Faith Formation: The Discipleship Check In  
Session 5-25

## Discipleship Check In: Your Next Step

*Diocese of Green Bay- Julianne Stanz*

Introduction: On our faith journey, each one of us will grow and respond to the Holy Spirit in different ways and at varying times. It is important to remember that God is directing the steps of each person's journey of personal discipleship. In your relationship with Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you are called to go farther and deeper along the path of your spiritual life than where you were before.

In the Scriptures, we see examples of disciples at different stages of their journey. The "Woman at the Well" is at an early stage of faith. The "Man Born Blind" is farther along his walk of discipleship. Peter is farther along again. Jesus used stories and parables to form his disciples throughout his life. Like Jesus, we are going to unpack stages in the discipleship journey so that you can recognize your own journey in the story of another.

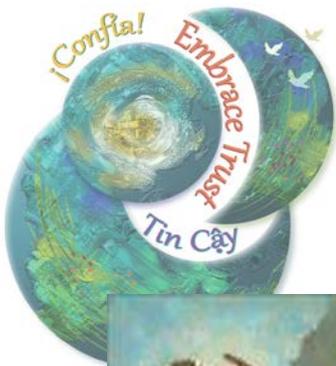
We will look at the following individuals from the Gospels:

1. The Woman at the Well
2. The Man Born Blind
3. Peter

Each these had a particular encounter with Jesus Christ that transformed his or her life. Growth in the Christian life is happens through God's grace, not our own effort or power, so it is important to remember that "you are where you are" right now. You always have the potential to grow as a disciple in your walk with Jesus. As a community of disciples, the Catholic Church offers us many ways to progress farther and deeper in our discipleship walk with Jesus.



**The Woman at the Well** (John 1:1-42) develops an initial trust in the man who dares to speak to her, a Samaritan and a woman, clearly a marginalized person in society. However, she does not shrink run away or ignore him but instead is intrigued. Curious about what he is telling her but most importantly listening to her (verbally and non- verbally) she becomes more open to what he is saying. The Samaritan Woman becomes gradually open to the possibility of change when Jesus seems to know all about her situation, but does not seek to judge or condemn. There is something about Jesus which draws her to him. She wants to know more, she wants to tell others what she has experienced and who she has been with- Jesus. In doing so, she runs to share the Good News that she is loved, that we are all loved by Jesus. Her compelling testimony is now offered to those who have not met Jesus and yet can still encounter Him in and through her story!



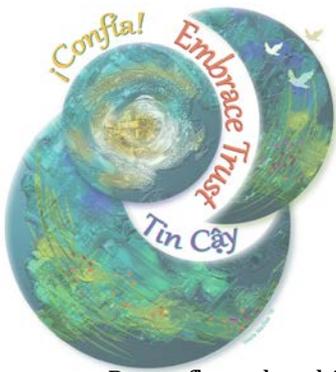
Healing of a Blind Man  
by Brian Jekel

**The Man Born Blind** (John 9:1-41) experiences a profound conversion which leads to his healing. The blind man did not initiate his healing, Jesus, the Divine Physician did. Darkness and blindness is a metaphor for sin. The formerly blind man turns away from the dark ditch of unbelief toward the glorious light of the Son of God. The formerly blind man turns away from the dark ditch of unbelief toward the glorious light of the Son of God. But as soon as his sight is restored, life becomes more difficult. Why is this? Those around him wondered if this was the same man as before. He now had shed his former identity as a blind man and now could see. Life became clearer than ever and indeed, he was a new person. If you are living in darkness today, there is no reason why you cannot learn from the example of this formerly blind man. Will you be washed and receive your sight today? "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:16.



Saint Peter by Peter Paul Rubens

The Lord's question, "Do you love me?" is not just for Peter but for all of us to ask on our journey of discipleship. In this particular Gospel passage (John 21:15-17) Jesus asks, "Do you love me?" Three times Jesus asks Peter this question. He even asks Peter if he loves him more than his other disciples love Jesus. Jesus probably asked Peter this question three times -- one for each time Peter had denied him. The same person who denied Christ is now given the opportunity to affirm his deep desire and great love for the Lord. Jesus is giving Peter a chance to "take it back," so to speak.



Peter, flawed and forgiven, just like each one of us, gave his whole heart and life over to Jesus and His Church becoming one of the greatest saints whose impact continues to be felt today.

*Note: Each of the attributes or qualities listed below builds upon one another. For example, those in the "growing disciple" phase would manifest the traits of the "beginning disciple" in addition to those of a "growing disciple." CCC refers to Catechism of the Catholic Church.*

## **The Beginning Disciple: The Woman at the Well**

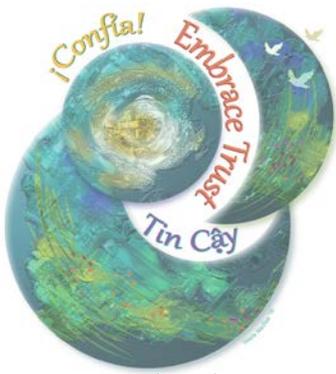
*(See Acts 2:37-38; CCC 1427; CCC 1)*

- Change of attitude towards Jesus Christ and the Church He established (favorable) (Romans 10:8-10)
- Change of attitude towards sin (unfavorable) (1 John 1:5-9)
- Has made a verbal profession of commitment to Jesus Christ to others (Mark 5:18- 20)
- Desires to grow spiritually (Philippians 4:8)
- Has received or desires to receive the sacraments of initiation or has gone to Confession if already a Catholic (Acts 2:37-38)

## **The Growing Disciple: The Man Born Blind**

*(See James 1:19-25; CCC 1694)*

- Has developed a heart for God that motivates his/her attitudes and actions
- Is willing to make sacrifices to grow
- Observable changes in attitudes and actions can be seen
- Is committed to trying to live the life of chastity, sobriety, and excellence in their state of life.
- Consistent in continually growing in the basic habits of the Christian life
- Seeks interior growth through daily prayer with Scripture and spiritual reading (John 1:1-18; Ephesians 6:18)
- Grows in holiness through the reception of the sacraments (Acts 2:42)
- Builds character through the virtues and the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-16)



- Accepts suffering and uses it to unite him/her to Christ (Colossians 1:24)
- Practices the spiritual and corporal works of mercy (Matthew 25:31-46)
- Is open to the Holy Spirit (John 16:7; 12-13)

### **The Intentional Disciple: Martha, Mary, or Lazarus**

*(See Matthew 28:18-20; CCC 905)*

- *Has decided to answer the call to take part in the mission of the Church*
- *Is actively striving to win people over to Jesus and His mission, to build them up in small-group Bible studies and to send them out to spiritually multiply (John 15:8)*

### **The Missionary Disciple: Peter, Paul, Mother Teresa**

*(See 1 Thessalonians 2:8; CCC 1816; 2 Timothy 2:2; CCC 3)*

- Led someone to commit his/her life to Jesus Christ and His mission and is helping them engage in the work of evangelization, discipling and friendships through a mentoring relationship (2 Timothy 2:2)
- Has developed a heart for God's people and is willing to make any sacrifice to help another grow, (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Makes life decisions (vocation, location, relationships, etc.) based upon their relationship with Christ
- Regular participation in personal prayer and sacramental life of the Church; Fulfills Vocational commitments; Leading a life of evangelization and discipleship through small groups
- Lives an influential life of faith, parish, community, and workplace.



## My Own Personal Growth as a Disciple On the Way



Without Purse or Scrip  
by Liz Lemon Swindle

*This image of Jesus walking with his disciples offers us a metaphor for our own walk as a disciple with Jesus Christ. Take some to reflect upon the image and allow it to speak to you. Reflect upon your life. Use the questions below to record your notes and thoughts about where you are on your walk of discipleship with Jesus.*

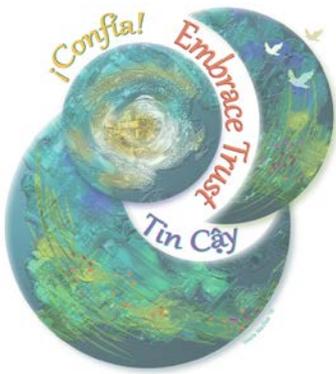
Where do you see Jesus in this image? Is he in the back, the front or the middle? Why?

Where are you?

Who is walking beside you?

Where do you place yourself right now on your spiritual journey? Why?

Where do you feel God is calling you to be? Why? What do you need to STOP doing to grow as a disciple?



What do you need to KEEP doing to grow as a disciple?

What do you need to START doing to grow as a disciple?

Do you have someone in mind who might help you to grow in faith? Name that person (s):

Note any other thoughts that come to mind:

### ***Diocese of Green Bay- Julianne Stanz***

#### **Credits:**

The Discipleship Road Map is adapted from *The Fuel and the Flame* by Steve Shadrach (Atlanta: Authentic, 2003), p.110- 113 and the Discipleship Road Map by The Fellowship of Catholic University Students.

#### **Images:**

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