



## FIVE

*Corresponds to P. 41 in Participants' Book*

### **The Disciple's Call to Serve**

*Learning to help one another with love and discernment*

#### **GATHER**

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

Lord, as we are gathered here today to discuss the topic of service, let us be reminded that we are not only empowered to serve, but we are also specifically called to serve according to our own individual gifts and talents. Your Son not only gave us examples of what a life of service looks like, but also was specific about the repercussion associated with a fruitless life; one void of service. Please guide our lives and lead us according to your will. In doing so, ensure us of a fruitful existence, and make us worthy of your words in Mathew 25:23: "Well done, good and faithful servant." Amen.

#### **REPORT ON ACTIONS**

*Take time to report on how you engaged in action as a result of the last meeting. It is encouraging to hear what others are doing and prompts us to put our faith into practice more intentionally.*

**\*\*Share with one another what you have learned about the Christian Family Movement since the last meeting.**

#### **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION**

A reading from the first letter of Peter (4: 8-11).

“Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

“Love covers a multitude of sins” is also found in Proverbs 10:12. The gifts given to us vary from person to person but are all necessary in building up the kingdom of God on earth. We are called to use all of our gifts for the glory of God and of Christ.

"Whatever the Father has done for us, he encourages us to do for others. His gifts come with the empowerment for us to give them again and again. Jesus told Peter and the disciples, 'Freely you've received, therefore freely give.' (Matthew 10:8) Every benefit we have ever received from the Father is also an empowerment to give to others." - Ray Hollenbach, Christian radio host, in "How Does Love Cover a Multitude of Sins," <http://myktis.com/2016/01/love-covers-multitude-sins/>

"In the power of the Holy Spirit, God’s Son became one of us to reveal the Father and his love. And not just to reveal the Father’s love but to enable us to participate in it. He did this by preaching and working miracles, and above all, by taking upon his shoulders the full weight of human sinfulness, mine and yours. There, on the cross, he conquered our sins by a supreme act of love: he gave his life for us and was raised from the dead. Blessed John Paul II used to say that on the cross Jesus manifest a love stronger than sin and more powerful than death. His love has the power to eradicate our sins." - Archbishop William Lori, Catholic Review, Feb. 7, 2013, <https://www.archbalt.org/charity-covers-a-multitude-of-sins/>

1. What does this passage teach us about how we are called to respond to one another?

Our gifts are to be used to help others. And we are to deploy the gifts with humility as opposed to (as Peter puts it) “complaining” or viewing them as a burden.

2. What perspective does it ask that we take toward “our” gifts?

Our gifts are from God, and were given to us to be used to glorify Him. We should receive our calling with great gratitude and be eager to deploy our gifts for the betterment of others.

## **SOCIAL INQUIRY**

The secular world generally defines freedom as the ability to go where we want to go and do what we want to do. While we have the free will to use our freedom to live only for our own enjoyment, living in this way can lead to chaos and disorder. The good news is that our creator has sent us the perfect example of a properly ordered existence. Christ eliminates all confusion on the subject, not only in word, but in action.

As Christians, we are not only empowered to serve, but are also called to serve. We are called to serve, not only on Sundays and on weekends, but also in our everyday lives. In Mathew 25:35 Jesus says “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.” The Catholic Church sums it up in what is termed the Corporal (bodily) Works of Mercy: (1) Feed the hungry. (2) Give to the thirsty. (3) Clothe the naked. (4) Shelter the homeless. (5) Visit those in prison. (6) Comfort the sick. (7) Bury the dead.

Sometimes the answer to serving or helping someone is a lot more complicated than we want it to be. Some who need help will not take it, while some others take that for which they have no need.

There is a phrase called “Choosing the harder right,” which is recited as a part of the traditional West Point cadet’s prayer. It refers to doing the right thing even when it is harder than we thought. Choosing the “harder right” can be especially challenging when we answer the call to evangelization.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy call upon us to “counsel the doubtful” and “instruct the ignorant.” Fear of seeming arrogant can hold us back. Yet, CFM families are often able to reach other families that are marginally connected to Church, or not at all. Those families may become more engaged when we invite them to participate in concrete ways that are meaningful to their lives. They can also embrace those on the margins and extend the healing ministry of the Church beyond the regular members, effecting Pope Francis vision of “the Church is a field hospital.”

From our own experience, **OBSERVE:**

1. Give an example of a time when you helped someone in their daily life and it felt good. What made it feel good? *Helping others feels right when we are able to discern that we actually did the individual some good. The greater the good the greater the degree of satisfaction. An example might be the difference between giving a homeless person money vs. buying them lunch and using the time to sit and talk with them.*
2. Give an example of a time when you helped someone and it made you feel uneasy instead? What made it feel that way? *Sometimes what people are asking for isn’t what they need. In giving them what they ask for we’re not actually helping them, and we may actually be hurting them.*
3. Tell of a time when you offered a simple way to help someone that really didn’t fix the problem. What more difficult solution might have been more effective? *Example might be where we encountered a person with a problem that required a more*

involved solution, but we threw money at the problem because we didn't want to take the time to get involved.

4. In what ways do the Church, your parish, and CFM act as catalysts to nudge us to serve? Are there forces in your life that are doing the opposite?

In the light of Christ's teachings, **JUDGE:**

1. What does it mean to be "in need?"  
Everyone we encounter is fighting a battle of some kind. Problems with relationships, family, health, work, money, addiction, fear, spirituality (or lack of), etc. Do we take the time to recognize others around us who are in need?
2. What should we do if helping someone turns out to be much more complicated than we had anticipated?  
Ask ourselves how far are we willing to go to impact the world around us.
3. How much of our own "time" and "treasure" are we expected to give? Whose expectations must we meet? Ask ourselves how far Jesus is asking us to go when he says "what you failed to do for the least of them, you failed to do for me".
4. Could we do a better job of using God's gifts appropriately to serve those in need?  
Discernment of how we can best use gifts is the point of the question. Example: A father of young children should not quit his job and travel to Africa to dig wells for the poor (neglecting his fatherly duties), but he may want to give money to help better equipped organizations fund that work. Perhaps that same father can direct the energy toward the people in his local community, workplace, and family. The merit in bringing Christ to others is the same, only the vocation is different.

Based on what has been discussed, **ACT**:

1. Set a goal each week of helping/serving others in some way. Keep it simple.
2. As a group or individually work with parish ministries that care for members of the faith community and their families as they prepare for births, baptisms, First Communion, Confirmation, Holy Matrimony, and death.
3. Choose a parish ministry that is struggling. As a group, volunteer to work with this ministry as a long-term committed ACT project. Seek to attract others to this ministry as well.

### **TAKE CFM HOME**

1. Discuss different ways that you can serve each other and the community.
2. Write the ideas down on posters and place them where everyone will see them daily. Make one poster of family service ideas, and one for community service ideas.
3. Review the posters weekly (at dinner?) and discuss if anyone saw others doing any of these activities (or if they did any of activities themselves).

### **LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT MEETING**

*Take a look at the Observes for the next meeting to see what needs to be done in preparation.*

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Phone or email host if you cannot attend.
2. Look ahead at the Observe questions for the next meeting.
3. Who could you invite to join our group?

*If children have come to the meeting with their parents, gather them to join you in the closing prayer.*

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Father, as we conclude our discussion on service, please help us to move forward with greater discernment of purpose. May the Holy Spirit always guide us according to your Will so that service ceases to become something we feel awkward or uncomfortable doing, but instead becomes what we love to do. Through service, may we see your face and be reminded of Christ's words in Mathew 25:30: "Whatever you did for the least of these brethren, you did for me".

And let us pray the Prayer for the Christian Family Movement (found on Page 80).

### **CFM IN ACTION**

Fifty years ago, the CFM Group at Holy Name Cathedral decided to "adopt" a retirement home for people who were not well off. Once a month, members would, as a group, spend an afternoon at the home. Some would bring musical instruments and they'd have a "hootenanny" with the residents. They'd sing some old-time songs and occasionally even dance with them. Later, when things quieted down, CFM members listened as the elders told some fascinating stories about their lives. For young, middle-aged and old, these occasions were joyous experiences.