

# Impact

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.

## TAKE JESUS' MESSAGE SERIOUSLY.

In this month's gospel readings, we are challenged to grow as people who live as God desires. Taken separately, the gospels may seem to present Jesus as uncaring and demanding. Read as part of the whole of the gospels, however, they depict Jesus as he teaches his followers what it means to be so deeply in relationship with God that we become more God-like. This is the call of discipleship: to become more like Jesus Christ. To what are we called as disciples? Let us explore discipleship through the gospel passages we hear this month.

Disciples put their faith in Jesus. The disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith. They are already growing in relationship with him, and yet recognize that putting their faith in the Lord is a process of turning to God in trust (see page 2).

Disciples are called to service. Just after Jesus told the disciples that those with even a tiny amount of faith will do great things, he reminds us that, as people of faith, we are to serve, and to do so simply as a matter of course, without expectation of adulation or praise.

**God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.**

(2 Tim 1:7)

Disciples are called to be thankful. Ten lepers were healed. Nine likely did what was prescribed by the law. Only one returned to give thanks. Jesus sees his faith, expressed in gratitude, and the thankful one is saved.

Disciples are called to seek justice. The widow in Jesus' parable about the dishonest judge seeks a just decision and will not be quiet until she receives what is deserved. Those who seek justice are assured that God hears their plea and will respond with love.

Disciples are called to rely on God's mercy. In the final gospel narrative this month, we hear of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee assures himself of his own righteousness, while the tax collector admits his sinfulness and relies on God's mercy. He goes home justified through his humble expression of trust.

Disciples have faith, are called to serve, are thankful people, seek justice, and rely on God's mercy. How are you living and growing as a follower of Jesus? Take Jesus' message seriously, and rely on the spirit of power, love, and self-control which has been poured out upon us through the Holy Spirit.



## What is *your* mulberry tree?

The apostles had followed Jesus throughout Galilee; they had witnessed him teaching, healing, and forgiving people's sins. They saw great miracles and Jesus' mercy for those who were poor, marginalized, and ill. They were coming to believe in him, and so they asked, "Increase our faith." (Lk 17:5-10, Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time)

**Jesus' response to the apostles may initially seem outlandish:** "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you." Our initial reaction is likely to be, *'that is impossible!'*

**And that may just be Jesus' point.** A little faith goes a long way! Rather than dwelling on how small our faith sometimes feels in the face of the big challenges of life, Jesus asks the apostles, and us, to realize the impact of faith in whatever measure we have been blessed. Faith is a gift, after all, one that must be nurtured in order to bear fruit.

**What is *your* mulberry tree?** What situation, challenge, or obstacle seems impossible to you right now? In what ways do you feel lost or alone? How may faith provide the strength you need to overcome the obstacles you face? Put your faith in Jesus, and say to your mulberry tree, *'Be uprooted!'*



Adapted from an article in Impact, October, 2016

***Following Jesus is the work of a lifetime. At every step forward, one is challenged to go further in accepting and loving God's will.***

- Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, p. 15

## IMPACT THIS MONTH



*Jesus asks us to bring our needs to God in prayer. Take time this month to do so. Discern how faith may shape the way you live your life.*

**See:** Pause at the end of each day. Recall the moments in which you perceive God's presence.

**Linger:** Stay quiet for a few minutes, lingering in this awareness of God.

**Consider:** How does this awareness of God strengthen your faith? What concerns, obstacles, or situations do you bring to God at this time?

**Thank:** Say a prayer of gratitude to God for the blessing of this graced time.

**Share:** Share your thoughts, questions, and reflections with a trusted friend or spiritual companion.

**Respond:** Be resolved to put in faith in action as your trust in God and relationship with the Lord grows and deepens.