

-Week 10-

*A Community of Service: Working Together Towards a Common Purpose*

*“Young people appreciate the choice of working together...”*



*exercising leadership directed to improving the environment in which they love and of seeking opportunities to acquire and refine, in a practical way, useful skills for life and work.”*

**THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS'  
“YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH & VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT”  
PREPARATORY DOCUMENT**

## *-Week 10-*

# *A Community of Service: Working Together Towards a Common Purpose*

Last week, we explored “The Call of Our Talents: Sharing my Personal Gifts with Others,” which invited us to reflect on the parable of the talents as a metaphor for utilizing our gifts and talents in service to others. We were also invited to reflect on how sharing our gifts helps to further develop our sense of personal calling. Continuing into this tenth week of our Benedictine Volunteers 20-weeks Vocational Discernment Series inspired by the Synod of Bishops’ “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment” Preparatory Document, we explore “A Community of Service: Working Together Towards a Common Purpose.” How can our individual gifts and talents come together as community to contribute to a shared mission? How does community offer us opportunities for service and invite us into solidarity with our brothers and sisters?

1 Corinthians 12: 12-26 paints a beautiful image of the body of Christ as a metaphor of different gifts and talents working together collaboratively within a community. When all our individual gifts come together towards a common purpose like different body parts working together to help the body be healthy and functioning, our communities become vibrant and stronger. When firmly rooted in its common purpose, a community is enriched and inspired by the all the unique parts that make up the whole. We need each other’s gifts because alone, we are not as effective. Just like the eye needs the hand and head needs the feet, we are called to work together. When we work together, we learn from one another, fill each other’s gaps, and strengthen the whole. This transformative merging of talents and collaborative sharing is reflected in Jesus’ own communal life. Along his journey, Jesus is constantly travels with a community of disciples who each carry their own unique personalities and gifts. Peter brings denial, which is transformed into leadership. Thomas brings doubt, which is transformed faith. Simon brings zealousness, which is transformed into compassion. By working side-by-side with Jesus and one another in community, the disciples experience the transformation of contributing to the whole and allowing the whole to transform them.

We form community by giving away of our gifts and conversely, the community forms us by helping us refine our personal skills and acquire new skills by observing and learning from those around us. Communities are spaces of opportunity for service, inviting us to exercise our individual gifts and talents. Communities are also spaces of living and sharing in solidarity with others, offering us friends, companions, and teachers along the journey. By respecting and honoring the variety of talents others bring into community, we can work together like Jesus and the disciples did in sharing God’s message of love.

## *Questions for Reflection:*

- Spend some time prayerfully with 1 Corinthians 12: 12-26. What body part/function most resonates with you? How are your gifts and talents similar to this part of the whole?
- Which body part/function least resonates with you? Is there anyone in your life who seems to fill this part better? How do you see your part and their part working together?
- Recall a time you were transformed by community. How did that feel? What insights did you learn about yourself and others?