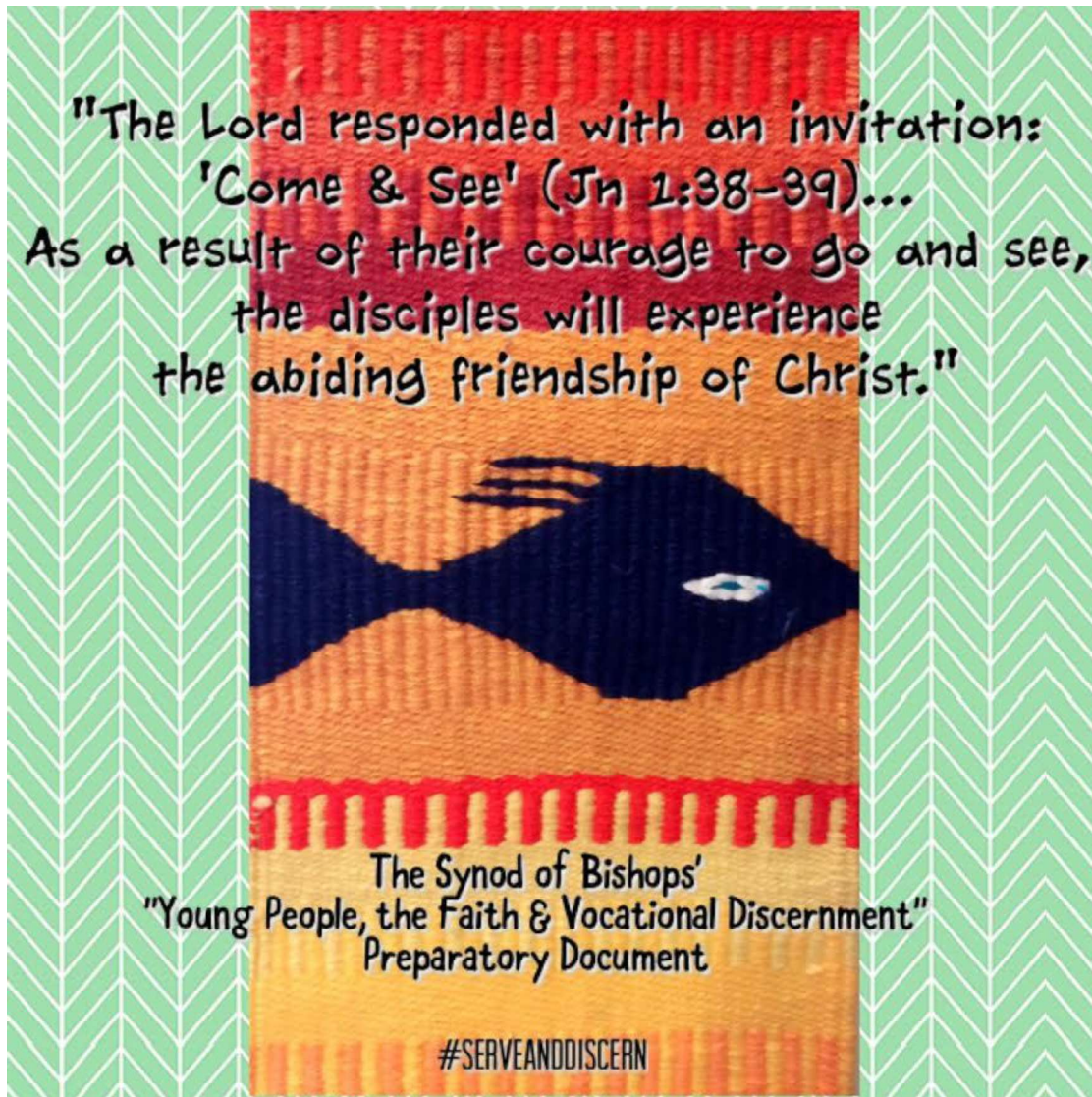


-Week 5-

*Come & See: Discipleship as Friendship*



## -Week 5-

### *Come & See: Discipleship as Friendship*

Last week, we explored “Allowing the Soul to be Shepherded: Setting Aside Our own Mental Framework,” which invited each of us to ponder the Scriptural image of shepherd and flock as a mutually leading and following relationship. We were also invited to reflect on personal attachments that affect our receiving of call and to reflect on how Jesus invites us to let go of these attachments. Continuing into this fifth 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 “Come & See: Discipleship as Friendship.” What does friendship with Jesus look like? How can the disciples’ friendship with Jesus model for us one way to engage more intimately with calling?

John 1:35-51 illustrates the beginnings of a beautiful friendship between Jesus and the first disciples. The disciples observe Jesus walk by and hear John refer to Jesus as the Lamb of God. They are curious, intrigued, and follow Jesus, who notices their presence and asks, “What are you looking for?” The disciples aren’t really sure what exactly they are looking for, but they continue to ponder and ask questions. Jesus responds, “Come and see.” These simple and open words welcome the disciples to peer into something deeper about their lives. And thus, the disciples choose to follow and continue a much longer journey of accompanying and passing each day side-by-side with Jesus.

When we chose to ‘come and see’ with Jesus as the disciples did, we choose to enter in a relationship very much like a friendship. As the disciples come to understand Jesus more and more, he grows to become their teacher, their leader, and their Lord. Jesus is also their travelling companion, community gatherer, and friend. They walk together, they eat together, they work together, and they pray together. They talk and get to know one another through stories and parables. They also ask hard questions of one another and sometimes, deal with conflict, doubt, and betrayal. Like friends, Jesus and the disciples are ‘there’ for one other—present, listening, giving, and receiving through the happenings of all of life. This friendship of mutual care, support, and love modeled for us by Jesus and the disciples is one way to engage with calling from the heart.

Discipleship begins with friendship. To follow, we must first have a relationship with the person or thing we seek to learn and understand from. As with most healthy friendships, both persons are bonded by reciprocal giving and receiving. When we love a friend, our hearts naturally open up and stretch to provide our friend with what s/he needs. Similarly, when we are loved by a close friend, s/he reaches out to us to share in our joys and our struggles. True friendship is a beautiful dance of relational solidarity and reciprocity. We accompany and walk together through all of life’s unfolding. Such is the intimate invitation of friendship that Jesus calls us into when he says, “Come and see.”

## *Questions for Reflection:*

- How do you define and understand friendship? Who are the persons in your life you consider close friends? How have these friendships shaped who you are?
- When you ponder your relationship with Jesus as an opportunity for friendship, how is this similar and/or different to other friendships in your life?
- Friendship comprises of both giving and receiving. In what ways have you been friend and gift to others?