

-Week 11-

Social Innovation & Creativity: Making the World a Better Place

"SOCIAL INNOVATION

*expresses a positive involvement
which turns upside-down
the condition
of new generations,
transforming losers
seeking protection
from the risks of change
to agents of change
who create
new opportunities."*



#SERVEANDDISCERN

The Synod of Bishops'
"Young People, the Faith & Vocational Discernment"
Preparatory Document

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Social Innovation & Creativity: Making the World a Better Place

Last week, we explored “A Community of Service & Solidarity: Working Together Towards a Common Purpose,” which invited us to reflect the body of Christ as a metaphor for different talents working together in community. We were also invited to reflect on how community helps refine and extend our personal calling. Continuing into this eleventh 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 “Social Innovation & Creativity: Making the World a Better Place.” How do we discover creativity and opportunities for innovation in our local environments? When we combine our personal talents with creativity, innovation, and community, how do these interactions help make the world a better place?

Creativity and innovation are gifts of the Holy Spirit. We can discover these gifts all around us. The people we encounter can inspire us. A conversation can stimulate new thoughts and ideas. Nature can stir the soul through its colors, movements, and textures. New cultures and life experiences can broaden our understanding. Every day, our local environments and communities are full of opportunities for seeking out new ways of interacting with one another. In Matthew 14:13-21, we see how the Spirit creatively engages with Jesus’ environment to help him and the disciples feed 5,000 people. With five loaves, two fishes, and five thousand people to feed, the disciples are concerned there is not enough food to go around. Being in a deserted place, the disciples ask Jesus to dismiss the 5,000 so that they might go to villages to purchase their own food. But Jesus is able to see beyond this doubt and utilizes the opportunity to challenge the disciples and reveal to them God’s creative abundance. The five loaves and two fishes multiply to fill twelve baskets. All are fed with surplus left over. Through faith, God transforms our ‘not enough’ to ‘more than enough.’ When we tap into the creativity of the Spirit, we can learn like the disciples did that God’s gifts to the world are full of abundance. By tapping into this abundance and by working together, our vision of reaching out to others can stretch well beyond our perceived abilities.

When we combine our personal talents with the Spirit’s inspiration and the hands and feet of our community, we are empowered to serve others in ways beyond our imagination. We can practice creativity by listening and looking for inspiration all around us in the things God presents in our daily lives. Like Jesus, we are called to observe the situation and feelings around us. They can give us important information about the needs of others and prompt us respond to these needs. We can practice innovation by combining these observations with our personal talents and utilizing our gifts to help make the world better. Like Jesus, we are called to action by applying our abilities to the situations that need our gifts. In doing so, we allow the Spirit to work through us and begin to move beyond our

individual limitations by working together in ways larger, deeper, and more mysterious than we can imagine.

Questions for Reflection:

- Spend some time prayerfully with Matthew 14: 13-21. It may also be helpful to visit with Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, and John 6:1-15. Where do you observe Jesus' listening? Talents? Creativity? Where do you observe the disciples doubt? Trust? What did working together enable them to do?
- When in your life have you experienced a 'burst of creativity' that enabled you to do more than you thought possible? How did this become gift to others?
- What/where/who do you draw inspiration from? What does this energy feel like for you, personally?