

-Week 12-

*A New Generation: Globalization & Multiculturalism*

**"MANY SOCIETIES  
ARE INCREASINGLY  
MULTI-CULTURAL &  
MULTI-RELIGIOUS...  
THE PRESENCE OF  
DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS  
TRADITIONS IS A  
CHALLENGE AND  
AN OPPORTUNITY...  
[IT] CAN PROVIDE  
FOR INCREASED  
POSSIBILITY  
FOR FRUITFUL  
DIALOGUE AND  
MUTUAL ENRICHMENT."**

THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS'  
"YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH &  
VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT"  
PREPARATORY DOCUMENT

#SERVEANDDISCERN



## -Week 12-

### *A New Generation: Globalization & Multiculturalism*

Last week, we explored “Social Innovation & Creativity: Making the World a Better Place,” which invited us to explore different ways of drawing inspiration and discovering creativity from our local environments. It also challenged us to consider new ways to merge our personal talents with creative innovation in service to others. Continuing into this twelfth 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 New Generation: Globalization & Multiculturalism.” How does globalization and multiculturalism present new challenges and opportunities in related to and learning about difference in our world today? What does Jesus say about difference and relating to the ‘other’ midst us?

Today, new cultures, information, and ideas are moving more complexly and rapidly across transnational borders. This modern movement gifts us with both new opportunities for learning and also, new challenges to sort through. One of the challenges/opportunities of a globalizing multicultural world is learning different ways to engage meaningfully with the ‘other.’ Though Jesus’ time is different from our modern world today, Jesus’ life was full of encounters with the ‘other.’ John 4:4-42 describes Jesus’ passing through a town in Samaria called Sychar and his intimate encounter with a woman at the well. The woman is startled that Jesus approaches her and asks for a drink because she is a Samaritan. Jesus’ ability to peer into her heart’s concerns and engage her in conversation moves the woman. Their authentic encounter with one another encourages other Samaritans to approach Jesus. They even invite him to stay with them. And so what began as mere passing transformed into a two days’ visit of hospitality in Sychar between Jews and Samaritans.

In Luke 10:29-37, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan who helps a neighbor robbed along his journey. Others see the injured man, but no one chooses to help. It is the Samaritan who is moved with compassion, tends to the man’s wounds, takes him into an inn, and even gives the innkeeper additional money to care for the man. In Jesus’ time, Samaritans were considered ‘other’ because of their differing religious beliefs. Historically, there was a lot of political, religious, and social tension between Jews and Samaritans. Many Jews during Jesus’ time perceived the stereotype of a Samaritan to be hostile and barbarian. Jesus breaks this stereotype by choosing to get to know the Samaritans personally. In doing so, Jesus transforms a culturally perceived difference into an opportunity for gleaning insight about the other’s kindness, courage, vulnerability, generosity, hospitality, and love.

To be perceived as an ‘other’ simply means to be different in some way, be it appearance, ability, belief, or culture. Rather than dismiss difference, shy away in fear, or react with misunderstanding, Jesus chooses to reach out to the ‘other’. He shares with us

how encounters with the 'other' can be mutually fruitful, loving, and learning. Jesus models for us one way to posture ourselves towards the 'other' with openness, curiosity, and desire to engage with love.

### *Questions for Reflection:*

- Spend some time prayerfully with John 4:4-42. Image yourself as the Samaritan woman. What is this experience like for you? When in your life have you experienced Jesus reaching out to you personally as an 'other'?
- Spent some time prayerfully with Luke 10:25-37. Image yourself as the Good Samaritan. When in your life have you reached out to someone different from you? What did you learn from the experience?
- In our world today, who do you observe as 'others'? What are some challenges/opportunities you experience in relating to/understanding/reaching out to these 'others'?