

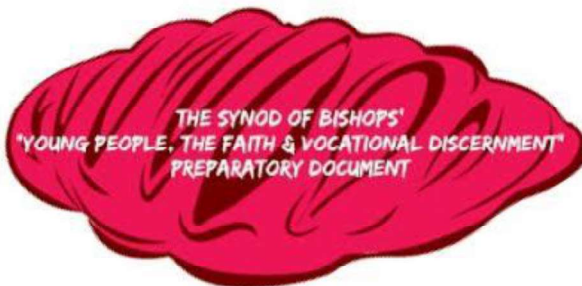
-Week 19-

Choose: Exercising My Authentic Human Freedom & Personal Responsibility

"A choice cannot remain imprisoned in an interiority which is likely to remain virtual or unrealistic... but is called to be translated into action, to take flesh, to embark on a path, accepting the risk of a confrontation with the reality which caused the desires and emotions."



#SERVEANDDISCERN



-Week 19-

Choose: Exercising My Authentic Human Freedom & Personal Responsibility

Last week, we explored “Interpret: Understanding Where the Spirit is Calling Me,” which invited us to consider the verb “to interpret” in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 51 as a second step in an intentional discernment process. We were also invited to reflect on how Jesus practiced interpreting the happenings at the wedding in Cana and how the Spirit was calling him to respond to these events. Continuing into this nineteenth 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 “Choose: Exercising My Authentic Human Freedom and Personal Responsibility.” Let us further explore John 2:1-12, the Wedding at Cana, and probe more deeply into to third and final discernment step, to choose. When we image ourselves as Jesus, what are we able to learning through his choice and actions? What implications do these have on our own lives?

In the third and final step of discernment, we are asked to make a choice. Having reflected on the possible sources of his feelings of cautiousness, fear, confusion, and frustration and also, listening and praying for the Spirit’s guidance through these, Jesus’ next step is to make a choice of action. There are six stone water jars at the wedding. Jesus tells the servants to fill the jars to the brim, draw some out, and take it to the headwaiter. The headwaiter tastes the water, which had become wine, and comments that the new wine tastes even better than the wine they had previously served. Jesus makes a concrete choice—to utilize the gifts God gives him in service to a need by transforming the water into wine.

In making a choice that responds to both the needs of the community and the gifts God has uniquely given Jesus, Jesus exercises human freedom and personal responsibility. No one forced Jesus to transform the water into wine. It is something he chooses freely, recognizing that he a personal responsibility share what God has gifted to him. Like the concreteness of water becoming wine, the step of choosing requires concrete actions. If our choices simply sit in the quiet confines of our interiority, they are held captive by unrealistic chains and virtual ideas. Real choices require us to ‘go out’ on a pathway that responds to reality of our lives. Jesus’ choice to transform the water into wine is significant because it is his first concrete response to his calling as baptized and sent forth by God to transform the world.

Jesus’ first miracle at the wedding in Cana suggests a variety of implications for our own lives. Jesus’ choice to share his gifts publicly, in spite of cautiousness and fear, models for us how God works with us to transform our fears into courage. Mary’s gentle probing of

Jesus' gifts models for us the important of recruiting the help and wisdom of others in our discernment process. The good quality of the new wine models how faith in God's abundance results in a plan greater than we may have ever imagined.

Questions for Reflection:

- Recall back to that situation in your life when you had to make an important decision. What did you choose to do? What were the effects/consequences of this decision both for you and others?
- Looking back on the decision you made, how was God a part (or not a part) of your choice? How did that choice lead you to where you are now?