



# **“A Spirituality for Teachers in a Catholic School”**

**Singapore Catholic Education  
Conference 2015**

**‘Spirituality’  
is a slippery  
term**



# Eternity

**“Long before we do anything explicitly religious at all, we have to do something about the fire that burns within us. What we do with the fire, how we channel it, is our spirituality.”**

Ronald Rolheiser, Seeking Spirituality

# **‘The Rohr principle’**

**“You can only transform people to the degree that you have been transformed. You can only lead others as far as you yourself have gone. You have no ability to communicate to another person that they are good or special until you know it strongly yourself....**

**Rohr, Things Hidden- Scripture as Spirituality, p.44**



**Put more simply.....**

**“You lead others to the  
depth to which you have  
been led...you can only  
transform people to the  
degree you have been  
transformed.”**

**Richard Rohr, *Things Hidden*  
– *Scripture as Spirituality*,  
pp.43,44**



**Education is about  
transformation.**

**What we don't  
transform in  
ourselves, we  
transmit.** (Richard Rohr OFM)



**As the etymology  
implies – *pais* and  
*agagos* –  
pedagogy/the art of  
teaching is about  
accompaniment**





**“Education  
is not a job  
but an  
attitude. It  
is a way of  
being.”**

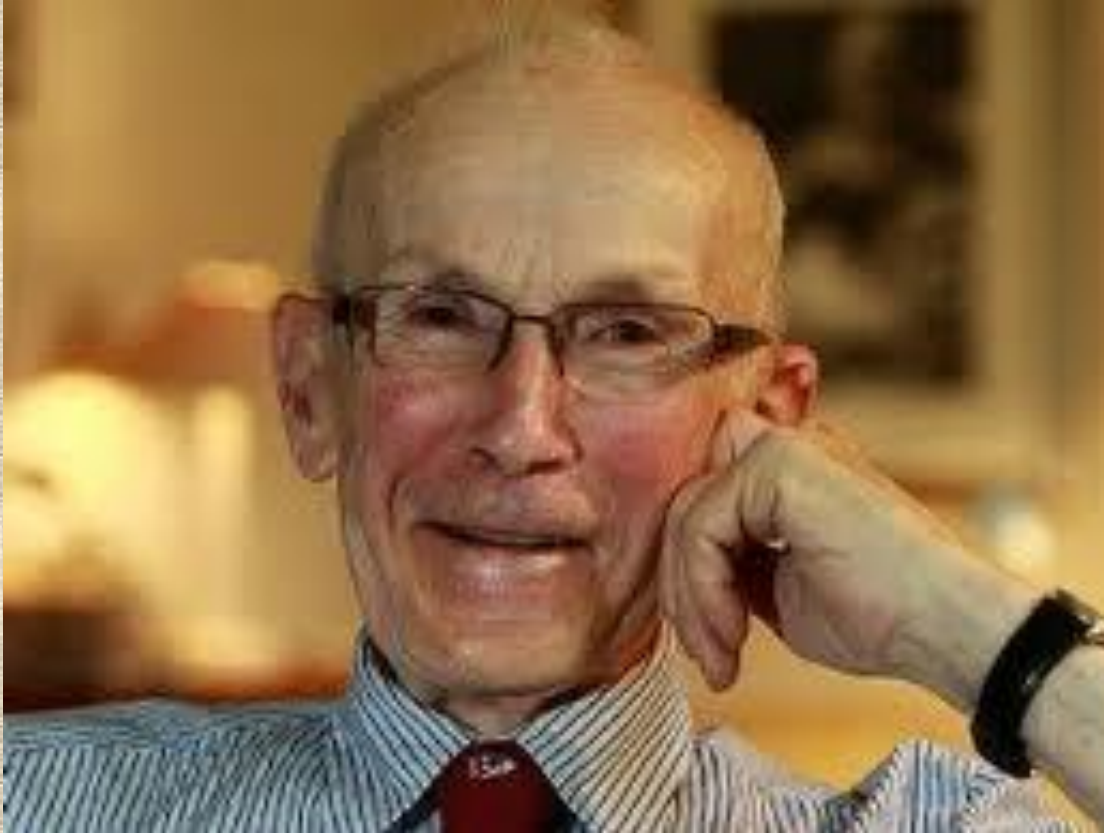
**Pope Francis,  
June 7, 2013**

**“To educate well we need to step out of ourselves and be among young people, to accompany them in the stages of their growth, placing ourselves at their side.”**

**Pope Francis, June 7, 2013**







**Our role is to be the guide  
at the side more than the  
sage on the stage**

*Serving Christ's mission  
today means paying special  
attention to its global context.  
This context requires us to  
act as a universal body with  
a universal mission.*



INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM  
ON JESUIT SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE **WORLD** IS OUR **HOUSE**

# PRAYER SERVICE

(Wednesday, 1 August 2012)

*When I first went to school there  
was no school: A Reflection on  
Education as Accompaniment,  
Compassion, and Solidarity*





When I first went to  
“Garri” school....



Like Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, my teacher was careful that not one of the children entrusted to her care got lost (John 18:9).

W



**What if the art of education was  
like shepherding and  
accompanying those entrusted  
to us along the path of  
knowledge, truth, and  
discovery?**



**In Luke 24, we have an  
excellent model for our  
pedagogy/accompaniment  
in the story of the  
Walk to Emmaus**

# **6 Stages in Emmaus Companionship**

- ✓ **Walking with**
- ✓ **Listening**
- ✓ **Story telling**
- ✓ **Disposing, not imposing**
- ✓ **Blessing**
- ✓ **Community-building**

# Stage 1

**The initial  
befriending  
of Jesus  
as he  
*walks with*  
the  
distraught  
disciples  
(v.13)**





**In accompanying young people today, “we need a new language, a new way of saying things. Today, God asks this of us: to leave the nest which encloses us in order to be sent.” Pope Francis**



1830 - Dinner Out  
2000 - Session 2 - CORPS  
2100 - Session 3 - DB  
2300 - Night Prayer  
2330 - Lights Off

DAY 2  
0630 - Wake Up  
0700 - Breakfast  
0800 - Morning Prayer  
0820 - Session 4 (TIPS)  
0930 - Session 5 - Solid  
1045 - Tea  
1100 - Session 6 - Gabriel  
1200 - Lunch  
1300 - Session 7 - BN  
1420 - Games - Show  
1700 - Session 8  
1730 - Mass  
1830 - Mass

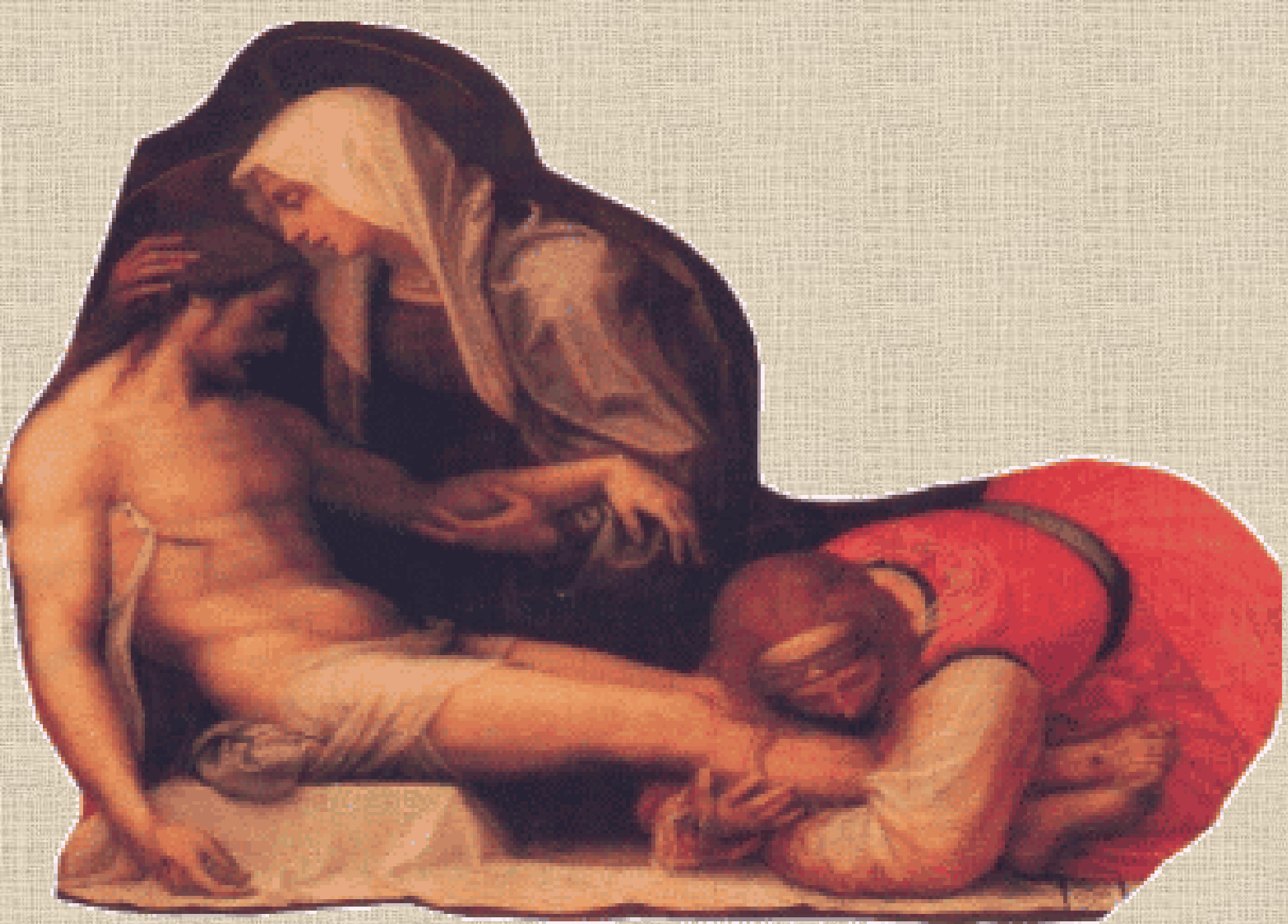
Staple  
CORPUS CHRISTI  
Body of Christ

Patrician  
P L  
T C





**Mary, the  
constantly  
faithful  
companion**













**“If the times  
are bad then  
let us be better**

**Then the times  
will be better,  
for we are the  
times”**

***St. Augustine***



# Compassion and Companionship





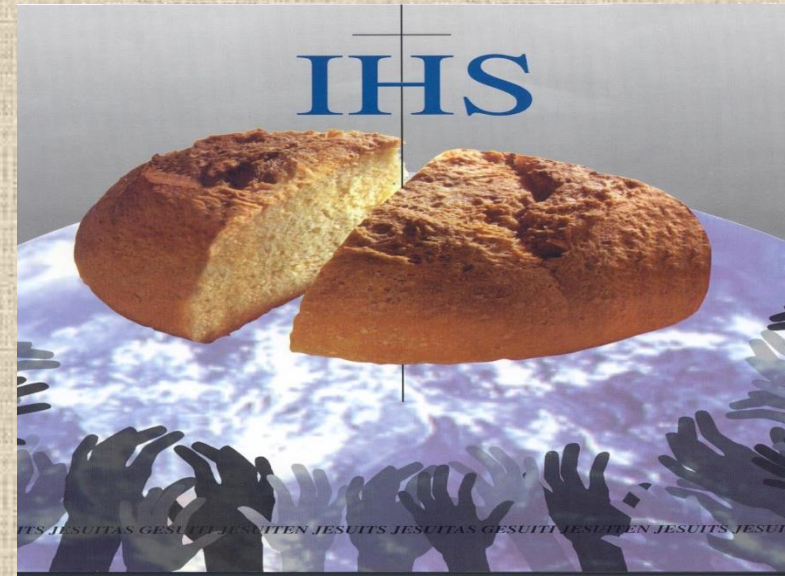




**Just as food is  
required for human  
life,so are  
companions.**

**The word ‘companion’  
comes from two Latin  
words: *cum* meaning  
‘with’ and *panis*  
meaning ‘bread’.**

**Companions nourish  
the heart, mind, soul,  
and body.**





**The  
*Frangipani*  
comes from  
the same  
Latin words  
'to break  
bread'**



*'We live in the  
shelter of each  
other'*

Irish Proverb

An Irish Blessing

May the road rise to meet you  
May the wind be always at  
your back  
May the sun shine warm upon  
your face  
The rain fall soft upon your  
fields  
And until we meet again, may  
God hold you in the palm of  
his hand.







*I will continue O  
my God to do all  
my actions for the  
love of You.*

*Let us remember  
that we are in the  
holy presence of  
God.*

*Let us remember  
that we are in the  
holy presence of  
God.*





TRIANGLES  
Sum of angles = 180°  
64-70-46  
180-180=0

Quadrilaterals  
Sum of angles = 360°  
Place each vertex at the top of the page and draw the sides to the right edge of the page.  
If you draw the sides to the right edge of the page, the sum of the angles will be 360°.

Regular polygons  
Each side is the same length  
Each angle is the same size  
Has acute and reflex angles

Hexagon  
The formula is:  
 $(n-2) \times 180$   
 $(6-2) \times 180$

Irregular polygons  
Sum of angles = 360°  
Sum of angles = 540°

IRREGULAR NONAGONS  
Sum of angles = 1260°  
Sum of angles = 1260°

student voice  
Parking  
+  
What is going well?  
?  
What are the questions?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESSICA!  
NO ALFIES During Y6 Exams  
Students in Years 7 to 10 will be permitted to sit at 2 x 4 ft tables during exams supervised by year 11 staff. Please ensure you are in the 1st interval.

50  
 $\frac{20}{3} + 1 = 4$   
 $x^2 \div 2 \rightarrow 9 \div 3 \rightarrow 3 \div 1 \rightarrow 1$   
 $x = \frac{9}{2}$   
 $4.5 \div 2 = 2.25$   
 $2.25 \div 2 = 1.125$   
 $1.125 \div 2 = 0.5625$   
 $0.5625 \div 2 = 0.28125$   
 $0.28125 \div 2 = 0.140625$   
 $0.140625 \div 2 = 0.0703125$   
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 $3.006860298853687 \times 10^{-51} \div 2 = 1.503430149426843 \times 10^{-51}$   
 $1.503430149426843 \times 10^{-51} \div 2 = 7.517150747134215 \times 10^{-52}$   
 $7.517150747134215 \times 10^{-52} \div 2 = 3.758575373567107 \times 10^{-52}$   
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 $1.879287686783553 \times 10^{-52} \div 2 = 9.396438433917765 \times 10^{-53}$   
 $9.396438433917765 \times 10^{-53} \div 2 = 4.698219216958882 \times 10^{-53}$   
 $4.698219216958882 \times 10^{-53} \div 2 = 2.349109608479441 \times 10^{-53}$   
 $2.349109608479441 \times 10^{-53} \div 2 = 1.1745548042397205 \times 10^{-53}$   
 $1.1745548042397205 \times 10^{-53} \div 2 = 5.872774021198602 \times 10^{-54}$   
 $5.872774021198602 \times 10^{-54} \div 2 = 2.936387010599301 \times 10^{-54}$   
 $2.936387010599301 \times 10^{-54} \div 2 = 1.4681935052996505 \times 10^{-54}$   
 $1.4681935052996505 \times 10^{-54} \div 2 = 7.340967526498252 \times 10^{-55}$   
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 $1.835241881624563 \times 10^{-55} \div 2 = 9.176209408122815 \times 10^{-56}$   
 $9.176209408122815 \times 10^{-56} \div 2 = 4.588104704061407 \times 10^{-56}$   
 $4.588104704061407 \times 10^{-56} \div 2 = 2.294052352030703 \times 10^{-56}$   
 $2.294052352030703 \times 10^{-56} \div 2 = 1.1470261760153515 \times 10^{-56}$   
 $1.14702$



**‘None of us is as strong as all of us’**

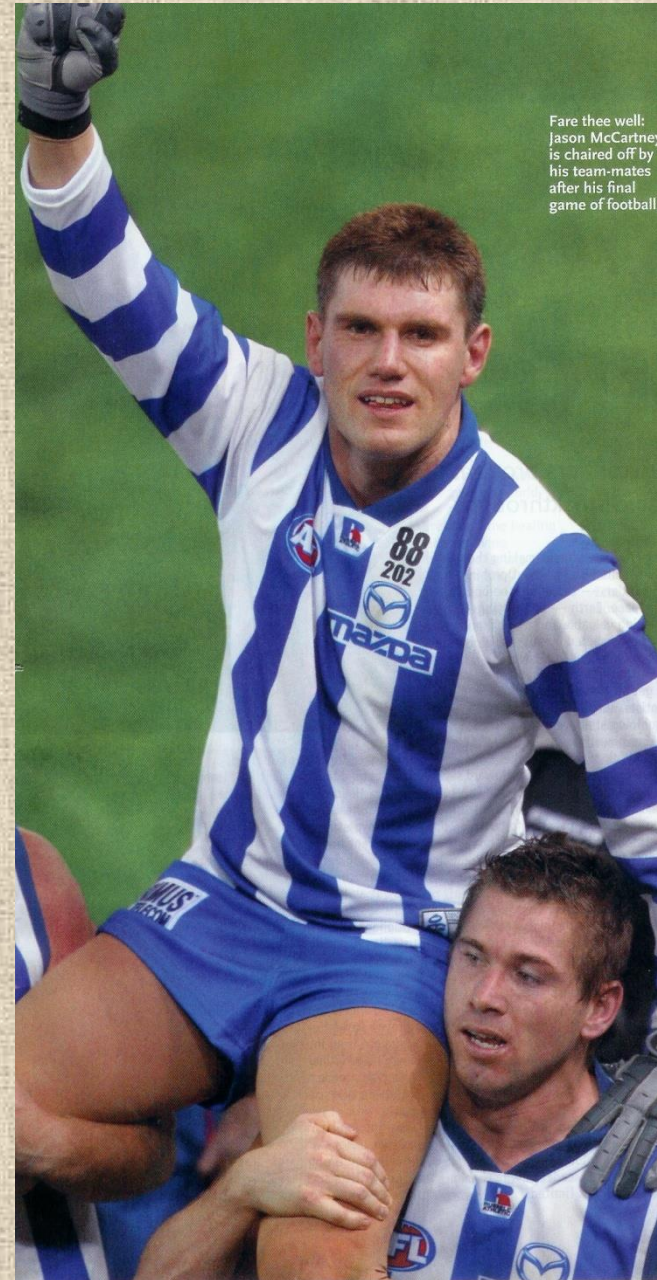






*'I am because we are'*

African saying



Fare thee well:  
Jason McCartney  
is chaired off by  
his team-mates  
after his final  
game of football

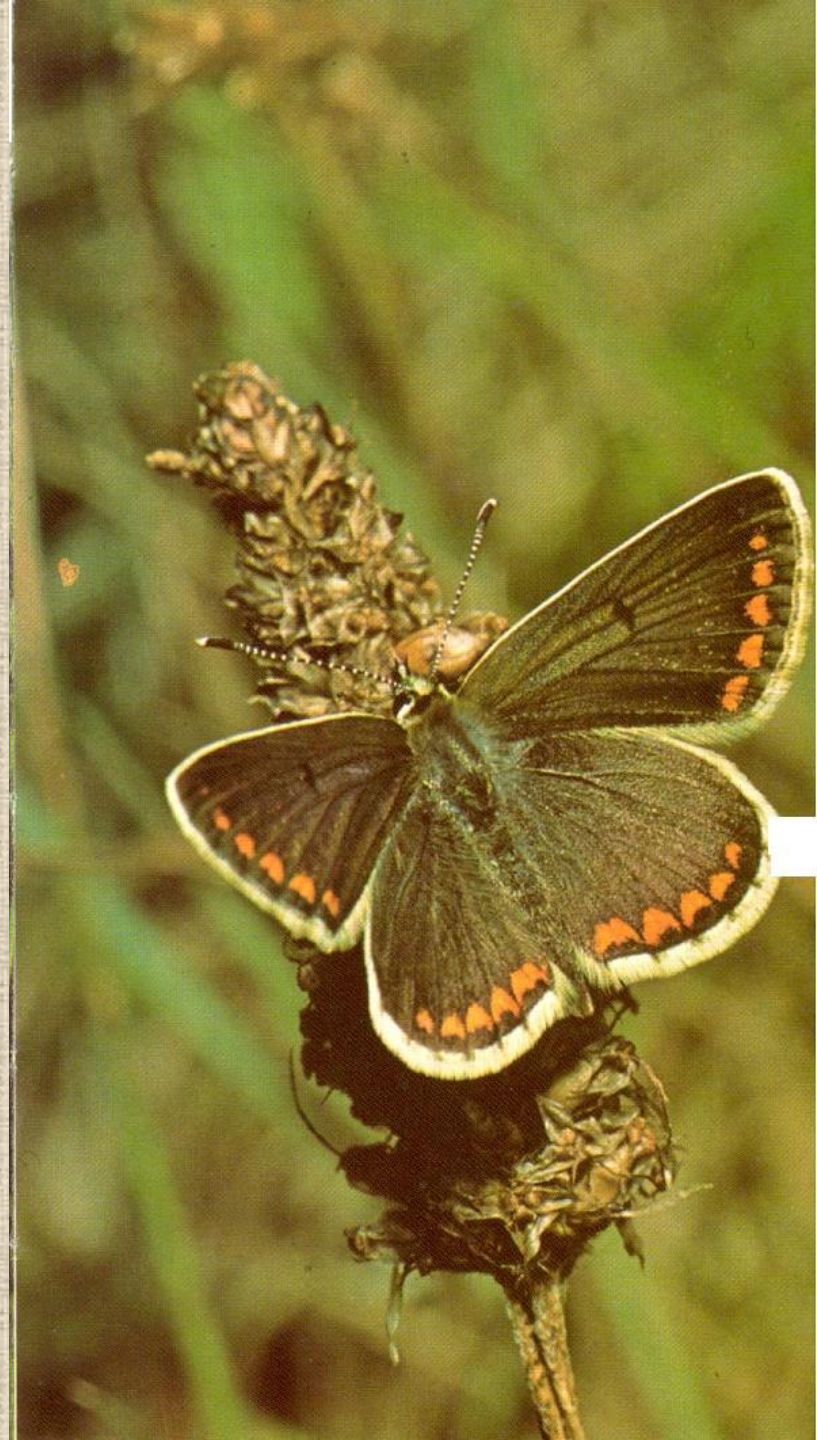
**‘Care’ comes  
from the  
Latin word  
*cura*  
meaning  
‘attention to,  
observance  
of...’**

*Care is not  
about  
problem-  
solving. It is  
about  
learning to  
befriend  
problems*



**“Honour the  
symptom  
and let it  
guide us  
in close care  
of the soul”**

**Thomas Moore,  
Care of the Soul**





**‘Care’ – from  
Gothic word  
‘Kara’ meaning  
mourning**

**Care = a  
participation  
in the pain  
of another**

**Cure without  
care is  
meaningless**

**Van Breemen,  
Called by Name**

*“Perhaps our problem  
has been too great a  
preoccupation with  
curing to the  
detriment of truly  
caring.”*

*Van Breemen, Called by Name, p.151*







## **Stage 2 – Listening with reverence to a story**

**Hearing  
people out  
before  
rushing in  
with the  
‘truth’**

**Listening =  
Healing**

cameras  
d at him—  
vacy.







**“You have to  
listen to the  
river if you want  
to catch a  
trout.”**

**Irish Proverb**

**Teacher as  
Horse  
Whisperer -  
teasing out  
people's  
deepest  
yearnings**





**With great respect  
for people's  
experience, their  
culture, we help  
them to listen to  
themselves and  
discover their own  
deeper desires.**

**Patrick O'Sullivan SJ, Prayer and Relationships**



**Listening with  
reverence to a  
story**

**Hearing  
people out  
before  
rushing in  
with the  
‘truth’**

**Listening =  
Healing**



# Listening vs Advising



**“A father, a parent of three boys, once told me, ‘However bad it gets, never cut off, never stop talking....Keep listening, that’s what I do’.”**

**Jonathan Smith, The Learning Game p.222**

**“Listening is  
always a life-  
giving act. So  
many people  
have never  
been heard in  
their whole  
lives.”**

**Joan Chittister,  
Called to Question**





**“What we don’t  
name we  
enable....We take  
the unacceptable  
as natural.”**

**Joan Chittister, Called  
to Question**

**To name is to claim  
and empower**

**“I have a theory that only what touches the heart is really lodged in the mind. Memory is made up of what has touched our lives.”**

**Joan Chittister, Called to Question**











**“Listeners are life’s  
rarest  
breed...Listeners –  
those who hear the  
pain behind the  
pain...come few and  
far between.”**

**Joan Chittister OSB**





**‘Spirituality is  
about listening,  
paying attention to  
the Mystery in  
every moment.’**

**Michael  
Whelan SM**

**To have a tender  
moment is to pray –**

**Ronald Rolheiser OMI**

**We need to pray by  
picking up the tender  
moment and letting its  
grace soften us** RR omi









# **What constitutes the tender moment?**

**Anything in life that helps make us aware of our deep connectedness with each other, of our common struggle, our common wound, our common sin, and our common need for help....**

**Ronald Rolheiser OMI**



God is  
winking at  
us during  
the day



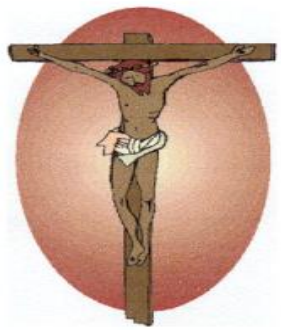


*Christ dining at  
Young and  
Jackson's Hotel,  
Melbourne - John  
Perceval 1947*

# **THE AWARENESS EXAMEN**

**- a big title for a  
very simple idea**

**Ignatius would  
have us look back  
on every point of  
the day to find  
God's presence in  
all our ordinary  
activities.**



# 5 PARTS to AWARENESS EXAMEN

• Thanksgiving

• Asking for Insight

• Looking at/Pondering My  
Day

• We Ask Forgiveness

• Looking to Tomorrow



**Awareness Examen =  
Rewinding our day**

**TUNING IN  
before  
Turning In**

**The Examen can be as simple as asking ourselves:**

- **Where was I loving today?**
- **Where was I not at peace today?**
- **What event or person touched my heart today?**



# *The Aloys 5 Stars*

*Under the  
Southern  
Cross*

Being aware of God's presence  
today ...

1. *What was the best thing I heard?*
2. *What was the best thing I saw?*
3. *What was the best thing  
someone did for me?*
4. *What was the best thing I did  
for someone else?*
5. *What can I do to improve  
tomorrow?*

Thank You God





Being aware of God's presence  
today ...

1. *What was the best thing I heard?*
2. *What was the best thing I saw?*
3. *What was the best thing  
someone did for me?*
4. *What was the best thing I did  
for someone else?*
5. *What can I do to improve  
tomorrow?*

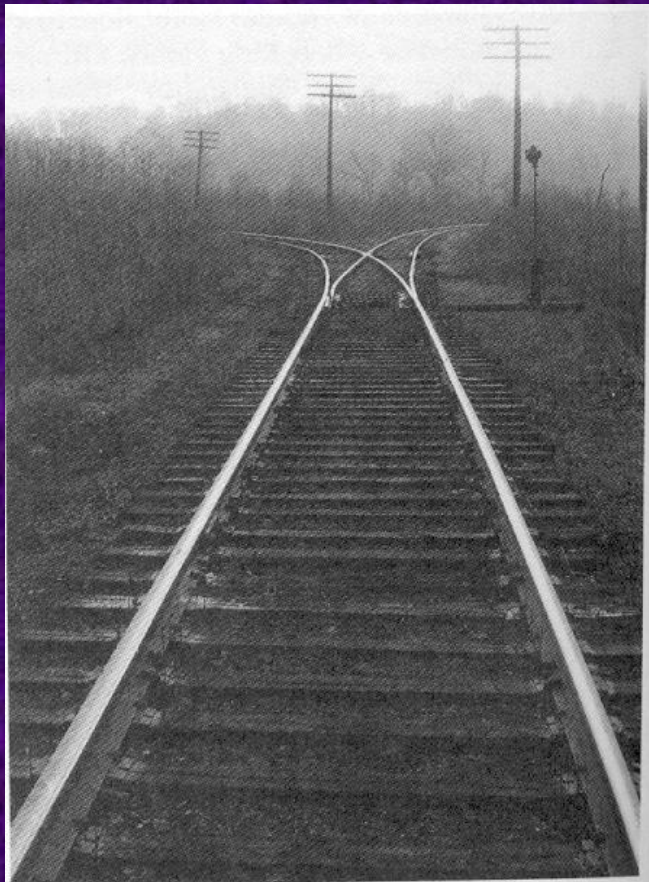
Thank You God

**In learning to  
listen we must  
learn also to  
listen to  
ourselves**



## **Discernment of Spirits**

**- long a venerable part of  
Christian tradition**

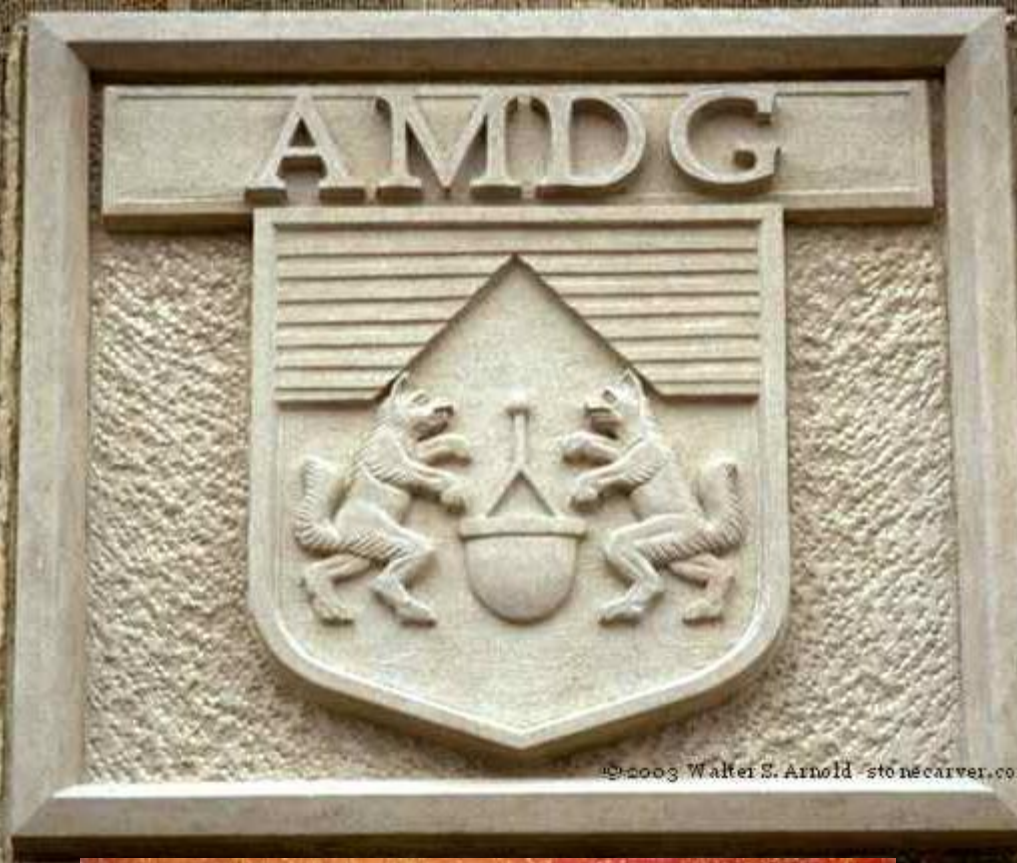


**“Honour the  
symptom  
and let it guide us  
in close care of the  
soul”**

**Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul**

**Discernment is the  
art of looking into  
our hearts and  
minds to see what  
parts of our life  
lead to God and  
which parts lead  
away from God.**





# The Two Wolves

©2003 Walter S. Arnold - stonecarver.com



# **The good spirit/wolf of good brings us....**



**Peace**



**Love**



**Generosity**



**Joy**



**Hope**



**These are signs of the  
good spirit in us leading  
us to God**



# **The evil spirit/wolf of evil in us brings.....**

**Anger**

**Arrogance**

**Lies**

**Jealousy**



**These are signs of  
the evil spirit  
leading us away  
from God**



# **Discernment and making decisions/choices**

**1 Fundamental Rule**

**=**

**Never make a  
decision in the  
dark**



**Which wolf wins in us?**

**The wolf you feed**

# **Discernment**

## **Away from God**

- **Locked into my view**
- **Quick to judge**
- **Rigidity**
- **Moralising (shoulds)**
- **Self-centered**

## **Towards God**

- ✓ **Open to growth and change**
- ✓ **Taking time to listen and reflect**
- ✓ **Flexibility**
- ✓ **In touch with real desire**
- ✓ **In relationship**



**Stage 3 – Be  
ready to offer  
a deeper  
vision**

**Often we  
need to  
broaden  
the agenda  
– broaden  
the  
horizons**



**“The essence of school teaching is to translate something trivial and particular, such as memorising a date....into something significant and universal, such as understanding the complexities of world-changing events.”**

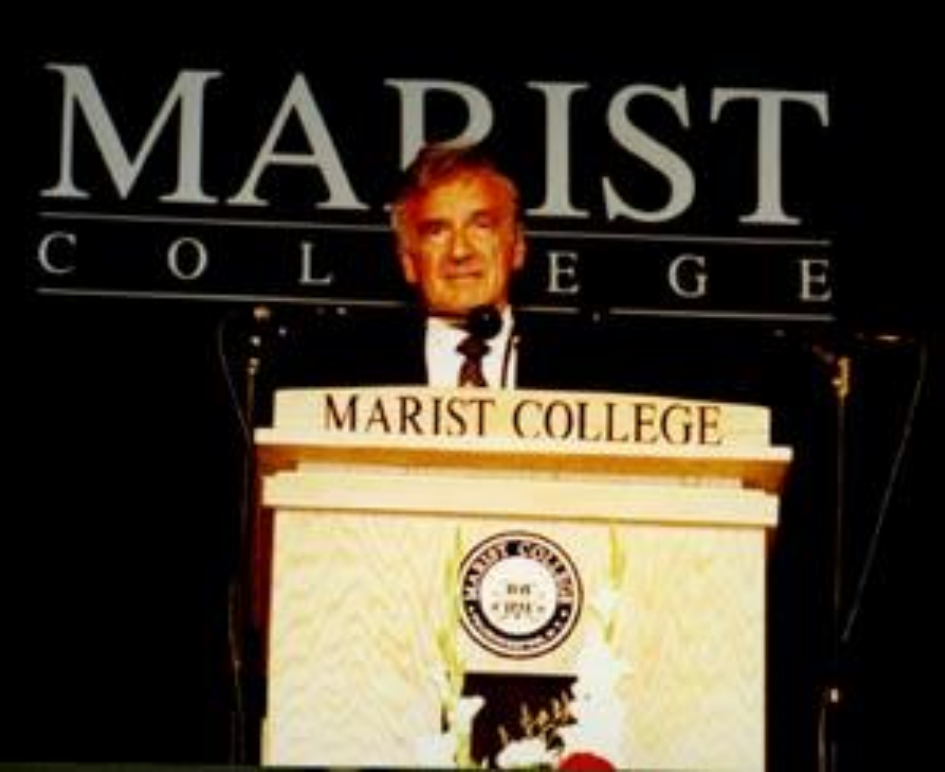
**G. Denning, Xavier Portraits, p.307**

# **We need to provide our students with 'big' stories, stories of transcendence**

**In 1955  
Rosa  
Parks  
changed  
the  
course of  
American  
history**







**Elie Wiesel,  
Holocaust  
survivor and  
Nobel Peace  
Prize winner  
1986**

**‘God made  
man  
because  
he loves  
stories’**

**Elie Wiesel**

Caroline  
Jones



*“a person’s experience,  
their story, is sacred  
ground”*

Caroline Jones, The Search for  
Meaning



**“Whether  
sung or told,  
stories are  
themselves  
thresholds for  
stepping from  
the profane  
into the  
sacred.”**

**Peter W Cobb,  
‘Teachers  
as a Rainbow Tribe’**







**“The hearer of  
the story  
becomes with  
the teller a  
shared  
caretaker of the  
story. This is  
true of the  
family story and  
the school  
story, just as it  
is of the sacred  
story.”**

**Peter W Cobb**

**“The Great Stories  
are the ones you  
have heard and want  
to hear again. The  
ones you can enter  
anywhere and  
inhabit comfortably.”**

**Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things**

# **A religious charism “gives people a**

- **story to enter,**
- **a language to speak,**
- **a group to which they belong,**
- **a way to pray,**
- **a work to undertake,**
- **a face of God to see.”**

**Brother Michael Green FMS, 2000**



**“...we need fire,  
passion, and  
romance...the fire  
of passion comes  
from God.”**

**Ron Rolheiser OMI**



# **A Man of Passion becomes Pope**



**Passion  
is God's  
fire in us**

**Ronald Rolheiser OMI**

**“I wanted my children to feel the concerns of the heart just as much as I wanted them to cut to the heart of the matter.”**

**Jonathan Smith, The Learning Game**







# **BARRIERS TO THINKING AT DEPTH**

- **Outcomes overload – we need *multum* not *multa***
- **Education vs Instruction**
  - **Information Overload**
  - **Functional immediacy**
  - **Instant gratification**
- **Productivity – ‘use by date’**
  - **Pluralism of choices**



***Dear Teacher,  
I am the victim of a concentration camp. My  
eyes saw what no man should witness:  
Gas chambers built by learned engineers;  
children poisoned by educated physicians;  
infants killed by trained nurses;  
women and babies shot and burned by high  
school and college graduates.  
So I am suspicious of education.  
My request is: help your students become  
human. Your efforts must never produce  
learned monsters, skilled psychopaths,  
educated Eichmanns.  
Reading, writing and arithmetic are  
important only if they serve to make our  
children more human.***



**How deeply do  
we form  
people's *inner*  
*persons*?**

**“If I don’t stand for  
something  
I will fall for  
anything.”**



**Time for a  
stretch**





**Stage 4 - The  
Companion as  
Liberator - v.28**

**- “...he made  
as if to go on.”**

**The teacher  
disposes, but  
never imposes**

# The Companion as Healer





**“I am  
releasing  
the angel  
imprisoned  
in this  
marble.”**

**(Michelangelo)**



# **Sins against freedom/spirit**

- ♣ partiality and fanaticism**
- ♣ capitulation to mediocrity**
- ♣ dogmatic self-assurance**
- ♣ supplanting mystery by technology**
- ♣ subordinating the mind to power, truth to political correctness**

**“All of us are  
healers”**







# **Stage 5 - Blessing is Healing**

**Blessing is:**

✓ **to affirm**

✓ **to touch the  
original  
goodness in  
another**

✓ **to let another  
know they are  
beloved by God**



**To bless is**

**☞ to take people back  
to the true source of  
all gifts, God**

**☞ to remind people  
that they are a  
blessing, a gift to us**



Ignatian Children's Holiday Camp



**“Blessing is a sign  
that life is sacred  
and good and full of  
the touch of God.”**

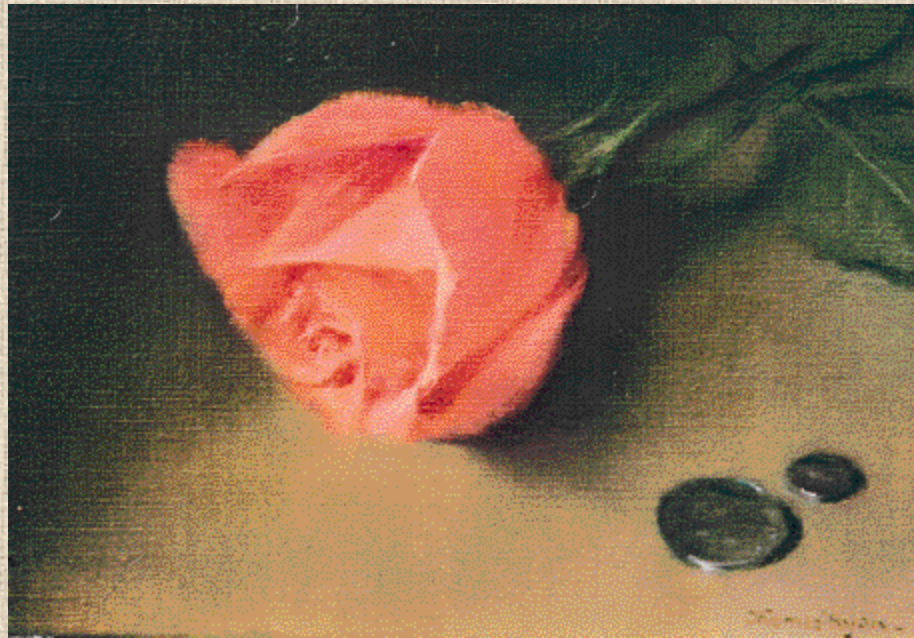


**Blessing is a sign that  
'grace is everywhere'**



**“We are often blessed in ways we can’t imagine. Instead of getting what we want, we get what we need.”**

**Joan Chittister, Listen With the Heart**



**‘A grace place’**

**A place where the  
goodness of God is made  
visible to all**

**A place where the visible  
and invisible are  
seamlessly interwoven – a  
‘thin place’ (as the Irish would  
say)**





**The Irish concept  
of a  
‘Thin Place’ -  
where there is a  
thin dividing line,  
just a membrane,  
between the  
spiritual and the  
material worlds.  
A ‘Thin Place’  
connects  
the seen and  
unseen worlds.  
Is there a Thin  
Place’ for you?**



**“Grace is God’s love at work  
in our lives.”** Thomas Groome







**Grace – God gazes lovingly on Paul and sees the good in this arch exterminator of Christians**

**“We praise God not to celebrate our own faith, but to give thanks for the faith God has in us. To let ourselves look at God and let God look back at us.”**

**Kathleen Norris, Amazing Grace, p.151**

**“May the  
Lord  
make his  
face  
shine  
upon you  
and be  
gracious  
to you.”**

**(Numbers 6:25)**





**“The grace of God  
has always been there  
ahead of our preaching....  
Hence our preaching is  
not really  
an indoctrination with  
something alien  
from outside,  
but the awakening of  
something within,  
as yet not understood  
but nevertheless really  
present.”**

*Karl Rahner*





**“Eating becomes an  
encounter with  
God.....When I recite  
the blessing, I become  
part of an awesome  
chain of people,  
events, and places  
which created my  
food.”**

**Rabbi Stacy Laveson in  
*How Can I find God?***

**....the blessing reminds me that my food did not come from my refrigerator nor from my grocery store. Rather, it came to me via the rain, the sun, the people who tilled the soil and harvested the land and worked in the store which sold the food.”**

**Rabbi Stacy Laveson**

**“When I  
bless  
myself,  
the world  
too is  
blessed.”**

**Daniel O’Leary**





# **Stage 6 – It is all about Community- building**

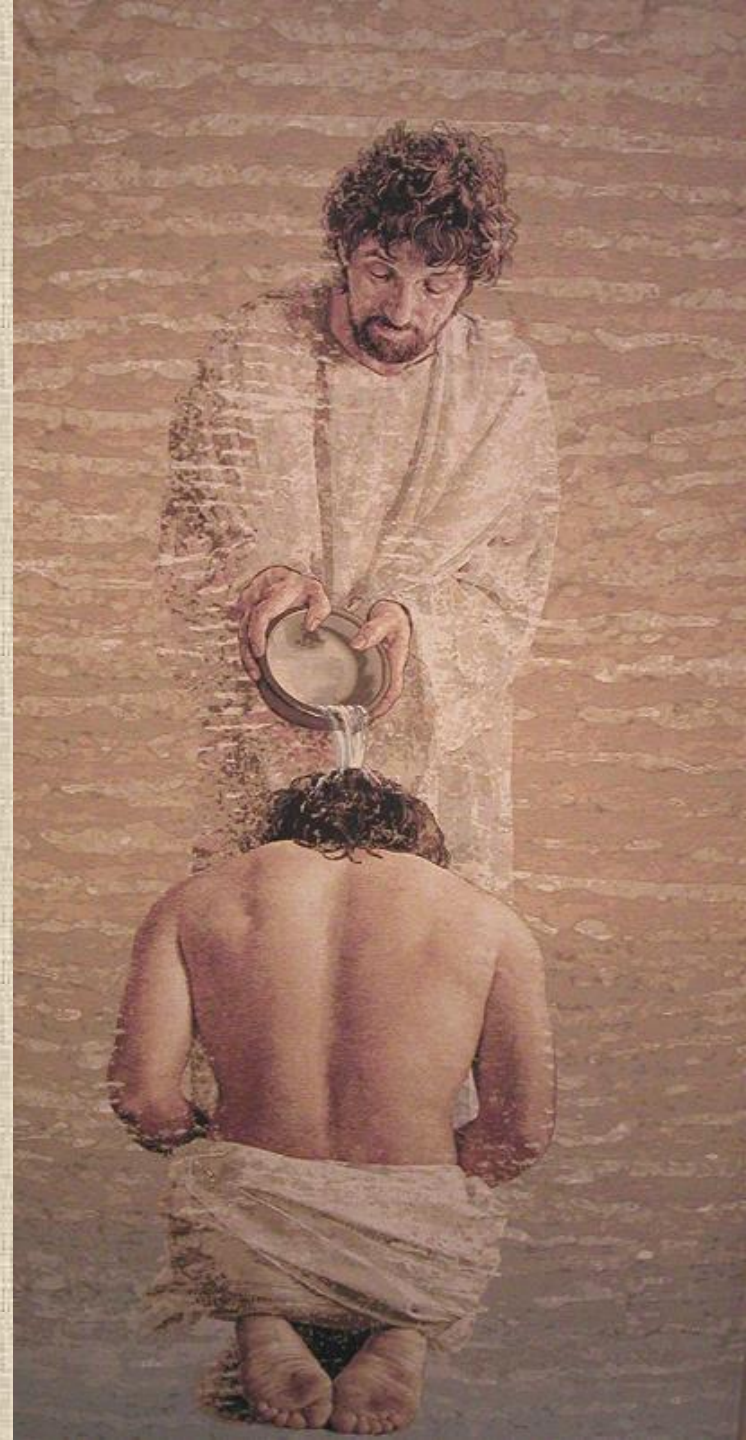
**The relationship  
is more important  
than the content  
of a  
communication**



***“They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions...Then they told their story of what had happened on the road...” vv.33,35***

**“Life is only  
lived well  
when it is lived  
generously in  
the service of  
others.”**

**Bill Byron SJ**







**“God gives  
nothing to  
those who  
keep their  
arms  
crossed.”**

**Old African  
proverb**

**“The Son of Man  
came not to be  
served but to serve.”  
(Matthew 21)**



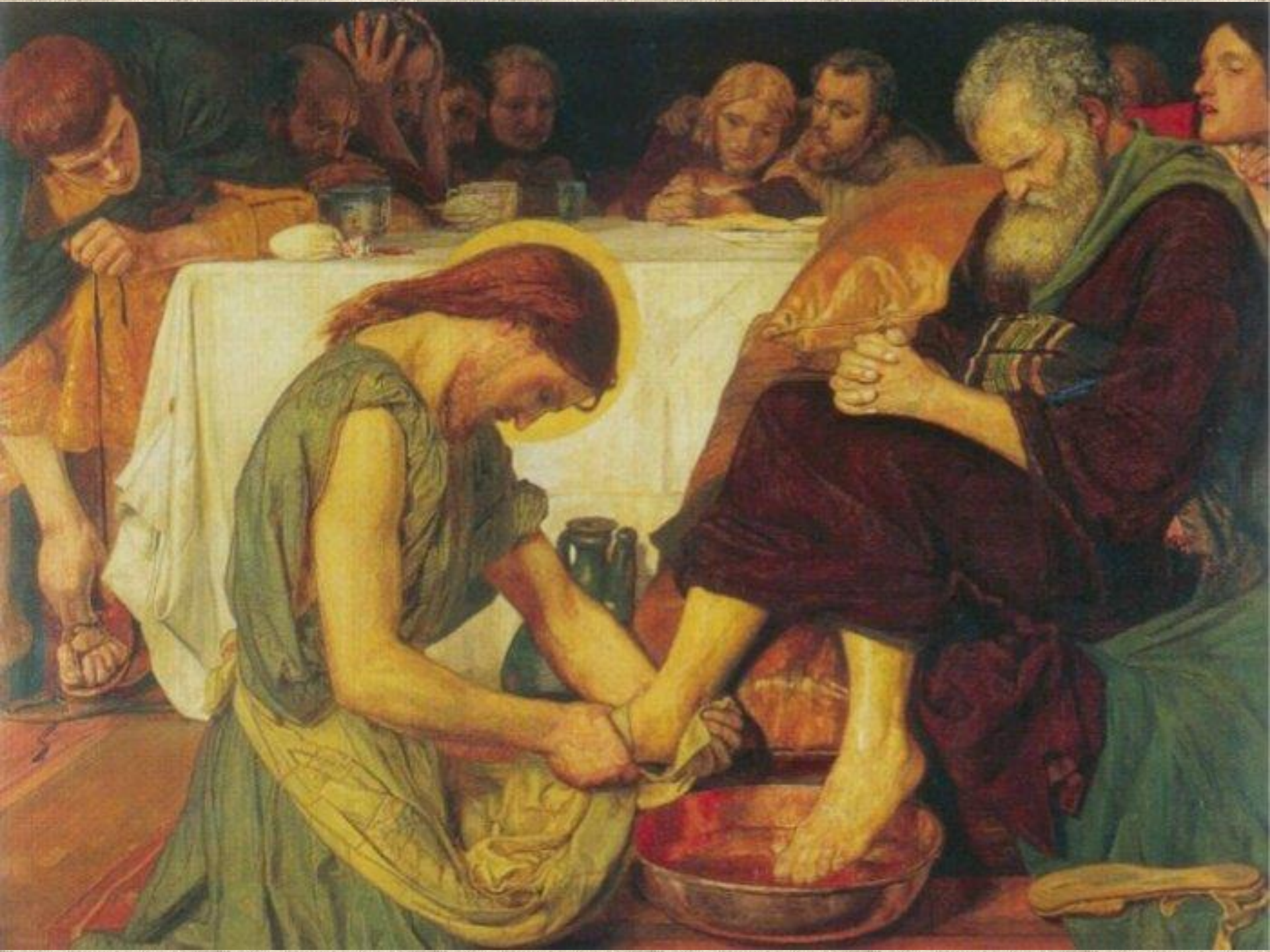






# **Jesus as Servant – in John Chapter 13 People who wash feet are very vulnerable.**







**“Jesus had now  
finished what he  
wanted to say, and  
his teaching made a  
deep impression on  
the people because  
he taught them with  
authority.”**

**Matthew 7:28**



**‘Human life is a spider web...touch it anywhere, you set the whole thing trembling....The life that I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another ....’**









# Reflection Time – Let's not be taken for a ride!





