

## 7. LETTING GO page 36-38

**Session Outcome:** Pilgrims develop an awareness that they will need to let go of that which is an obstacle to their being fully present to themselves, God and others.

### **SONG: BE NOT AFRAID**

Bob Dufford

You shall cross the barren desert, but you shall not die of thirst.  
You shall wander far in safety, though you do not know the way.  
You shall speak your words in foreign lands and all will understand.

You shall see the face of God and live.

***Be not afraid. I go before you always.  
Come, follow me and I will give you rest.***

If you pass through raging waters in the sea you shall not drown.  
If you walk amid the burning flames, you shall not be harmed.  
If you stand before the pow'r of hell and death is at your side,  
know that I am with you through it all.

Blessed are your poor, for the Kingdom shall be theirs.  
Blessed are you who weep and mourn, for one day you will laugh

### **SCRIPTURE: Ez 36:26-27**

Ezekiel expresses the deep longing within each of us to let go of what holds us back and be transformed by the love of God.

### **PRAYER: Psalm 48**

Psalms for the Road – Joy Cowley

#### **Pilgrimage**

Lord I'd like to be a pilgrim. By that, I mean I want to be serious about the spiritual life, regular worship, daily prayer, some effort to become a nicer person to my family and neighbours, the kind of thing You've talked about for more than two thousand years. But Lord, I'm not sure I can do it. I've read about pilgrimage and it seems to me that You ask a lot of followers, a hard road and steep mountains that have to be climbed. That's ok for holy disciples, but me, Lord I'm just your average tag-along. I've never been one for steep mountains. I know now that I would never make it. I'm wondering, is there a compromise, some kind of easy slope for beginners? What's that, Lord? Oh. I see. The problem is not the mountain.

## GROUP ACTIVITY:

**INPUT FOR DISCUSSION:** On every pilgrimage there comes a point where each person must face the struggles and obstacles that hold them back from living their fullest potential. Often we are unable, or unwilling to face the hurt, anger and shame deep inside us. On pilgrimage we are called to truly 'see', to take our brokenness to God and to surrender. This is often deeply painful and difficult. Often the most difficult thing is 'seeing' - engaging in our blindness. Journaling and Examination of Conscience are great tools to help us see. Your fellow pilgrims can also be a huge help in this. When we are able to open our eyes and see, we are able to live in a new way and find freedom.

**ACTIVITY:** Set up a 'movie theatre' (you might like to sell or provide popcorn and drinks etc.) Watch one of the following movies (or another of your choosing) with 'pilgrim eyes':

- The Song of Bernadette (1943)
- The Shawshank Redemption (1994)
- The Power of One (1992)
- Romero (1989)
- Freedom Writers (2007)
- Precious (2009)
- Prince of Egypt (1998)
- The Rosa Parks Story (2002)

**REFLECTION:** Spend some time writing and reflecting on this activity experience. Use the following questions to guide your reflection:

1. What external obstacles held the characters back?
2. What internal obstacles held the characters back?
3. How did you see yourself reflected in the film?
4. What do you need to let go of to reach your full potential?



## TOOL FOR THE JOURNEY: Reconciliation

*“Few souls understand what God would accomplish in them if they were to abandon themselves unreservedly to Him and if they were to allow His grace to mould them accordingly” **Ignatius of Loyola***

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a ritual in which believers are invited to face themselves with what is broken in their lives, what is wrong, especially their part in it however large or small that may be. We often call this brokenness sin. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains the basic process of reconciliation: *“Like all the sacraments, Penance is a liturgical action. The elements of the celebration are ordinarily these: a greeting and blessing from the priest; reading the word of God to illuminate the conscience and elicit contrition; and an exhortation to repentance; the confession, which acknowledges sins and makes them known to the priest; the imposition and acceptance of a penance; the priest’s absolution; a prayer of thanksgiving and praise and dismissal with the blessing of the priest.”* **1480 The Catechism of the Catholic Church**

In reconciliation we acknowledge and let go of the things that hold us back and we renew our commitment to living as Jesus did. We often do this through ‘penance’. The Catechism describes: *“The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms; fasting, prayer and almsgiving, which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God and to others...”* **1434 The Catechism of the Catholic Church**

Reconciliation literally means ‘to walk together again’. We commit to walking the way of Jesus; to being people who seek to bring peace, justice, respect and healing to our community and world.

On pilgrimage we are called to let go of the things that hold us back from reaching our full potential, from being fully present to ourselves, God and others. We are called to reconcile that which is broken within ourselves; our hurts, relationships, experiences and choices. At WYD11 you will have opportunities to experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You may be very familiar with this practise. If so, you might like to reflect on being part of the WYD experience, surrounded by hundreds of others sharing this healing process with you. If you are not familiar, you might like to receive the Sacrament – either go alone or invite your pilgrim group to go together to share the experience.

Whether at home or at WYD11, Reconciliation is an opportunity to experience God’s great love for us. When we let go of some of the things that hold us back, we can experience a heightened awareness of the presence of God on our journey. Using your ‘Journal’ skills reflect on what the experience was like for you.