

9. YOU AND GOD page 42-45

Session Outcome: Pilgrims become aware of God's unique and powerful love for them.

SONG: Strong and Constant

Frank Anderson

I will be Yahweh who walks with you
you will be always within my hand
take your heart and give it all to me
Strong and constant is my love! x 2

Should you wander far away from me
I will search for you in every land
should you call then you will truly know
Strong and constant is my love! x 2

When you know sorrow within your life
I will come, I will embrace your heart
through your pain you will discover me
Strong and constant is my love! x 2

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 1:4-9

God calls each of us by name and promises to be
with us always.

PRAYER: Psalm 7

Psalms for the Road – Joy Cowley

Behold, the Christ

Just a little, of It was easy to see You
in holy faces, holy places,
God made flesh in a mother's voice
or in the gentle hands of a nurse,
or the smile of a grandfather
or the laughter of small children.
Every presence of love and beauty
proclaimed your advent.
I needed eyes sharpened by suffering
before I was able to see You
in the pain of human poverty.
The man who stared at a prison ceiling,
the alcoholic mother, the hungry child,
the old woman who died alone in her flat,
the young victims who grew up
to become abusers themselves,
the people who were in despair
at their inability to make changes,
when I could look at them
through the experience
of my own crucifixions,
I realised they all looked back at me
with your eyes.
It took much longer to see You
in places of affluence and power,
in parliament or at the stock exchange,
at the helm of a luxury yacht
or residing in a summer palace
surrounded by material wealth.
But now I discover that in these places
You have the same eyes as the poor,
the disabled, the imprisoned,
the same eyes as the grandfather,
the children, the hospital nurse,
the same eyes that I see
each morning in the mirror.
And I begin to understand a little,
Just a little, of the truth
of who You are.

GROUP ACTIVITY: Images of God

INPUT FOR DISCUSSION: God seeks to have a deep and personal relationship with each and every one of us. We often have images of who/what God is to help us understand God. Our image of God is deeply personal and can help us develop and grow in our relationship with God. Reflecting on your image of God can be a helpful tool for developing your awareness of the presence of God on your journey.

Sometimes we fall into the trap of believing our image is the only image or the only right image. It's important to remember that our images only provide a small insight about God. Read 'The Blind Men and the Elephant' (poem attached). It is a great story to help us realise that each of us hold a little of the truth of who/what God is.

The process of engaging in pilgrimage prepares us for the time when we will experience a moment of transcendence. Transcendence is a mystical, heightened sense of the presence of God like we have never experienced before. On your WYD11 experience there will be a time when you feel such an intimate union with God. This activity is simply a way to help you in your preparation.

ACTIVITY: Each pilgrim is given some clay and asked to reflect God. Play some reflective music in the background to provide a quiet, reflective atmosphere. Each pilgrim spends time with the clay, moulding an image that speaks deeply to them about God. Share the images with each other.

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

1. What are some images of God that people have?
2. What are some traditional images of God we are taught about?
3. What images does Jesus use when talking about God?
4. What images help you understand and see God?
5. When have you experienced a heightened awareness of the presence of God? Where were you? What were you doing?

'The Blind Men and the Elephant'

John Godfrey Saxe's (1816-1887) version of the famous Indian legend



It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The *First* approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! But the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The *Second*, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, -"Ho! What have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The *Third* approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

The *Fourth* reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he,
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

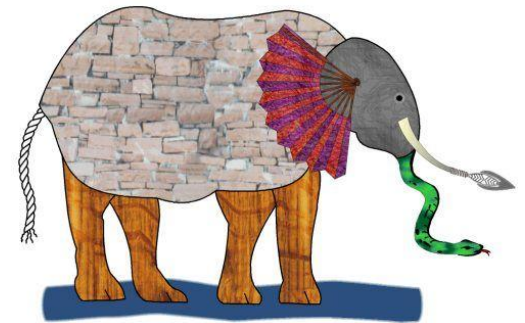
The *Fifth*, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The *Sixth* no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Then, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

MORAL:

So oft in theological wars,
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
*And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!*



TOOL FOR THE JOURNEY: Adoration

Eucharistic adoration is a practice in which the [Blessed Sacrament](#) is exposed to and adored by the faithful. When this exposure and adoration is constant (twenty-four hours a day) it is called Perpetual Adoration. In a [parish](#) this is usually done by volunteer parishioners; in a [monastery](#) or [convent](#), it is done by the resident [monks](#) or [nuns](#).

“Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honoured with the worship of adoration. “To visit the Blessed Sacrament is... a proof of gratitude, an expression of love and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord.” (Paul VI, MF 66)” **1418 Catechism of the Catholic Church**

Experience Adoration

At WYD11 you will have an opportunity to experience ‘Adoration’. As the Catechism says the act of doing this is an expression of your commitment. 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 worship with you. If you are not familiar, you might like to experience this worship before you go – either go alone or invite your pilgrim group to go together to share the experience.

Whether at home or at WYD11, Adoration is an opportunity to reflect on God’s great love for us. In the quiet 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.