

Saints *Alive!*

A Periodic Newsletter of Emmaus Journey

Issue
30

Serve Others! Why?

By Rich Cleveland

“The point being we cannot present ourselves to God and simultaneously withhold ourselves from others.”

October 31, 2020 was the beatification day of Blessed Michael McGivney, who personifies what it means to serve. He was a simple parish priest, a son who had to briefly interrupt his studies to care for his family. This concept of putting others’ needs ahead of his own was not simply confined to the needs of his own family, but was manifested toward others throughout his life and ministry as a parish priest. His life reflected that love for Christ that is seen in how one loves others. As a new priest he was immediately thrust into responsibilities beyond his experience and which required much time and effort, and it seemed that his work load never got easier. Nevertheless, in the midst of all that was going on he was aware that many people had great needs economically, socially, and spiritually. To meet these needs, he organized men’s groups to build into the lives of young men, and to appeal to them to share these burdens of the poor, the orphaned, and the widows by providing economic, social, and spiritual relief — these groups eventually resulted in the founding the Knights of Columbus.

As I considered how Blessed Michael McGivney served, and how he taught others to serve, I was reminded of Emmaus Journey’s mission; “To help Catholics experience conversion to Christ, become formed in Christ, and to be mobilized for Christ.” The link between the two is revealed when we ask, “Mobilized to do what?” Maybe some of the men involved in the men’s organizations Fr. McGivney founded became priests or religious, hopefully they did, but that was not his primary objective. Rather he hoped to teach ordinary men how to love Jesus and serve

others, thus meeting the needs of those less fortunate. Similarly, Emmaus Journey’s objective is not primarily to mobilize people to fill formal ministry positions, but rather to mobilize them to be followers of Jesus, and consequently functioning as his body, doing his work throughout their environments — which of course begins in their parish. Our love and devotion to Jesus is expressed in our service to others.

It is hard to choose just one or two foundational passages of Scripture about serving others, but certainly Ephesians 2:8–10 is one of those foundational passages; “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God not because of works, lest any man should boast. **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**” People have often spent a lot of time discussing the “salvation by works, or by faith” issues, but I have observed how less frequently they major on discussing the truth that God created us as believers, for the purpose of doing good works. This is a foundational tenet of our faith; we were made believers so that “good works” would be done by us, works which God prepared for us to do, and that these good works should be a way of life with us; “to walk in them” continually.

I bemoan the fact that others seem to serve



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*The Golden Moment
is when they ask you,
“Why are you doing
this for me?”*

Emmaus Journey

MISSION:

Emmaus Journey is a lay Catholic evangelization and discipleship ministry which partners with parishes, small groups and individuals to facilitate a personal encounter with and conversion to Christ, thereby forming missionary disciples actively living for Jesus.

VISION:

By encountering Christ through scripture, discipleship and community — individuals experience: 1) conversion to Christ; 2) transformation in Christ; and 3) mobilization for Christ, where they are actively involved in sharing their faith with others and living out their faith in the greater community. Thus achieving Goal One of the USCCB's initiative on evangelization, "To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others."



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Serving Others By Abe Chavez

Back in my college days, I recall one of my spiritual mentors making the statement, "To love is to serve and to serve is to love." It is a true statement because love entails being other-centered, putting others ahead of self. That is what serving others is all about...loving others.

I remember being challenged by that statement especially when I considered the John 13 passage where Jesus washed the disciples' feet. The disciples should have been washing Jesus' feet, but it was Jesus who arose from the table and wrapped a towel around his waist and washed each of the disciple's feet. Jesus uses this incident as a backdrop for introducing the New Commandment: John 13:34 — "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you ..." Serving is loving!

Previously, in Mark 10:43–45 Jesus redefined leadership, and he spoke of this as the disciples were arguing about which of them was the greatest. Jesus said, "*But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*"

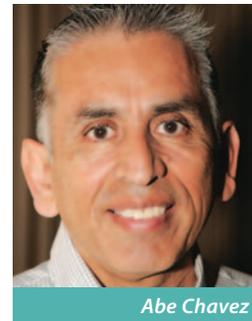
Leadership is not about being served but entails serving/loving those you lead. I know Catholic men who live to serve, and I am (naturally) not one of them. They serve for pure joy; I serve for the sake of obedience. We are called to love and serving is loving. We are all required to take the call to serve others seriously. God gives grace, and we can rise to this standard that Jesus set before us all. Besides this, loving and serving others is central to evangelization.

I recently heard a talk on evangelization by Dominick Albano that explains this. He spoke of the two most important questions in the history of evangelization. First, "Where does it hurt?" Second, "How can I help?" He said, if you ask and answer these two questions, then prepare yourself for the "Golden Moment of Evangelization." If someone sees you take an interest in them by observing where they are hurting and then stepping up to help, then you have their attention. The Golden Moment is when they ask you, "Why are you doing this for me?" At this point, you just served their need, and they are ready to hear about what Jesus means to you, how he has changed your life, and how he motivates you to do good deeds. It is not me attempting to create an evangelization moment; it is them opening the door after being served in this way.

For example, when I was in my early 30's and working for the phone company as an engineer, I broke my ankle and my foot was in a cast for six weeks. My foot was extremely swollen, and I was excused from work for one week. The night before returning to work, I was contemplating how I was going to get there. My wife and I had five young daughters and her plate was full with caring for them, getting them off to school, and caring for me. At about 8 pm, I received a call from my friend, Tim B. He asked me how I was going to get to work the next morning? I hesitated, and he said, "Can I have your permission to take you to work and pick you up from work for the next two weeks?" Tim saw where I was hurting and answered the question, "How can I help?" Tim now had my attention, and I was willing to listen to anything he said that contributed to my walk of faith as a Catholic.

If we are loving, we are serving. If we are serving, we are loving. Someone like that, looks like Christ — because the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. This is one of the marks of true discipleship as we model our lives after Christ.

Abe Chavez and his wife Liz are Emmaus Journey staff. As Emmaus Journey staff, Abe & Liz seek to catalyze evangelization and discipleship through Small Catholic Communities (SCCs) and Spiritual Mentoring. They live in Albuquerque, New Mexico and are members of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Catholic Community.



Abe Chavez

Tools You Can Use



Discovering the God We Call Father

Discovering the God We Call Father enables participants to enter into a more profound understanding of some of the great mysteries of our faith contained in the Our Father prayer that Jesus taught his followers.

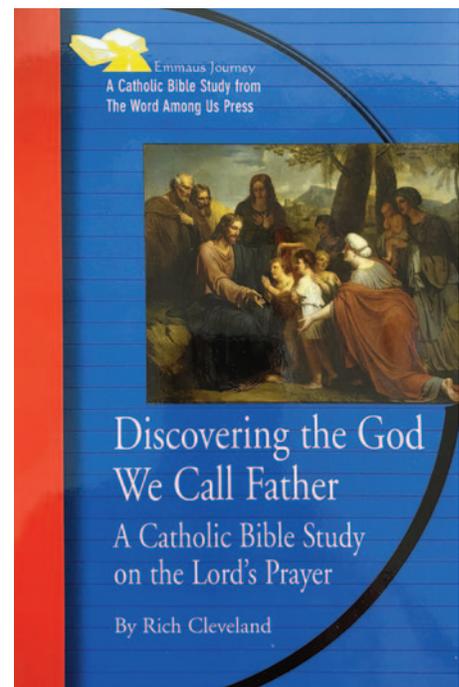
As you complete this eight-chapter study each of the petitions in the Our Father will take on new meaning for you each time you pray it. Additionally, this bible study will enable you to develop a new consciousness of your relationship with the Father as his dearly beloved child, and as an heir with Christ to all that is the Father's.

Discovering the God We Call Father consists of eight enlightening chapters:

- Chapter 1 — Discipleship Begins with Prayer
- Chapter 2 — Understanding Our Father
- Chapter 3 — Honoring Our Father
- Chapter 4 — Living as Citizens of the Kingdom
- Chapter 5 — Doing the Father's Will
- Chapter 6 — Relying on God's Resources — Grace for Today
- Chapter 7 — Relying on God's Resources — Forgiveness and Forgiving
- Chapter 8 — Relying on God's Resources — Protection from Evil

In this study you will find stimulating reflections, thought provoking Scripture based questions, enlightening Church teachings and moving testimonies.

Sound interesting? You can order your copies today by clicking [here](#).



Topic: Serve Others

Verses: Mark 10:45 and Galatians 6:10

Reflection on the Wisdom of the Church

Jesus said there are no other commandments greater than these two: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength,” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30–31). Loving and serving others is the primary way we express that we whole-heartedly love God.

We are called the *Body* of Christ because it is through our physical beings that Jesus intends to encounter the peoples of the world. Our serving of others is simply his actions through us, and contrariwise, when we fail to serve others we limit his actions through us. Pope Saint John Paul II points out that “Each Christian’s words and life must make this proclamation resound: God loves you, Christ came for you, Christ is for you ‘the Way, the Truth and the Life!’ (John 14:6)¹ This is what serving others is all about.”

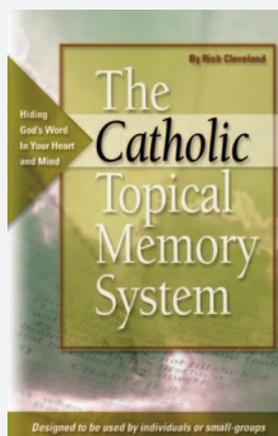
Of course, Jesus was the consummate servant, for as our memory verse points out, he came “not to be served but to serve.” Consequently, the Christian in whom Jesus dwells, who is self-seeking and who is averse to serving others, contradicts the very name he carries: *Christian*. The Holy Trinity was so concerned that we recognize and pursue the opportunity to serve one another that the Father and Son sent us the indwelling Holy Spirit. He uniquely gifts us with the skills beyond our natural talents so that collectively, our abilities and gifts perfectly match the serving opportunities we encounter.

We are to serve everyone, but as Galatians 6:10 and the following quote point out we are to pay special attention to serving our fellow Christians:

“Hence we are to work, and we are to work good and to work it all so that there is no partiality toward persons. We are to do nothing except do good and good to all. ... However, he [St. Paul] makes the distinction that the good that we work on behalf of all is to be worked most of all on behalf of the household of faith, that is, those who have come to believe and trust in Christ and God.”²

1. *The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People*, by Pope St. John Paul II, 34

2. Marius Victorinus commentary on the Epistles to the Galatians, in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, Vol. VIII



Questions for Meditation

Mark 10:45

(For context read Mark 10:35–45)

- In what ways did Jesus serve people?
- What are some specific ways you can follow Jesus’ example as a servant?

Galatians 6:10

(For context read Galatians 5:22–6:10)

- What do you think the writer of Galatians means by verse 5:25?
- How is being an un-serving person a contradiction to living in the Spirit?
- What should determine when we serve others?
- Why do you think this passage underscores the special importance of serving fellow Christians?

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Serve Others! Why?

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“Why are we to do this so wholeheartedly? Because we are not just serving another person, rather this is the way we are loving God, the way we are expressing affection to and for the Almighty.”

so well, so naturally, while I do it so poorly, in my estimation. But self-flagellation about not serving well, doesn't enable us to serve better, but simply distracts us from the foundational purpose for which we are called. This morning I read Romans 12 in my devotions wherein St. Paul explains that we all should present ourselves, in our totality, to God as a “living sacrifice” that is good and acceptable to God. St. Paul then immediately explains that we all differ significantly in terms of who we are, and in the gifts which we have been given. I think there are two major take-aways for me in this chapter. First is that St. Paul on one hand talks about giving ourselves to God as a living, good, acceptable sacrifice; and on the other hand, talks about using our gifts to serve others. The point being; **we cannot present ourselves to God and simultaneously withhold ourselves from others.**

The second is that God fashioned us, fashioned me, fashioned you, with the temperament, characteristics, and gifts he desired to see in a particular person, and he creatively made us to differ. To bemoan or desire to be different, so that we could serve differently, in one way is to despise or think less respectfully, less appreciably, of God's creative design. St. Paul's point for us is that God wants us by faith to accept ourselves; both our created design, and his re-created design for us “in Christ Jesus.” Additionally, he desires us to give who we are to him, as a gift of ourselves, to fulfill his purpose for us; living for him, loving others *as we love him*, serving him. It is interesting in Romans 12 to see the superlative words and phrases St. Paul used to explain how God

wants us to function, terms like: “as much as our faith tells us,... devote ourselves,... generously,... conscientiously,... because you enjoy doing,... without pretense,... letting deep feelings come to expression,... consider others more importantly,... work not halfheartedly,... work with an eager spirit,... with joy,... perseverance,... praying,... sharing,... looking for opportunities.”¹ All these expressions simply communicate; throw yourself into serving, whatever the nature of your service. Why are we to do this so wholeheartedly? Because we are not just serving another person, rather this is the way we are loving God, the way we are expressing affection to and for the Almighty.

We see this expressed in St. Paul's description of the Thessalonian church. He said that it was a broadly disseminated public fact, that these Thessalonian Christians, “**turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven...**” People knew of the Thessalonians' conversion, and were talking about it, not because they had a good publicity agent, or a significant social media presence, but because they served with such extraordinary devotion, enthusiasm, and appreciation. They knew who they served, they knew why they served, and they were committed to serve for the duration. We may need to step back and rethink who we are, who it is we are serving, what we have uniquely been given, and make a similar “turn” as did the Thessalonians; to serve a living and true God.

After thirty-five years as evangelicals, Rich Cleveland and his wife Gail became Catholic. Rich is the founder of Emmaus Journey, and he and his wife continue to serve Emmaus Journey, and live in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

1. Taken from the New Jerusalem Bible