

Episode 2: Laying the Foundation

PROJECT: ORDINATION JUSTICE

After you listen to this episode, the recommended process is to pray, discuss, then pray again. First, take the content of the episode to silent, personal prayer. Second, discuss it with others. Third, take the content of the discussion back to silent, personal prayer again. These are imagined as three different sessions. Read through the guide before you begin to get a sense of the content and flow. Take what is helpful, leave what is not. Adapt the guide and process as needed.

PRAYER SESSION I - PERSONAL PRAYER

This spiritual exercise helps you contemplate your experience of the theology of the incarnation discussed in the episode. Set aside 20 minutes for silent prayer. Find a place where you will not be disturbed. Close your eyes, slow down your breath, and draw yourself to stillness. Place yourself in the presence of God. Once connected to God, offer gratitude for whatever you feel moved to share. This can be a simple, "Thank you for my life." After you have thanked God, ask God for guidance. Perhaps use Psalm 32:8: "I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you." Then, continue with the exercise below. Spend more time listening to God than speaking.

1. Recall a time you experienced communion—a feeling of oneness—with God. If this is difficult to identify, call to mind a gratifying experience of using a God-given gift (for example, singing, math, cooking, fixing things, playing a sport, comforting the sick, etc.)
2. Choose one experience. Use your five senses to bring this experience fully alive in the present moment. Sit with it for a few minutes and observe your experience. What do you notice? What emotions do you feel? What physical sensations?
3. Dialogue with God:
 - Share what you notice with God. Allow God time to respond.
 - Ask God, "What do you see in this experience?" Allow God the opportunity to respond.
 - Ask God, "How does this experience make you feel?" Allow God the opportunity to respond.
 - Is there anything else you want to ask or share with God?

When you complete the spiritual exercise, sit silently and allow God a final opportunity to be with you. When ready, close your prayer session with gratitude. Thank God for the gift of relationship and for your God-given gifts. Ask for the grace to more freely allow God to incarnate through you as God desires. Perhaps end with a favorite prayer, piece of scripture, or song.

NOTE: If you prefer to do a general reflection on the content of the episode and what it brought up for you, you can follow the opening instructions and then ask the question, "What struck me in the episode and why?" Allow your answers to surface and then bring each before God. Allow God the opportunity to respond. Use the closing instructions above to end your prayer session.

DISCUSSION/FAITH SHARING

You can host a formal gathering or have a conversation with a friend. Allot 45 minutes to one hour for discussion. For small group gatherings, determine from the outset whether the session will be a discussion or faith sharing. If you choose faith sharing, there is no crosstalk or commenting on what people share to reduce fear of criticism and promote deep sharing. Begin with an opening prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your time together. Pray for any graces you desire, such as wisdom, humility, freedom, and/or connection with one another. Share on the following questions:

1. What struck you in Episode 2 and why? Is there anything you want to share from your experience praying the spiritual exercise above?
2. How do you see the relationship between Church tradition and studying the ordination of women as priests? (e.g. fidelity to tradition, a betrayal of tradition, etc.) Elaborate.
3. How do you understand vocation? What are your thoughts on vocation as a pathway for God's incarnational self-expression and the opportunity to experience communion with God?
4. What are your thoughts on re-phrasing the question from "Can the Church ordain women?" to "Is God calling women to ordained ministries?"
5. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Offer a closing prayer. Give thanks to God for any gifts you experienced in your time together. Perhaps open up the prayer time to allow others the opportunity to offer a petition or thanksgiving to God. Finish with a favorite prayer or piece of scripture. For small groups, set a plan for the next meeting.

PRAYER SESSION II

Set aside 20 minutes for silent, personal prayer. Find a place where you will not be disturbed. Bring the content of the discussion/faith sharing session back into your prayer. Use the instruction from Prayer Session I to open your prayer session (above).

1. What struck you—positively or negatively—in the sharing? Why?
2. Bring each instance before God and ask, “What do you want me to see or understand about this?” Allow God the opportunity to teach and minister to you. Let any graces you receive deepen.
3. Identify any new insights you received with God. Allow God the opportunity to respond.

Before you close your prayer, sit silently and allow God a final opportunity to be with you. Thank God for teaching you, and thank God for any graces you received. Close your prayer session with a favorite prayer, piece of scripture or song.