



WAY OF LIFE



Loving Father, may we become teachable disciples who learn from you with open hearts, pray and live with loving, watchful attention, and who intentionally go to proclaim the Gospel to our family, friends and localities in the power of the Holy Spirit.

All for your glory, in Jesus name.

Amen



Welcome to theASCENT Way of Life

Our hope is that this Way of Life will ensure “the strong have something to yearn for and the weak have nothing to run from” (RB 64). May the following allow you to “ascend the hill of the Lord with clean hands and pure hearts” (Ps 24:3-4).

As team members of theASCENT we aspire to the following Way of Life. Where an element remains vague or exceptions need to be made, it is our own responsibility to discuss it with our team pastor or spiritual director.

We don't want you to see this Way of Life as either unrealistic or unachievable. Whilst we have a high expectation of holiness - we recognise that we also need to have an equally high threshold of compassion and grace. So, don't see these as rigid 'rules', but rather the framework for a way of life. Jesus spoke of wanting his followers to live life to the full - these commitments are a way of helping you live that life. Following Jesus faithfully will mean having integrity and accountability.



Our Values

The flavour of how we lead

Teachability

Enables us to learn...

"Take my yoke upon you and
learn from me."
Mt 11:29

Watchfulness

Provokes us to pray...

"Watch and pray so that you
will not fall into temptation."
Mt 26:41

Intentionality

Leads us to go...

"Therefore go and make
disciples of all nations"
Mt 28:19

These three values are clearly demonstrated through the 123 model of discipleship. We commit ourselves to:

Teachability: through our own spiritual direction every 6-10 weeks

Watchfulness: through our weekly fellowship and accountability with two other Christians

Intentionality: through mentoring and praying for our three mentees once a month during a PoD session

Jesus calls us to “take my yoke upon you and learn from me” Mt 11:29. In order to remain teachable, I commit to the following:

Openness to personal transformation and being continually filled with the Holy Spirit

“Indeed you love truth in the heart; then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.” Ps 51:6

Continual formation and commitment to growth as a disciple

“Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity” Heb 6:1

Always being open to what the Holy Spirit is teaching me through life and others

“The Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things.” Jn 14:26

Visibly learning alongside the participants e.g. taking notes in sessions, asking more questions than giving answers, sitting amongst the participants and not at the back etc.

“Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” Mark 10:15

Taking a yearly personal retreat time (to be discerned with my spiritual director)

And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. Mk 6:31

Jesus calls us to "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation" Mt 26:41. In order to be watchful, I commit to the following:

Aiming for at least 30 minutes of personal prayer a day, ideally in one sitting.

"And when you pray...go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Mt 6:5-6

Holding the prayerful reading of the Scriptures in high esteem.

"Lectio Divina, if it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church – I am convinced of it – a new spiritual springtime."
Pope Benedict XVI

Fulfilling my Sunday Mass obligation and honouring the Sabbath rest.

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" Exodus 20:8

Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation monthly.

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Jms 5:16

Interceding for the ASCENT and my mentees (if applicable) on a weekly basis.

"I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest." Is 62:6

Fasting once a week for the mission of the ASCENT (to be discerned with my spiritual director).

“When you fast...” Mt 6:16;

“For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.” Neh 1:4

Upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church in regards to sexuality and relationships (including chastity, LGBTQ+ ideology and birth control).

“The human body includes right from the beginning...the capacity of expressing love, that love in which the person becomes a gift – and by means of this gift – fulfils the meaning of his being and existence.” Saint John Paul II

Upholding a lifestyle of balance and moderation in regards to alcohol, dress, speech, media and social media.

“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand...whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Phil 4:4-8.

“Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Pt 5:8).



Jesus calls us to “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations” Mt 28:19. In order to be intentional, I commit to the following:

Pursuing the grace of being continually baptised in the Holy Spirit; and seeking to grow in the charismatic gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.” 1 Cor 14:1

Sharing the Gospel and my testimony when prompted by the Holy Spirit

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.” 2 Tim 1:8

Being a voice of encouragement to the participants and fellow team members.

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” Eph 4:29

Always being welcoming, hospitable and inclusive, making every effort to make the participants feel known (e.g. remembering names & birthdays, taking an interest in the small aspects of their lives, looking out for those on the margins etc).

“Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” Rom 15:7

Pursuing excellence in a spirit of service.

"Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ" (Col 3:23-24)

Being an advocate for justice, upholding the dignity of every human person and other principles of Catholic social teaching.

"The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it: "Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design." (CCC 1935)

"What does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

Investing in my local parish (or other local context).

"God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them." Heb 6:10

Tithing until it demands something of me (to be discerned with my spiritual director).

"When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Mt 6:3

I commit to the following essential elements of service during my time with theASCENT:

- Accountability to the Leadership structures which enable the process to thrive;
- Three years of service if attached to a cohort;
- Be fully present on all theASCENT weekends during the year
- PoD on a weekly basis during term time @1930 on a Monday (Discipleship Team)
- Attendance at the yearly team training weekend
- Attendance at my monthly location meeting @1930 on a Monday (Discipleship and wider teams)
- Engagement with monthly team formation resources

We encourage you to see these commitments as an opportunity to walk more closely with Jesus; to cling more closely to Scripture and the Church; and to grow into authentic disciples and leaders. When you struggle (as we all do) to keep to your commitments, bring your worries to one of the leadership team - who will always try and meet you with grace and understanding. And bring your fears and failures to Jesus (especially in the context of confession), who will allow you to rest in him, with no shame - allow him to minister his grace to you. Grace does not excuse us from doing what's right, but it does allow us to see how we can only achieve holiness with Jesus at work within.

Doing Accountability Well

Living life as a Christian can be challenging, we can all vouch for this. However, Jesus didn't intend for us to try and do it alone, he created us to live out our faith together with other Christians. Jesus sent His disciples out in two's, why? Well we can imagine that this was to support and encourage each other and provide gentle challenge when the other wasn't quite living the way Jesus had instructed.

St Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians 'Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.'

This is what accountability is all about! It's about intentionally choosing someone to have regular conversations with about how living out your faith is going. Not pretending we are perfect Christians but being real and honest with each other. Sharing ourselves openly and allowing the other to correct us when perhaps we aren't quite living as Jesus did.

This can be scary at first but the more we do it the easier it becomes, and many find their ability to be open and honest with God becomes easier too. It is a beautiful and powerful tool to help us become more like Jesus, being supported by friends who desire this too.

Each month you will have the opportunity to connect with a couple of other ascent team members of the same sex whom you can be accountable with. Inviting the help of the Holy Spirit, use the learning circle on the following page to enable you to reflect on your life of discipleship.

The Learning Circle

Before the meeting...

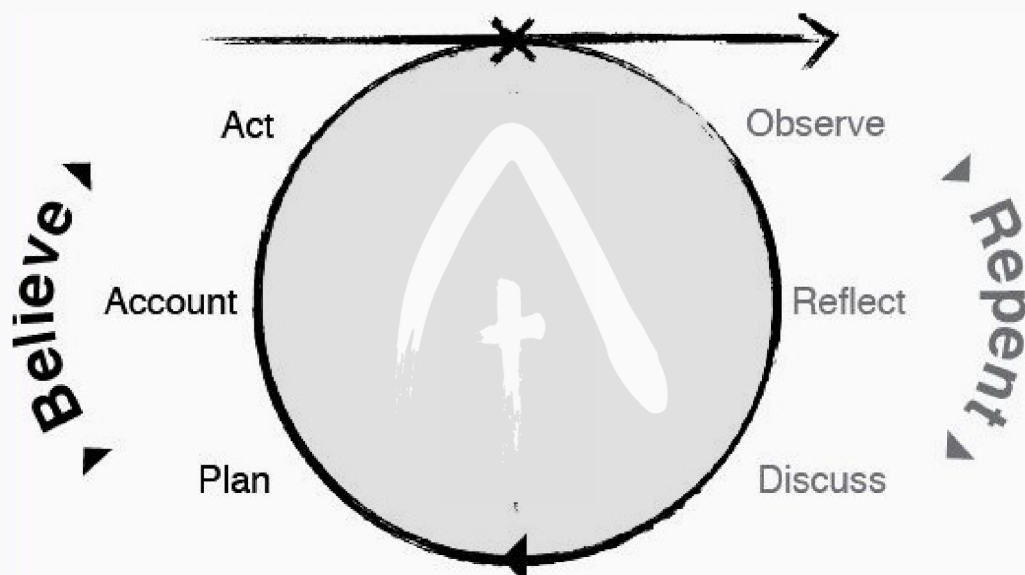
- **Observe** a couple of areas where you are winning and losing in regards to the Way of Life in the last month.
- **Reflect** on why you are winning and losing in these areas.
- **Discuss** this with your own mentor/Spiritual Director.
- **Plan** some specific actions that you can be held accountable to.

During the meeting...

- Share the stages above and then become **accountable** to your brothers/sisters in Christ through prayer, support and challenge.

After the meeting...

- **Act** on what you have said.



NOTES



NOTES





**Saint John Paul II, pray for us.
Our Lady Gate of Heaven, pray for us.**

“In response to their enthusiasm, I do not hesitate to ask young people to make a radical choice of faith and life and present them with a stupendous task: to become "morning watchmen" (cf. Is 21:11-12) at the dawn of the new millennium”

(Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 9).



Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,
who do not lift up their souls to what is false,
and do not swear deceitfully.

They will receive blessing from the Lord,
and vindication from the God of their salvation.
Such is the company of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Psalm 24: 3-6



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