



Dear Friends,

**Where there is faith, miracles happen** – I so love the thought of a miracle about to happen!

Last week I attended a workshop; “Encountering Jesus”, presented by Father Anthony Gittins CSSp. It was fantastic. Tony Gittins is the Professor of Mission and Culture at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. He is also a prolific writer who has for years been teaching and reflecting on the Spirituality of Discipleship.

These are the key ideas that have stayed with me:

- Discipleship is for humans with all our weaknesses and failings, not angels. It is for those who decide they want to make a choice and follow Jesus.

Yes, you and I, with all our faults, inconsistencies and ego are the ones who have been called. We can pretend we didn't hear the call, or we can ignore it and hope it will go away. But if you are reading this you are probably thinking about how you can move towards a closer relationship with God and be a better person. These were the guidelines for the decisions we make to become a disciple; a criteria for discipleship.

- To live you must choose to love
- To love you must choose to encounter
- To grow you must suffer

I happened to ask about how we maintain the energy and enthusiasm for this way of life. His answer; “keep loving and become a member of a faith sharing group.” The old adage – to keep it you have to give it away, was his advice. That would be a great adventure for many of us to join a small faith group.

Tony led us through a close study of examples of discipleship in the Gospels. Give it a go. Go to Mark, read it slowly, it usually takes about an hour and forty minutes to read it from start to finish. Use this idea with your RE class. Perhaps the three criteria for discipleship could be a way of discussing the scripture with students. Spend sometime yourself looking at the way Jesus ‘encounters’ the people of the New Testament. This was a delight to ponder.

There was so much food for thought but one insight really touched me. **Where there is faith, miracles happen.** As we read closely, and listen carefully to the scripture we heard how it was faith that was needed for a miracle to occur.

It started me thinking about those people who describe miracles in their lives and yes faith seems to be the common prerequisite. I really love the idea that a miracle is about to happen, I just have to keep believing that's about to happen.

Talking of Christian Discipleship please keep an eye out for this exciting National E- Conference for The Year of St Paul. In collaboration with the Australian Catholic Bishop Conference and The Broken Bay Institute this conference on St Paul with input from **Brendan Byrne sj, Michele Connolly rsj** and **Richard Leonard sj** will be webcast live across Australia for free.

Please go to the 'What's On' section for more details. Don't miss out- you'll have a great time.

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