

Discernment Prayer Walk - My Journey

Follow this walk as an act of prayer and discerning together with God.

The questions are there for guidance, but there is nothing stopping you from reflecting on other questions that are more important to you at this moment, or asking God the questions that you feel you need answering.

Start by reading this prayer by Thomas Merton:

*O Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going,
I do not see the road ahead of me,
I cannot know for certain where it will end.*

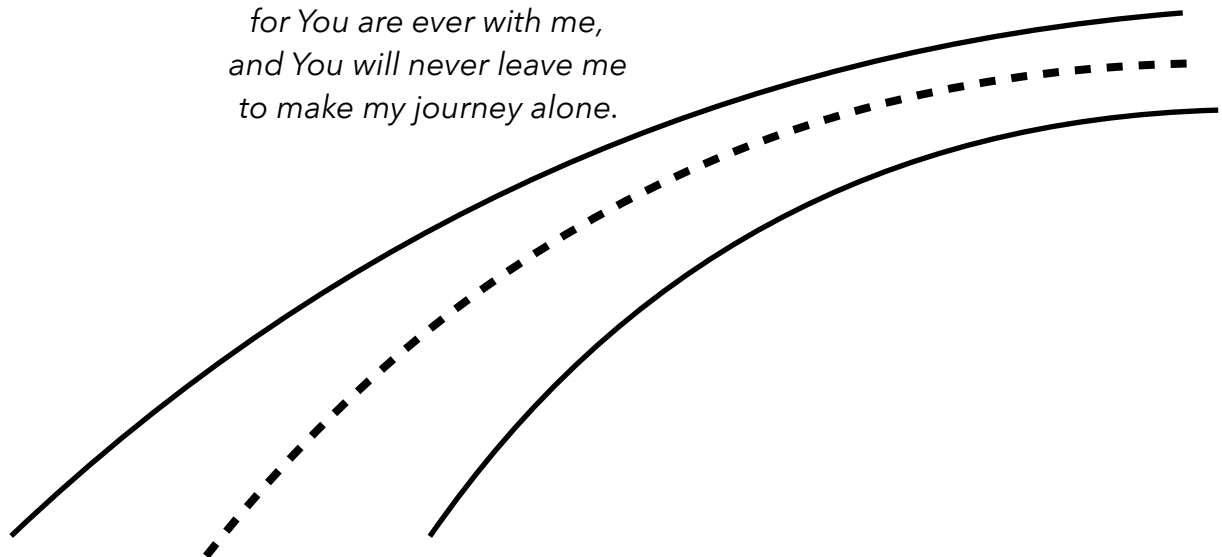
*Nor do I really know myself,
and that fact that I think
I am following Your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.*

*But I believe
that the desire to please You
does in fact please You.
And I hope I have that desire
in all that I am doing.*

*I hope that I will never do anything
apart from that desire to please You.
And I know that if I do this
You will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.*

*Therefore I will trust You always
though I may seem to be lost
and in the shadow of death.*

*I will not fear,
for You are ever with me,
and You will never leave me
to make my journey alone.*



THE JOURNEY:

Before you begin your walk, start by revisiting the 3rd and 4th stanza, and reflect on: Is your desire to please God in your life and ministry journey?

Spend a moment reflecting on this thought and when you feel that you are ready, start to walk down your chosen road or path. Choose one or two characteristics of God that are important to you on your journey, and repeat these in your mind or under your breath in time with your steps, for example, God is shepherd, God is love and so on.

When you've walked down a path

When you get to the end of the path, stop and look back at the path you've just walked, and use this view to reflect on your past.

- How have you tried to follow God's will in your journey so far?
- Is there times in your past when God has led you down the right road without your understanding it at the time?
- Think of two or three things that you are particularly grateful to God for from your journey so far, and repeat these in thanksgiving as you continue to walk.

When you get to a turn in a path

When you get to a turn coming off you path, return to the opening stanza of Merton's prayer. Here, in this place, you cannot see where the path is leading, anything can await you past this turn. Dialogue with God about your fears of the path you are on in your life:

- Do you know where you're heading? Are you concerned about what might happen? Where do you think this fear is coming from?
- Still your heart to hear God's voice and ask him specific questions, for example, what do you want to achieve in the next phase of my life and ministry?

Find a place to sit

Find somewhere to sit down and revisit the second stanza of Merton's poem.

- Do you feel like you know yourself? Ask God to reveal one or two things about how he made you, the way he has equipped you for where you are.

When you get to a dark and shady place

Stop in the shade of a tree or other large thing. Spend a moment thinking about the 'shadow of death' in the prayer, the darkness we sometimes find ourselves in.

If your journey has been traversing the valley of the shadow of death already, then spend some time reflecting on what this had taught you and who God revealed himself to be in that place.

If your journey has been full of light and joy so far, reflect on your preparedness for darker times.

- Who have you experienced God to be so far, and how do you think this will help you if your encounter difficulties? Ask God to reveal who he is as we walk in darkness.

Walking home

- Can you pray the last stanza of Merton's prayer as you walk back?
- What difference does it make to you that you are not walking alone?