



Awakening *Initial Conversion*

Opening Prayer

Late have I loved you, Beauty so ancient and so new, late have I loved you!

Lo, you were within, but I outside, seeking there for you,

and upon the shapely things you have made

I rushed headlong – I, misshapen.

You were with me, but I was not with you.

They held me back far from you, those things which would have no being, were they not in you.

You called, shouted, broke through my deafness;

you flared, blazed, banished my blindness;

you lavished your fragrance, I gasped; and now I pant for you;

I tasted you, and now I hunger and thirst;

you touched me, and I burned for your peace.

St. Augustine, *The Confessions*

2nd Reading, Office of Readings, Feast of St. Augustine

The Heart of the Christian Faith

“The Christian faith is, above all, *conversion to Jesus Christ*, full and sincere adherence to his person and the decision to walk in his footsteps. Faith is a *personal encounter with Jesus Christ making of oneself a disciple of him*. This demands a permanent commitment to think like him, to judge like him and to live as he lived.”

General Directory for Catechesis (1997), 53

Initial Conversion

“*Conversion*. This first moment of interest in the Gospel requires a period of searching to be **transformed into a firm option**. The option for faith must be a considered and mature one. Such searching, guided by the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of the *Kerygma*, prepares the way for **conversion** which is certainly ‘**initial**’, but brings with it adherence to Christ and the will to walk in his footsteps.

General Directory for Catechesis (1997), 56

KEY POINTS for Today

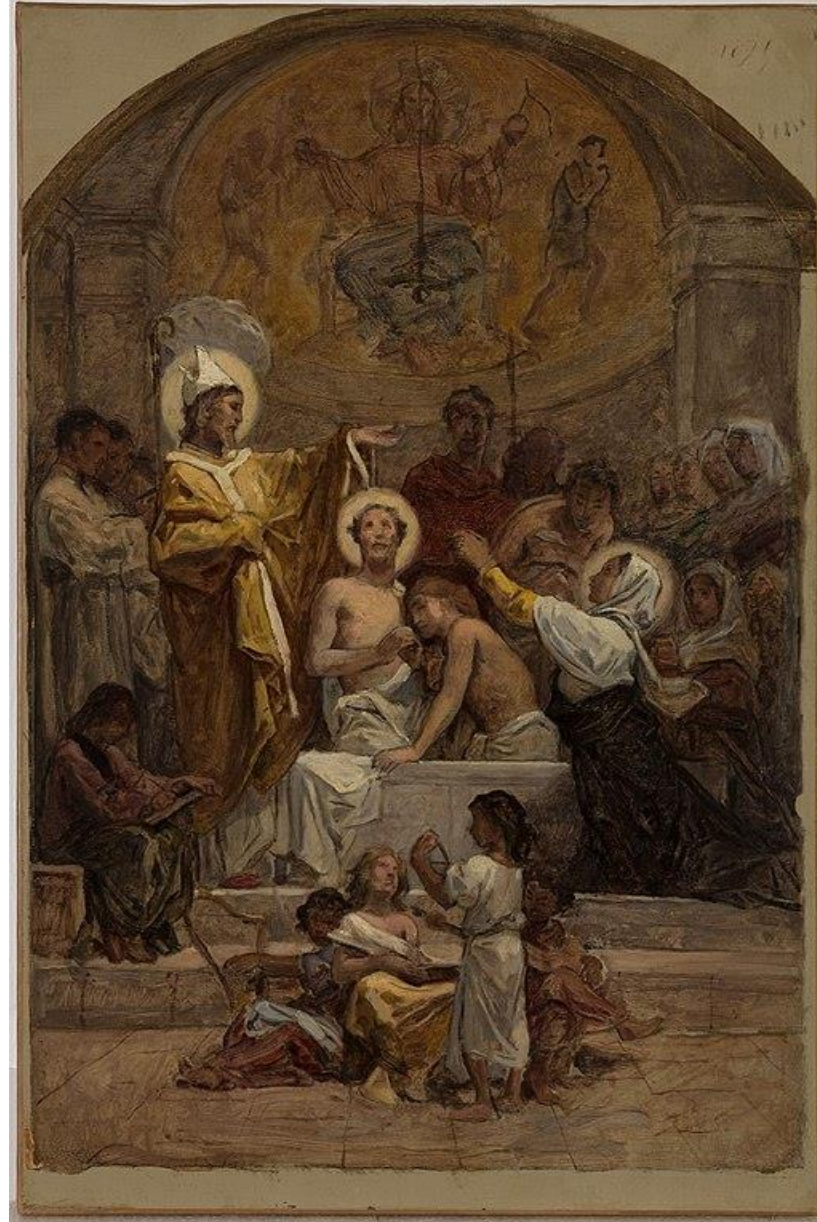
To search for, to encounter, and to follow Jesus

1. To Search

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Do Baptised and Confirmed Catholics Need to Search as Well?

- John 6:66-69 (Jesus and religious freedom)
 - Mark 10:17-22 (The Rich Young Man)
- Matt 13:45-46 (Parable of the Merchant & the Pearl of Great Price)

1. To Search



1. To Search

What are you looking for?

2. To Encounter

2. To Encounter

“Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the **encounter with an event, a person** [Jesus Christ], which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”

Deus Caritas Est, “God is Love” (2005), 1

2. To Encounter

It is Different for Everyone
– But Leading to the Same Lord

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It is Different for Everyone
– But Leading to the Same Lord

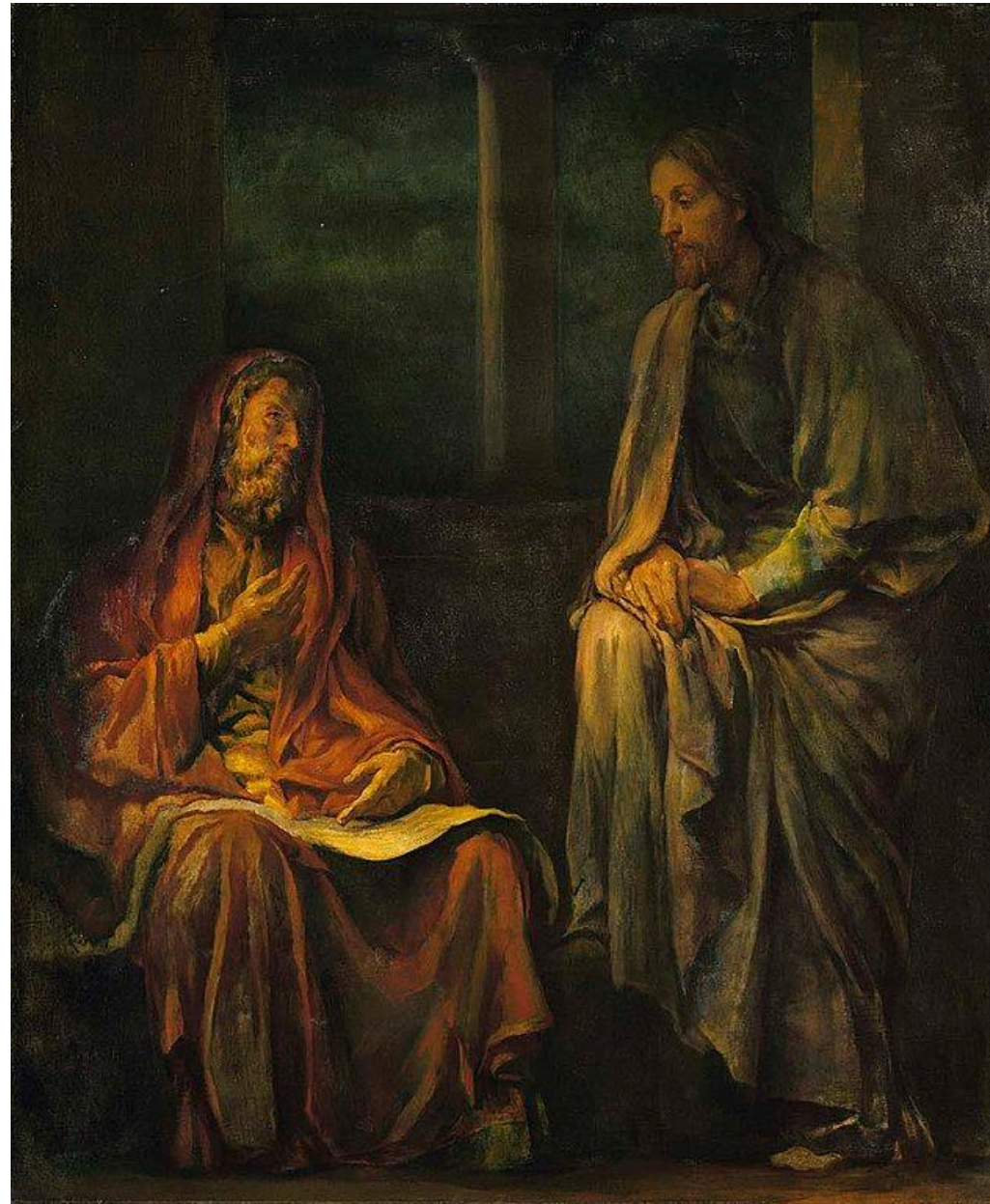
Dramatic and Singular Encounters with Jesus

2. To Encounter

It is Different for Everyone
– But Leading to the Same Lord

Gentle and Gradual Encounters with Jesus over Time

2. To Encounter



2. To Encounter

The Important Role of Philosophy, Theology and Accompaniment

2. To Encounter

“... fundamental theology should demonstrate the profound compatibility that exists between faith and its need to find expression by way of *human reason fully free to give its assent*. Faith will thus be able ‘to show fully the path to reason in a sincere search for the truth. Although faith, a gift of God, is not based on reason, *it can certainly not dispense with it*. At the same time, it becomes apparent that *reason needs to be reinforced by faith*, in order to discover horizons it cannot reach on its own’.”

Fides Et Ratio, “On the Relationship between Faith and Reason”
(1998), 67.

2. To Encounter



2. To Encounter

Process of Searching and Encountering Christ requires
Accompaniment by older or maturing Catholics

- Invite
- Inspire
- Illuminate

2. To Encounter

A Work of Grace, and Grace-Driven Work

- Comforting
- Compelling

3. To Follow

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“This first moment of interest in the Gospel requires a period of searching to be *transformed into a firm option*. The option for faith must be a *considered and mature one*... [Initial conversion] brings with it *adherence to Christ* and the *will to walk in his footsteps*.”

General Directory for Catechesis (1997), 56

3. To Follow

Herod

- wanted the *signs*, but not the *sonship*
(Luke 23:6-15)

VS

Zacchaeus

- lived out the *metanoia* / conversion
(Luke 19:1-10)

Conclusion

Initial Conversion (Awakening)

The beginning of *intentional discipleship*

To *search*, to *encounter* and to *follow* Jesus

Needs to be constantly *renewed* and *deepened*

To *begin*, *renew* or *help others* in this essential
process of initial conversion

Closing Prayer

“You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You”.

Lord God, renew your Church with the Spirit of wisdom and love which you gave so fully to Saint Augustine. Lead us by that same Spirit to seek you, the only fountain of true wisdom and the source of everlasting love. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Taken from the 2nd Reading, Office of Readings,
Feast of St. Augustine.