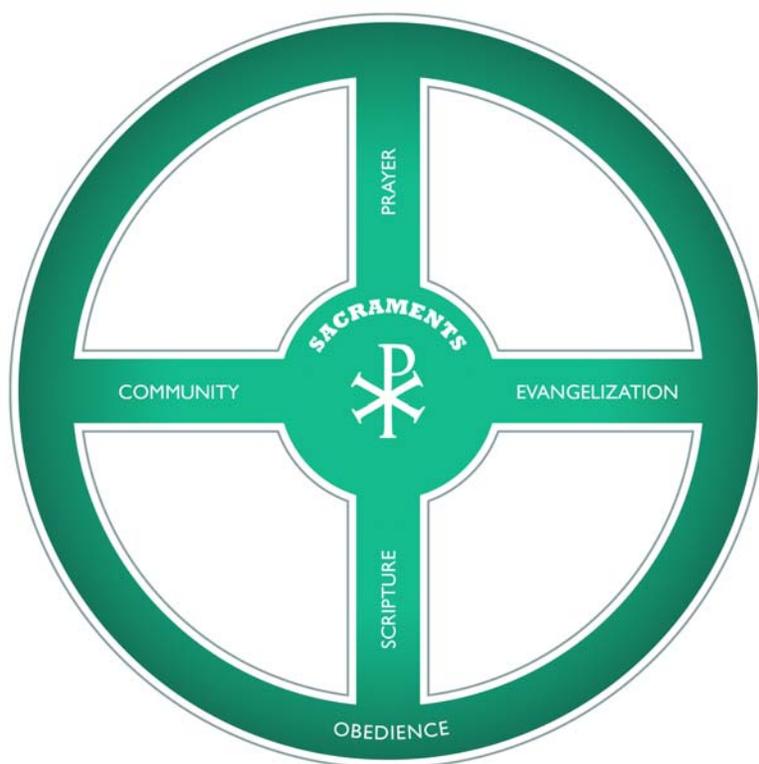# The Discipleship Wheel

The Heart and Habits of a Disciple

Adapted by the Evangelical Catholic from "The Wheel Illustration," Rich Cleveland, *The Catholic Topical Memory System* (Albuquerque: Emmaus Journey, Inc, 2013, second printing) 17. Print.

This illustration shows, in a simple way, the basic elements of a life in Christ. If you incorporate each of them into your life of discipleship, your spiritual "wheel" will keep moving you closer to him.

If we look closely, the wheel actually looks like a monstrance, which is, in a sense, what we become when we live out radiant lives of intentional discipleship. We become transparent; Jesus is held up in and through us for the world to see.

The Center

The Hub: Christ the Center

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Christ is the center of all reality, but we must let him become the center of our lives. When we do, our heart finds peace.

Once he has the central position, Jesus sets you on your own journey of becoming like him. You put more and more trust in God, that his ways are the best for you and that he will provide everything you need to live as he wants you to live. You believe this is the only way to happiness.

Inner Rim: Sacramental Life

"So those who received his word were baptized... And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2: 41a-42)

The sacramental life draws us ever more deeply into the life of Christ through his Body, the Church. If the Church is the Body of Christ, the sacraments most effectively carry the blood to the members. Thus the sacramental life is drawn in a circle around Christ, the center of our life.

When we approach the sacraments with open and prayerful hearts, we give glory to God and receive the specific gift of that particular sacrament: in Mass, we partake in the body and blood of Jesus; in Reconciliation, on-going conversion through the recognition and forgiveness for our sins. The seven sacraments of the Church are Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders.

Vertical Axis

This axis represents our direct relationship with Jesus and the Father in the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

"Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

Prayer is simply talking with and listening to God as we would a close friend. In prayer, we meet God and experience his love. As followers of Jesus, we pray communally as in our Eucharistic liturgy, but also privately, in our inner room.

Daily personal conversational prayer is essential to fostering our relationship with Jesus. The acronym A.C.T.S is helpful for structuring an interior prayer time: Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, Supplication. See the document "ACTS: A Way to Pray Every Day" for more information.

Growing in personal prayer helps us to open our hearts more to benefit from the sacramental grace we receive, especially every time we partake of the Eucharist or the sacrament of reconciliation.

Scripture

"Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)

God communicates with us in many ways, but primarily through the Scriptures and the Church. When we read and meditate on his Word, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we get to know him more and become closer to him. The teachings of the Church help guide us as we grow in this knowledge and assist us to live as Christ taught.

Horizontal Axis

This axis represents our relationships with other people as members of Christ's body.

Community

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20)

The Holy Spirit binds followers of Jesus together in love. Jesus did not intend for us to live what he asks of us all on our own. We need one another for support, encouragement, and accountability. Fostering relationships with others who also made Christ the center of their lives makes possible growth and perseverance in following Jesus. Participation in a small Christian community, Bible study, or prayer group at your church are ways to do this.

Evangelization

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16)

Evangelization is sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others. The Church exists to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. When we follow Jesus, we want to share

with others the joy, peace, and love we have found in him. It is the natural overflow of his life in us.

We witness to the goodness and power of the Gospel by what we say, how we live, and how we love others, especially other Christians (*cf.* John 13:34-35). This three-part formula is known as the witness of word, life, and community.

Outer Rim: Obedience to Christ and His Church

"'He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.'" (John 14:21)

Obedience, or living out our relationship with Christ in our attitudes and actions, keeps the Discipleship Wheel all together and mobilizes us for mission. God gives us the Scriptures, the Church, and the Holy Spirit to help us know how best to follow him.

It is not always easy to live in obedience to the commandments, but God promises to enable us to do all things through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit (*cf.* John 14:25, Philippians 4:13). If you obey him even when it is difficult, he will work it out for your good, as the Scriptures promise (*cf.* Romans 8:28). Everything God has asked of us is for one purpose: that our joy may be complete in loving him and in loving one another as Christ loves us.