

Beloved Disciple

Devotional

III. **THE SIGNS**



WHY SIGNS?

This week's devotional is meant to connect us with the idea that God is always speaking everywhere. He speaks in nature (Psalm 19), in events (e.g. the cross), in books (e.g. Bible), in dreams (e.g. Joseph, Peter), conversations (e.g. Emmaus Road Travelers), prophetic words (1 Corinthians 12). There is NOTHING that God cannot speak through! Even Silence is the Voice of God (e.g. Elijah at the Cave). God's word literally holds the entire cosmos together (Colossians 1:15-17).

The problem is not with God speaking, but with our listening. We don't know how to listen, how to discern and interpret the signs that lead us to his Voice. Our Lectio Divina this week will make us sensitive to the signs, recognizers of the Voice that speaks from the Shepherd to his sheep (John 10).

Bethlehem Star was placed in the sky for all humanity to know that The Earth's King had been born. But only the Magi studied it, recognized it, followed it. And their wisdom meant they were the only ones who were fully prepared for a life of worship.

Ultimately signs are meant to fill our life with worship, wonder, and serendipity.



S I G N S



the good, the bad, and the ugly

John 2:11-25

Imagine: Read the above Scripture slowly (3x's). In the **first reading** notice the language witness and the activity that it involves. **After the third reading** note the word(s) that stick(s) out to you.

Feel: Pray and express your feelings to God about the words that stuck out to you. This can include your desires, confessions, questions, gratitudes, or any resistance you have.

Think: Why do you think the Spirit highlighted those words to you? Where else in Scripture or your life have those words/themes come up? What message might God be conveying to you?

Be Still: Sit silently for 5 minutes. Just be in God's presence. Focus your attention on the Presence of God that accompanies the words of the Scripture; that is with you and in you. Be at peace with the Holy Spirit.

Act: What one action will you take today in response to this word?

- Notice the **three** mentions of signs.
- vs 11, 18, 23 what are their different functions? And how do different people see them differently?
- Do you see signs of God's glory in your life?
- Or, seek God to prove himself with signs?
- Or, follow the opinions of others and their view of signs?

Let who will scoff and revile - I will not remain silent; neither will I conceal the signs and wonders which have been shown to me by the Lord, who knew all things even before the time of this world, many years before, just as they happened.

-Saint Patrick



HOW TO DISCERN

Discernment is the spiritual gift God gives us for interpreting signs. We develop this gift into a skill through stewarding the gift and learning from Scripture. Joseph was skilled in interpreting dreams and signs and because of this he spared the world from famine. Noah discerned the sign of a dove as it was time to leave the Ark. Paul's missionary journeys were directed by a constant discernment in spiritual signs and phenomenon.

1. Prayer. Always ask God what the riddles, puzzles, and signs mean.
2. Listen. After praying journal your questions and come back to them. God will answer, but we frequently forget what we prayed.
3. Lectio Divina. Let Scripture guide your thought-flow. Compare what you are seeing and hearing to what Scriptures say.
4. Community. Talk with your community-pastors, brothers and sisters, spiritual friends-in sharing what you are experiencing there is a voice of communal wisdom wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, he is present.
5. Ask, "What of God is being revealed in this book, event, conversation or experience?"



A SECOND SIGN



John 4:46-54

Imagine: Read the above Scripture slowly (3x's). In the **first reading** notice the language of signs and what they point to. **After the third reading** note the word(s) that stick(s) out to you.

Feel: Pray and express your feelings to God about the words that stuck out to you. This can include your desires, confessions, questions, gratitudes, or any resistance you have.

Think: Why do you think the Spirit highlighted those words to you? Where else in Scripture or your life have those words/themes come up? What message might God be conveying to you?

Be Still: Sit silently for 5 minutes. Just be in God's presence. Focus your attention on the Presence of God that accompanies the words of the Scripture; that is with you and in you. Be at peace with the Holy Spirit.

Act: What one action will you take today in response to this word?

- Signs are for lost people. They direct us to where we are found, a profound message. What is that message? You are God's beloved.
- Imagine how loved and heard did the dad in our story feel? What message did he come to believe in that moment?
- What is God signaling you with in your life? Where do you see the activity of the "I Am"?

God speaks to us all the time and in many ways, but it requires spiritual discernment to hear God's voice, see what God sees, and read the signs in daily life. —Henri Nouwen



SEVEN ATTITUDES FOR DISCERNMENT

1. Humility: A willingness to acknowledge our limitations and to seek guidance from others, including trusted mentors and spiritual advisors.
2. Freedom: A willingness to set aside personal preferences and biases in order to discern the will of God.
3. Trust: A willingness to trust in the goodness and guidance of God, even in the face of uncertainty or difficulty.
4. Prayerfulness: A commitment to prayer and spiritual practice as a way of seeking clarity and guidance.
5. Docility: A willingness to be open to new insights and perspectives, and to be receptive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
6. Sensitivity: A willingness to be attuned to the needs and perspectives of others, and to consider the impact of our decisions on those around us.
7. Courage: A willingness to make difficult decisions and to follow through on the guidance that we receive through discernment, even in the face of obstacles or opposition.

from Timothy Gallagher on the Ignatian Principles of discernment



S I G N S



direction in the wilderness

John 6:25-35

Imagine: Read the above Scripture slowly (3x's). In the **first reading** notice the language signs in the wilderness. **After the third reading** note the word(s) that stick(s) out to you.

Feel: Pray and express your feelings to God about the words that stuck out to you. This can include your desires, confessions, questions, gratitudes, or any resistance you have.

Think: Why do you think the Spirit highlighted those words to you? Where else in Scripture or your life have those words/themes come up? What message might God be conveying to you?

Be Still: Sit silently for 5 minutes. Just be in God's presence. Focus your attention on the Presence of God that accompanies the words of the Scripture; that is with you and in you. Be at peace with the Holy Spirit.

Act: What one action will you take today in response to this word?

- How does God show up in your wilderness?
- What signs and provisions are you witnessing in your life?

**While it is true that God
is a hidden presence, we
have only to let nature
speak to us about the
God who is everywhere.**

-Henri Nouwen



S I G N S



booming sounds and infallible proofs

John 12:27-43

Imagine: Read the above Scripture slowly (3x's). In the **first reading** notice the sign of sounds and what hinders people to commit.

After the third reading note the word(s) that stick(s) out to you.

Feel: Pray and express your feelings to God about the words that stuck out to you. This can include your desires, confessions, questions, gratitudes, or any resistance you have.

Think: Why do you think the Spirit highlighted those words to you? Where else in Scripture or your life have those words/themes come up? What message might God be conveying to you?

Be Still: Sit silently for 5 minutes. Just be in God's presence. Focus your attention on the Presence of God that accompanies the words of the Scripture; that is with you and in you. Be at peace with the Holy Spirit.

Act: What one action will you take today in response to this word?



"The real voyage of discovery
consists not in seeking new
landscapes but in having new
eyes." Marcel Proust.



The Seven Signs

In the Gospel of John, there are seven signs that Jesus performs, which are meant to reveal his divine identity and mission. These signs are:

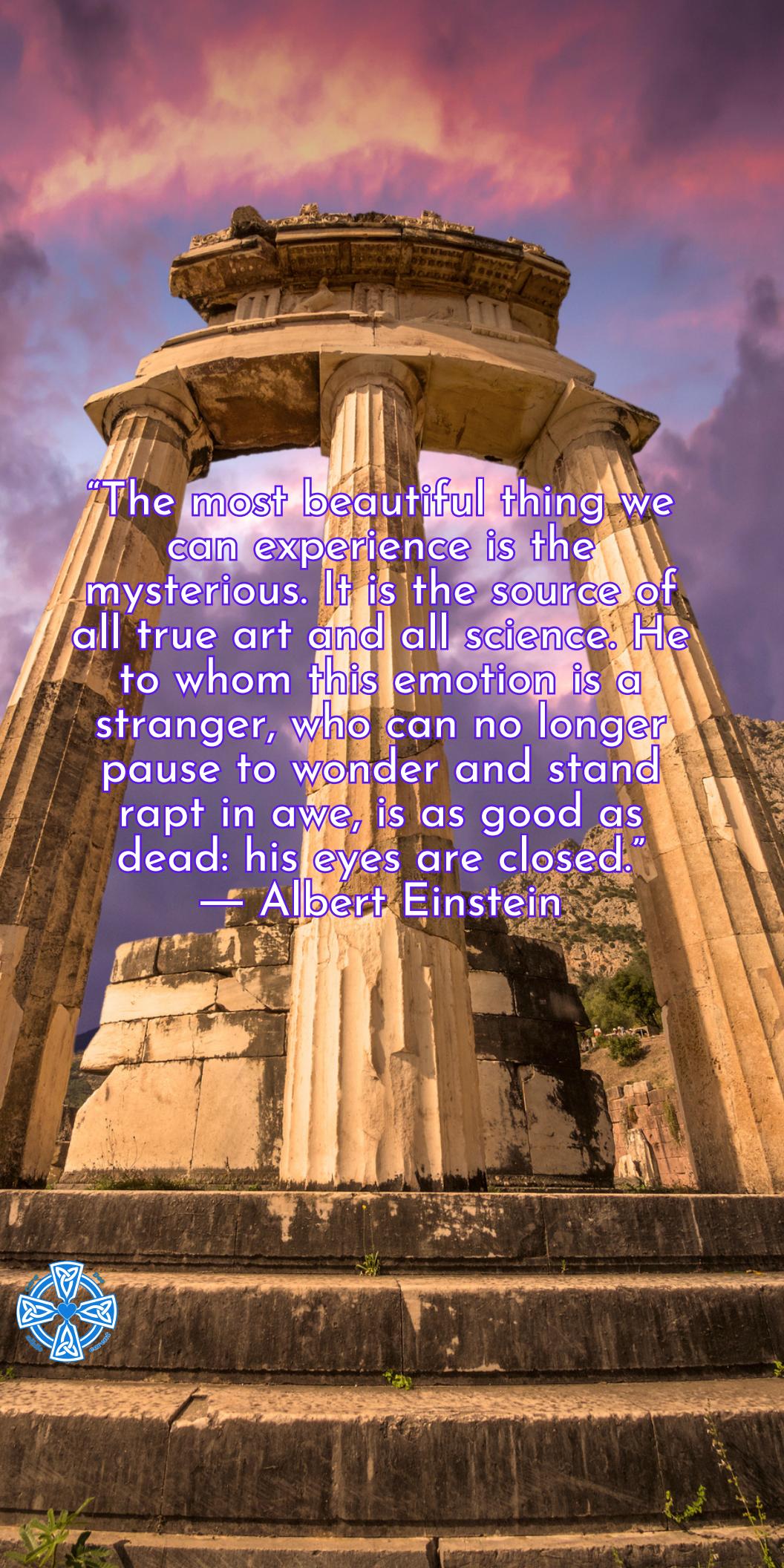
- 1. Changing water into wine at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11)**
- 2. Healing the official's son at Capernaum (John 4:46-54)**
- 3. Healing the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-15)**
- 4. Feeding the 5,000 (John 6:1-14)**
- 5. Walking on water (John 6:15-21)**
- 6. Healing the man born blind (John 9:1-41)**
- 7. Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44)**

The seven signs in the Gospel of John are significant because:

- They demonstrate Jesus completed his work and signs.
- Seven days in a week, continents on the earth, scales of notes, wonders of the world and signs that Jesus is the Son of God.
- One must recognize the seven signs if they are going to be able to "see through to the wonders of God."

Select a sign from above. Read it and ask God to reveal himself to you through his signs.

F R I D A Y



“The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed.”

— Albert Einstein



DISCERNMENT



Today pray and ask God for the gift of discernment, that keen skill of being able to discern the signs of the times, the wonders of God's voice, the message that he is signaling to you.

S A T U R D A Y

"He that has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches."--John on Patmos