

the pews of the sanctuary and surrounds the pilgrims with the light of Christ in order to move them closer to a realization of the sheer grace of God's love. When the community has withdrawn, the pilgrims enter into a time of prayer and recommitment in which they are given another opportunity to respond to the grace of Jesus Christ, who now calls them to follow and to rededicate themselves as his disciples. Following informal refreshments and fellowship, the pilgrims go to bed. Normally there is no team meeting that night.

Dying Moments and Holy Communion Service

"Dying moments" refer to specific sins, guilt, wounds, disappointments, burdens, or brokenness that we experience as points of living death in our lives. Some Weekend Spiritual Directors develop the MEANS OF GRACE talk around this theme, defining each "sacred moment" as a means by which God overcomes some form of living death at work in us and restores us to life. The Dying Moments and Holy Communion Service then flow naturally out of the MEANS OF GRACE talk. Other Weekend Spiritual Directors who do not present the MEANS OF GRACE talk through the image of dying moments develop the theme effectively during an introduction and a meditation in the Dying Moments and Holy Communion Service.

How are the Dying Moments and Holy Communion Service carried out? The Weekend Spiritual Director explains and personally illustrates dying moments in a Communion meditation and invites the pilgrims to get in touch with a part of their lives that needs to die or be released in order to make space for new life. In following an abbreviated order of service outlined in *The Walk to Emmaus Directors' Manual* and beginning on page 26 of the *Worship Booklet for Pilgrims*, the Weekend Spiritual Director invites the pilgrims to break off a piece of bread as a sign of their own brokenness as they name aloud their dying moment.

The Weekend Spiritual Director goes first, breaking off a piece of the loaf and placing it in the empty basket (located on the Communion table and, when possible, at the foot of a cross) while naming aloud his or her dying moment, using one word or short phrase. The Weekend Spiritual Director then invites the participants to come forward to do likewise and return to their seats. At this point, the Weekend Spiritual Director returns to his or her seat. Two or three team members go forward first to model how to name briefly one's dying moment.

After everyone has participated and is seated, the Weekend Spiritual Director lifts the basket before the group and continues with the Words of Pardon as printed in the *Directors' Manual*. The basket is then placed at the foot of the cross, and the Weekend Spiritual Director uncovers the second loaf and the cup and invites the group to join in The Great Thanksgiving as printed in the *Worship Booklet for Pilgrims* beginning on page 29.

After the consecration of the elements, the pilgrims are then invited to come forward a second time to receive the Communion elements by intinction (dipping the piece of bread into the cup of juice). When all have partaken, they share in expressing the resurrection joy of the moment through the Prayer after Receiving (page 34, *Worship Booklet for Pilgrims*), words of instruction by the Weekend Spiritual Director, a well-chosen closing song, and a benediction. The Lay Director will then dismiss the group for lunch

The Weekend Spiritual Director plans the Dying Moments and Holy Communion Service ahead of time, including the arrangement of the Communion table with the first loaf of bread, the empty basket, and the cross; the Communion elements of a second loaf and the juice; the scripture and meditation; whether or not the Dying Moments time will be in silence have quiet background instrumental music; the closing song led by the Musicians; and instructions for the best flow to and from the Communion table. A couple of Assistant Lay Directors who sit at the front of the chapel can be first in line to break the bread and name their dying moment, setting an example for the pilgrims. When the seating arrangement allows, pilgrims are asked to sit in the chapel by table groups in order to foster the development of Christian community at the tables. Clear and complete explanations and directions, such as are given in *The Walk to Emmaus Directors' Manual*, help engage the pilgrims' full participation.

Questions about Dying Moments

Why must participants name their dying moments aloud? Healing power resides in the public act of an honest confession of sin, need, or faith. When Jesus healed the man with the withered hand in the synagogue, he asked him to “come forward” and to “stretch out your hand” (Mark 3:1-6). The public act requires us to admit our humanness and our need for grace, which are no secret to anyone except ourselves. This is not a time for pilgrims or team members to make prolonged confessions. By using symbolic words or short phrases such as “fear,” “disappointment in myself,” or “April 15th,” each pilgrim is freed to participate honestly without feeling embarrassed or pressured to reveal personal details. The value of naming our dying moments aloud is not in other people’s hearing what we say but in the outward act of admitting our need and giving our brokenness to God in the presence of others. Sharing aloud in the sanctity of the cloistered environment is another step in the process of building community.

What is distinctive about this ritual? The intent of the Dying Moments and Holy Communion Service in Emmaus is to represent visually the healing and forgiving grace of God and to take

part in the new covenant offered to us in Christ and practiced in the means of grace known as Holy Communion. Just as Jesus used the broken bread to represent his broken body, the pilgrims are invited to break a piece from a loaf of bread and to name some aspect of their own brokenness. The words of confession, both communally in the prayer and individually in the naming of dying moments, are symbolically laid at the foot of the cross and the words of pardon are offered and received. Then as the words of consecration are spoken over the second loaf of bread and the cup of juice, the pilgrims can see that though we may be broken by the sin and pain in our lives, Christ's body was broken and his blood was shed in order that we might receive healing, forgiveness, and wholeness.

Lunch and Break Following Lunch

The lunchtime following Dying Moments Communion may be a time of reflection for some pilgrims. They may be in the beginning phases of processing and evaluating what transpired during Dying Moments Communion. The Assistant Lay Directors, with guidance from the Weekend Spiritual Director, need to consider the appropriateness of joke time following this meal. Having jokes so soon after the highly emotional and spiritual experience may be an inappropriate intrusion into the solemnity and sacredness of the Dying Moments Communion.

The schedule indicates a long break following this lunch period, the longest break of the weekend, and this time needs to be preserved. This break is not the place to make up lost time in the schedule. The pilgrims have come through an exceedingly emotional and a spiritually deepening event. They need this long break to process all that has transpired.

Discussion on Means of Grace

To facilitate the question-and-answer period following Dying Moments Communion and lunch, the Weekend Spiritual Director can respond to the pilgrims' questions written ahead of time on 3- x 5-inch cards. This approach allows the Weekend Spiritual Director to review the questions with other clergy who are present during the break and to select the questions he or she can respond to best and briefly. The Weekend Spiritual Director then explains that time does not permit answering all of the questions, but that he or she will be available informally at other times to answer additional questions. This approach means the Assistant Lay Directors must distribute 3- x 5-inch cards to the tables before the MEANS OF GRACE talk. Early in the talk, the Weekend Spiritual Director encourages pilgrims to write their questions on the cards. The Assistant Lay Directors collect the cards afterward and give them to the Weekend Spiritual Director to review during the break following lunch.