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During Lent, we often begin the Eucharist with the Penitential Order in the *Book of Common Prayer* (page 319, Rite I; page 351, Rite II). As part of the Penitential Order, we often hear and respond to the reading of the Ten Commandments. (I doubt if most people could recite all ten if asked, and even fewer could recite them in order. Oh well, I digress from my point.)

The response to the Rite I form is *“Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.”* I am always moved by the words, *“incline our hearts.”* I like that phrase, and I find meaning in it in my own life; for when my heart is inclined toward Jesus, my daily life and work take on a deep meaning. I believe that we are the recipients of many spiritual blessings when we are aware of a constant inclination toward Jesus.

To be inclined toward Christ means following. In Lent, we are particularly reminded to pick up our cross and follow. Discipleship is about following. The Christian faith is more than simply knowing some information about Jesus; it is about a willingness to follow our Lord from the River Jordan to Jerusalem, to trudge up the hill of Calvary, and to run with great expectation and hope to the empty tomb on Easter morning. Easter people know about following. And they know about leading. And they know about carrying a message. Faith is in the following. When I think about following, I have an image of walking, of feet on the move, with heart and soul leading the way.

Several years ago at our daughter’s softball game, I was visiting with another player’s family. They had their five-month-old daughter with them. She had a good Old Testament name: Leah. Babies have a lot in common with one another. There is the bald spot on the back of their tiny heads which comes from lying on it all the time. Second, babies watch everything and everybody, and soon begin to follow mom, dad, brother, and/or sister around the house. Third, little Leah reminded me that babies are always looking for something to put into their mouth, primarily their toes. As most of us know all too well, later in life the whole foot fits.

Thinking about feet can be more complex than you might imagine. Do you have small feet or big feet? What kinds of shoes do you find most comfortable? Those are easy questions having to do with our feet. A harder question to answer might be, “Whose footsteps do you follow?” Even more troubling, “What footprints am I leaving as I move through my life?”

So I am reminded again that knowing Jesus comes not in memorizing certain facts, but in the following of His footsteps. And He left some pretty big footsteps in our world.

In the Collect of the Day on the 5th Sunday of Easter we pray, *“Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps...”* (BCP, page 225) In other words, discipleship. The faith is in the following.

Babies such as little Leah have their whole, big life ahead of them. They will soon take their first steps, probably following their family around the house. Later in their life, other voices will call them to follow. Which will they choose to follow? On what basis will they make these choices? Which do you choose? Why?

Each summer our family spends some time at the beach, inevitably leaving some footprints in the sand as we stroll along the beach; literally leaving impressions in the sand. In truth, we're all leaving footprints (impressions) all day, every day. Some are small footprints, some are big footprints. Whatever the case, we need to make sure they are the ones we'd like to pass on; for someone such as little Leah is watching, and perhaps even waiting, to follow.

Our faith is in the following. Discipleship is in the following. Easter people have their feet following their heart and soul. Hard to do? Not quite so difficult if we have "*inclined our hearts.*" And when our hearts are so inclined, Easter becomes more than a Sunday morning in the springtime. It becomes a way of life, a powerful hope, and a holy calling. And we therefore join in the timeless refrain expressing our Easter hope: *Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.* Lord, incline our hearts, and our faith will be in the following.