



THE VIETNAMESE EUCHARISTIC YOUTH MOVEMENT IN THE U.S.A.

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Weekly Gospel Lessons

YEAR
B-C

NAME _____

TEAM _____

Blessed are the poor in
spirit, for theirs is the
Kingdom of Heaven



TNTT WEEKLY SCRIPTURE LESSON

STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEM

STUDENT

STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Read the weekly scripture lesson at home before going to TNTT and/or church
2. Participate and share in the bible sharing session
3. Practice the virtue from the **Live It!** section daily

YOUTH LEADER

YOUTH-LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Prepare a weekly scripture lesson with prayer
2. Share and connect the Gospel to daily life
3. Encourage students to do homework and practice the weekly virtue

PARENT

PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Read the weekly scripture lesson with your child
2. Share and connect the Gospel to family life
3. Help, pray, and remind your child to practice the virtue from the **Live It!** section

Weekly
Gospel
Lessons

Lesson Journal

Date/Page	Week	Lesson	Virtue to Practice	Assignments	
August 1, 2021 Page 2	Ord. B-18	Jesus is the Bread of Life	Truthfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
August 8, 2021 Page 4	Ord. B-19	Jesus Gives His Flesh for the Life of the Word	Acceptance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
August 15, 2021 Page 6	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Mary Our Guide and Model to Jesus	Humility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
August 22, 2021 Page 8	Ord. B-21	Jesus is Rejected by Many Disciples	Friendliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
August 29, 2021 Page 10	Ord. B-22	Jesus Asks Us to Live Honestly	Honesty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
September 5, 2021 Page 12	Ord. B-23	Jesus Heals a Deaf Man	Listenness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
September 12, 2021 Page 14	Ord. B-24	Jesus is the Messiah	Wisdom	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
September 19, 2021 Page 16	Ord. B-25	Jesus Teaches His Disciples a Humility Lesson	Modesty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
September 26, 2021 Page 18	Ord. B-26	Jesus Teaches Us Not to Sin	Forgiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
October 3, 2021 Page 20	Ord. B-27	Jesus Teaches Us About Marriage—Male and Female	Loyalty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
October 10, 2021 Page 22	Ord. B-28	Jesus Asks Us to Share Our Fortune to Others	Generosity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
October 17, 2021 Page 24	Ord. B-29	Jesus Reminds His Disciples to Serve Others	Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
October 24, 2021 Page 26	Ord. B-30	Jesus Heals a Blind, Bartimaeus	Sincerity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
October 31, 2021 Page 28	Ord. B-31	Jesus Asks us to Love God and Our Neighbor	Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
November 7, 2021 Page 30	Ord. B-32	Jesus Appraises the Poor Widow's Contribution	Kindness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
November 14, 2021 Page 32	Ord. B-33	Jesus Will Come Again on the Last Day of the World	Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
November 21, 2021 Page 34	Ord. B-34 Christ the King	Jesus is Our King	Reverence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
November 28, 2021 Page 36	Advent C-1	Be Alert for the Coming of Jesus	Watchfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
December 5, 2021 Page 38	Advent C-2	Prepare the Way for Jesus	Integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
December 12, 2021 Page 40	Advent C-3	Change Our Life for Jesus	Ethical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
December 19, 2021 Page 42	Advent C-4	Mary Brought Jesus to Elizabeth and John the Baptist	Caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
December 26, 2021 Page 44	Christmas C-1 The Holy Family	The Boy Jesus in the Temple	Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
January 2, 2022 Page 46	Christmas C-2 Epiphany of the Lord	Follow Jesus' Star	Reverence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
January 9, 2022 Page 48	Ord. C-1 Baptism of the Lord	The Baptism of Jesus	Purity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
January 16, 2022 Page 50	Ord. C-2	Jesus at the Cana Wedding	Sympathy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
January 23, 2022 Page 52	Ord. C-3	Jesus is the Messiah	Respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue

Lesson Journal

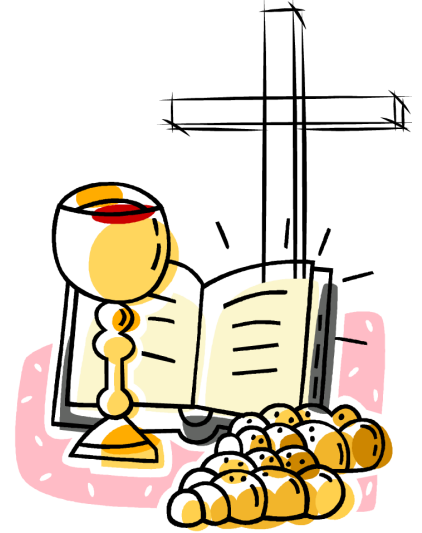
Date/Page	Week	Lesson	Virtue to Practice	Assignments	
January 30, 2022 Page 54	Ord. C-4	The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth	Acceptance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
February 6, 2022 Page 56	Ord. C-5	Believe in Jesus	Trust	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
February 13, 2022 Page 58	Ord. C-6	Jesus Proclaims God's Blessings	Optimistic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
February 20, 2022 Page 60	Ord. C-7	Jesus Asks Us to Love Even Our Enemies	Forgiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
February 27, 2022 Page 62	Ord. C-8	Jesus Teaches Us, "Be True to Ourselves"	Authenticity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
March 6, 2022 Page 64	Lent C-1	Facing Temptations Like Jesus	Determination	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
March 13, 2022 Page 66	Lent C-2	The Transfiguration of Jesus	Obedience	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
March 20, 2022 Page 68	Lent C-3	Jesus Calls Us to Repent	Commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
March 27, 2022 Page 70	Lent C-4	Jesus Tells Us About the Father's Love for the Lost Son	Self-discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
April 3, 2022 Page 72	Lent C-5	Jesus' Mercy Toward a Woman Caught in Adultery	Gentleness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
April 10, 2022 Page 74	Lent C-6 Palm/Passion Sunday	The Passion of Jesus	Sacrifice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
April 17, 2022 Page 76	Easter C-1 Easter Sunday	Jesus Rises from the Death	Hope	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
April 24, 2022 Page 78	Easter C-2 Divine Mercy Sunday	Jesus Strengthened the Faith of Thomas	Faith	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
May 1, 2022 Page 80	Easter C-3	Peter Professed His Love to Jesus	Excellence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
May 8, 2022 Page 82	Easter C-4	Jesus Knows His Sheep	Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
May 15, 2022 Page 84	Easter C-5	Jesus' New Commandment	Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
May 22, 2022 Page 86	Easter C-6	The Peace of Jesus	Truthfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
May 29, 2022 Page 88	Easter C-7 Ascension of the Lord	Be One with Jesus	Unity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
June 5, 2022 Page 90	Pentecost Sunday	Jesus' Disciples Received the Holy Spirit	Openness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
June 12, 2022 Page 92	Most Holy Trinity	Jesus Reveals the Holy Trinity	Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
June 19, 2022 Page 94	Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ	Jesus' Miracle with Five Loaves of Bread and Two Fish	Sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
June 26, 2022 Page 96	Ord. C-13	The Would-Be Followers of Jesus	Loyalty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
July 3, 2022 Page 98	Ord. C-14	The Mission of Jesus' 72 Disciples	Purposefulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
July 10, 2022 Page 100	Ord. C-15	Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan	Kindness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
July 17, 2022 Page 102	Ord. C-16	Jesus With Martha and Mary	Wisdom	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
July 24, 2022 Page 104	Ord. C-17	Jesus' Teaching on How to Pray	Sincerity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue



Jesus is the Bread of Life

JOHN 6:24-35

When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. And when they found him across the sea they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus answered them and said, “Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal.” So they said to him, “What can we do to accomplish the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent.”



So they said to him, “What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do?”

Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat.” So Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” So they said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.”

1. Explore It!

“AMEN”: We see in the Gospel reading that Jesus begins His statement with “Amen”, while we usually end our prayers with it. Amen in Hebrew means “truly”, “so be it”, and “I do believe”. When Jesus says “Amen” twice in a row, it is a solemn affirmation, an oath, of the statement He is going to make (John 6:27).

“THE SON OF MAN” & “MY FATHER”: Jesus uses the words, “Son of Man” and “my Father,” to show that He has been sent by God. Jesus, the Son of Man is prefigured as the Messiah who is to usher in the final days (Daniel 7:13-14; 8:17).

As Jesus speaks to the crowd, they misunderstand Him because they are looking for food and material items to satisfy their body, and do not yet realize that Jesus is speaking about something much deeper. Jesus, instead, is promising spiritual food. He reminds us that while material sustenance keeps us alive in this world, spiritual food sustains and develops supernatural life which will last forever.

Jesus teaches us that we are able to receive spiritual food by coming to Him. Jesus identifies Himself as the Bread of Life. He is the one and only who is able to meet all of man’s noblest aspirations and needs.

2. Connect It!

Today's Gospel reminds us of VEYM's second motto:

Holy Communion. As members the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement, one of the ten vows of our life is:

⇒ As Eucharistic Youths, we worship and receive the Eucharist, and visit regularly at the tabernacle.

Jesus in the Eucharist is our IDOL. By living the Eucharistic Day, we unite with Him and with one another in the Blessed Sacrament on the Solemnity of the Holy Body and Blood of Christ, the source of our life.

3. Reflect It!

We continue to seek for physical food in our lives and not the bread of life that Jesus has promised. List three activities that are fun to do and will help your spiritual growth.

5. Live It! [Truthfulness]

Truthfulness

the fact of being true or true to life; telling or disposed to telling the truth.

Identify three important people in your life (a parent, sibling, teacher, or friend..) and share with each person at least two positive statements that are true about them.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

[4. Remember It!]

**"I am the bread of life;
whoever comes to me
will never hunger, and
whoever believes in me
will never thirst."
(John 6:35)**



6. Pray It!

Dear God, thank You for taking care of us and feeding our bodies and souls. Though our bodies may be nourished, our souls still hunger for You. Please continue to fill us with Your bread from heaven which grants eternal life. Please help us to know the difference between what is important in our lives and which distracts us from You. Grant us the courage and will to speak the truth to those around us, as well as to be truthful in our actions and deeds. Amen.

Week
B-O19

Jesus Gives His Flesh for the Life of the World



JOHN 6:41-51

The Jews murmured about Jesus because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven," and they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Stop murmuring among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets: They shall all be taught by God. Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

1. Explore It!

In the Gospel of John, the term "The Jew" is often used to denote a representative of Judaism, someone in a position of leadership. The leaders murmured because of their lack of belief and trust in Jesus, like how the Jews reacted to Moses before they received the miraculous gift of manna in the desert (Ex 16:2, 8). Even after they had received the manna, many continued to complain (Numbers 11:4-6).

How can Jesus say that He came down from heaven? How can He possibly claim to have come from God? The Jews believed they knew Jesus' ancestry and because they thought Jesus was a human being like them. They could not bring themselves to believe that Jesus came from a divine origin as well. Therefore, they did not believe Jesus when He told them, (verse 29) "This is the work of God, that you believe in the one He sent."

"I am the bread of life." Jesus says this statement three times followed by the solemn oath Amen, Amen. In Hebrew numerology, the number three represents completeness. Jesus does not attempt to soften or alter His teaching. Rather, Jesus is trying to drive home the literal meaning, not a figurative or metaphorical one, that "the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

The Eucharistic theme of, "I am the bread of life" is reached as it is a figure of God's revelation in Jesus (see also Hebrews 10:5-10). Notice that this is in the future tense, something to be accomplished at a later time.

2. Connect It

To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary.

To one without faith, no explanation is possible." -Thomas Aquinas

Growing in faith is a gift from God. If we attempt to become good by our own efforts without God's grace, we eventually become frustrated or deluded. Jesus teaches that our salvation is dependent upon our faith in Him. He is the source of eternal life. If we ask for God's power in our lives, He will answer with blessings.

*"To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary.
To one without faith, no explanation is possible."
-Thomas Aquinas*

3. Reflect It!

How do we live life without God's grace?

How do we ask for God's grace to understand and believe?

Faith is a gift of God, which we receive when we fervently ask for it. Do we fervently ask for it now?

4. Remember It!

**"I AM THE LIVING BREAD THAT
CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN;
WHOEVER EATS THIS BREAD
WILL LIVE FOREVER"
(JOHN 6:51)**



5. Live It! [Acceptance]

the act of accepting something or someone.

List three things that you complain about most often. As you reflect upon these, promise to "stop murmuring" this week; believe and trust in God and accept God's will freely.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

6. Pray It!

Dear Lord, please help us to accept You into our lives. Bless us with Your grace and grant us understanding so that we may recognize Your workings in our lives. Help us to be patient and understanding so that we can accept Your teachings do not doubt Your presence and influence in our lives. Amen.

Mary Our Guide and Model to Jesus



WEEK B - The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Luke 1:39-56



Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

And Mary said: *"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call*

me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, and has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever."

Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

1. EXPLORE IT!

The Gospel begins with Mary set out and travel to the hill of country in "haste" where she enters the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth who is also pregnant. This happen right after Mary had an unexpected and disconcerting encounter from an angle who came to visit and tell Mary that she will conceive a child who would be holy and He would be called "the Son of God", even though she never had a relationship with a man before. Mary was confused and afraid after this encounter. Mary was probably

desperately need to talk to someone she can trust about the encounter and so she set out and travel in "haste" to visit Elizabeth who has just recently encounter an unusual experience as well: she found that she was with child, even though she was very old to have a child. And as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary greeting, the baby jump with joy and Elizabeth proclaim "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me."

2. CONNECT IT!

Just as Mary proclaim her faith and joy of all the greatness that the Lord has done for her, we too are called to share in the joy and happiness Mary experienced in serving her God and we are also encouraged “not to be afraid” (Lk 1:30) to serve him because when we come to the Eucharist, we also receive the Holy One, who is able to provide us the necessary graces for preaching and sharing the good news as he did for Mary in her service of her cousin Elizabeth’s needs. We are also call to bring Gods to others and share his love just as Mary did when she visits Elizabeth.

3. REFLECT IT!

- Various moments in our lives, we have encounter unexpected experience that was confusing and frightening. Did we ever put our faith in God plans for us just as Mary did?
- In our daily life, when we see someone else struggles and being hurt, have we ever take the initiative to give an open hand, just as Mary did who was in a hurry to visit her cousin who also in need of support?

4. REMEMBER IT!

**“BLESSED ARE YOU
AMONG WOMEN,
AND BLESSED IS THE
FRUIT OF YOUR WOMB.”
(LUKE 1:42)**

5. LIVE IT! [HUMILITY]

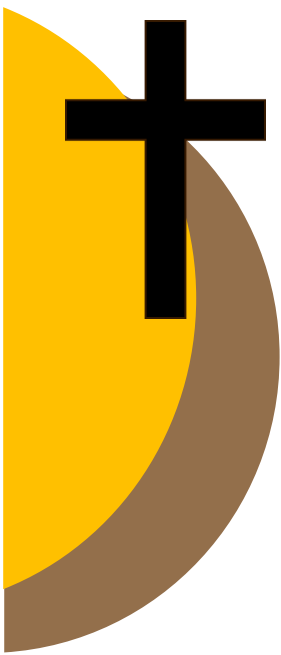
Humility or humbleness is a quality of being courteously respectful of others. It is the opposite of aggressiveness, arrogance, boastfulness, and vanity.

For this week, be humility toward those who you encounter and help those who are less fortunate than us. Just as Mary, who is Mother of God but yet, humble herself and travel far to visit Elizabeth, challenge yourself to be proactive in helping other, take the initiative to reach out to your family, friends and anybody who struggle in their life but yet be humble in all of your actions.

6. PRAY IT!

Dear Mary,
You are the Mother of Jesus and our mother. Thank you for your humble and generous “yes” to be the mother of God. Thank you for always looking out for us. Give us the courage to always respond with the same freedom as you when God calls us to things that we may not understand. We ask that you continue to watch over and intercede for us.
Amen.





Jesus is Rejected by Many Disciples

WEEK B-O21

JOHN 6:60-69

Many of Jesus' disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father."

As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."



1. Explore It!

Today, we complete John's presentation of Jesus' Bread of Life discourse. This is the hard study, where even many of Jesus' disciples could not accept.

Jesus makes many bold and controversial claims:

- He is the Messiah, the promised Savior descended from King David, or at least a prophet - yet they know His family;
- He is the Bread of Life - yet He is a human on Earth;
- He gives eternal life - yet this is something only God can do;
- We must eat His flesh - yet this is cannibalism;
- We must drink His blood - but this is forbidden by the Law;
- Furthermore, all this is said in the form of a covenant oath!

Knowing this is shocking, Jesus does not make any attempt to ease the disciples' astonishment because they do not misunderstand. Jesus means what He is saying, that He is indeed the Messiah, the Bread of Life, and all who eats His flesh and drinks His blood will be given eternal life.

Previously in John 6:29, Jesus says, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." If you do not believe in Jesus, then you would not believe what He is saying. The role of the prophet, which some believe He is, is to speak God's words. Some in the crowd do not believe and so Jesus makes one final appeal, an appeal that will separate the believers from the non-believers, a final prophetic image. Some of those on the fence on whether to believe Jesus are convinced, yet other non-believers fall away.



2. Connect It!

In today's society, many people no longer follow Jesus. Instead, they idolize money, fame, physical beauty, etc. As members of the VEYM, we are invited to deepen our faith and commitment to Jesus in the Eucharist. Believing in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is difficult. It requires an act of faith which is a gift of the Father. Like any gift we receive, it is useless unless we use it. Let's renew our faith each time we kneel in Jesus' presence and adore Him.

3. Reflect It!

Read Jesus' final appeal in the passage, "What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe."

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him". God's grace is necessary to have faith and understand (Isaiah 54:13). Jeremiah 31:33-34 has the same theme which accompanies the promise of the new covenant. It is a free gift but you have to be open to receive it. Are you going to be open the gift?

Many of Jesus' disciples make the decision to their former way of life after struggling to understand the words of Jesus. Will you have the courage to continue?

Can we respond to Jesus in the same way as Peter? "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."

5. Live It! [Friendliness]

being kind and helpful

"Love is shown more in deeds than in words."
- Ignatius of Loyola

Do one good deed in the name of the Lord who you have come to believe. Write in spiritual journal your experience doing good deed in His Name.

4. Remember it!

*"Master, to whom
shall we go? You
have the words of
eternal life."
(John 6:68)*

6. Pray It!

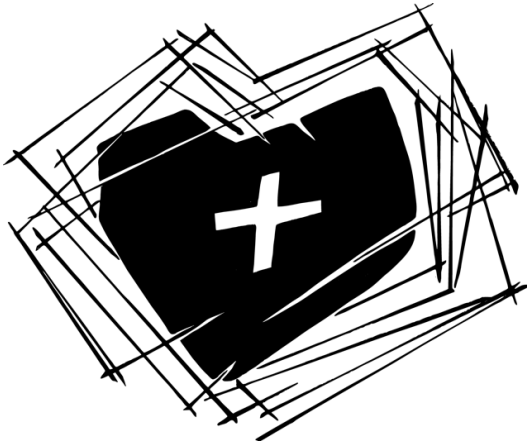
Psalm 34: 2-4, 12-15
I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise shall be always in my mouth.
My soul will glory in the LORD;
let the poor hear and be glad.
Magnify the LORD with me;
and let us exalt His name together.

Come, children, listen to me;
I will teach you fear of the LORD.
Who is the man who delights in life,
who loves to see the good days?
Keep your tongue from evil,
your lips from speaking lies.
Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.

JESUS ASKS US TO LIVE HONESTLY

WEEK B-O22

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23



When the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they observed that some of his disciples ate their meals with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands. — For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves. And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles and beds. — So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, “Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?” He responded, “Well did Isaiah prophesy about

you hypocrites, as it is written: *This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.* You disregard God’s commandment but cling to human tradition.”

He summoned the crowd again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile.

“From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile.”

1. Explore It!

In the Jewish religion, hand washing is a sign of someone with a pure heart and leading a holy life in accordance to the Jewish religion. The Pharisees and their scribes, who know both the original Laws of Moses and those added by the rabbis during the centuries, question Jesus and His disciples’ for not observing those traditions exactly. Yet Jesus invites them to reflect on the “why” of their customs rather than the “what.” Jesus differentiates between what is actually “law” and those of “traditions” or practices to which the rabbis would use to advance their power and prestige.

The Law of Moses was part of the Covenant that God made with the Jews and was meant to help them respond to God’s love. Yet the additional practices and traditions the rabbis had added were getting in the way of the Covenant. Instead, these practices became responses to religious officials and had become more important than keeping the relationship that God had initiated alive in their hearts. “This nation honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me.”

2. Connect It!

Jesus, as Moses before Him, offers us reminders of the relationship that God has extended to us. He is laboring for us to understand that the outward is to be a reflection and display of the inner

relationship with God. What makes a person unclean is not from the outside, such as not washing one's hands or face, but the uncleanness that is inside already.

3. Reflect It!

- ♦ How have my thoughts affected my actions?
- ♦ Have I been jealous of my friend's fortunes?
- ♦ Have I turned my back away from those I dislike?

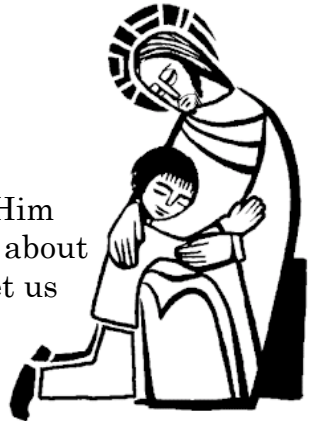
4. Remember It!

*"This people honors me
with their lips, but their
hearts are far from me."
(Mark 7:6)*

5. Live It! [**Honesty**]

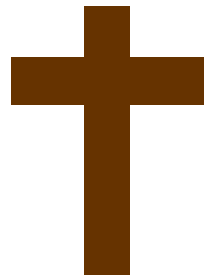
Honesty: The quality of being fair and truthful.

God knows who we are and how weak we can be. Often, we sin against Him and try to hide or ignore our faults. We should be honest with ourselves about our sins, admit them and ask God for His forgiveness. For this week, let us make an extra effort to go to confession so we can make peace with God and ask for His help and forgiveness. Nothing is better than living in God's grace.



6. Pray It!

Each team member will write down your personal prayer on a sheet of paper then as a team, go into the chapel to offer your prayer to God.



Jesus Heals a Deaf Man



Again Jesus left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!"— that is, "Be opened!" — And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

1. Explore It! >>

Decapolis in Greek means *Ten Cities*. It was a region located southeast of Galilee, where people were pagan and influenced by Greek culture. Although Jesus was not from here, He was known as someone who heals the sick. Thus, the people brought Jesus a deaf man who had difficulty with his speech and was unable to communicate with others.

The people thought Jesus would simply place His hands on the sick person to heal him. Yet Jesus goes beyond their request. Jesus places His finger in the man's ears and with His spittle touches the man's tongue, then looks up to heaven sighing deeply and says, "Ephphatha," which means, "Be opened!" The touching of the tongue with spittle gave the deaf man the faculty of speech. In those days, people thought spittle had medicinal value. By looking up to heaven, Jesus is saying that the healing is from God and His sigh is an attitude of supplication. Jesus' actions, all at once, opened the ears and loosened the tongue of the deaf man, allowing the man to speak correctly.

This deaf man reflects many people today, who live in large cities but in complete solitude, without communicating and sharing with others. Jesus desires that we open our ears and loosen our tongues!

The people in Decapolis were in awe and said, "He has done all things well!" (Mk 7:37). This statement recalls the Creation, "God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good!" (Gen 1:31). Jesus commanded the people to tell no one of what took place. However, the more He forbade this, the more the Good News spread. The inner power of the Good News is such that it spreads itself!

- What is the attitude of Jesus towards the deaf person and towards the people?
- How do you understand the actions of Jesus: He placed His finger in the man's ears and with His saliva touched the man's tongue, then, looked up to heaven, He sighed and said, "Ephphatha"?
- How can we understand Jesus' concern for taking the man away from the crowd?
- Why does Jesus forbid the spreading of the news? How do we understand the people's disobedience of Jesus' command?

2. Connect It!

➤ ➤ Was there a time you were stressed, troubled, or sad and needed to be alone? We often talk to God when we need Him. Know that He is always listening wherever we are. It is us that sometimes tunes Him out, not hearing what He has to say day by day. See if you can spot the messages He often blesses us with when we least expect it.

4. Remember It!

➤ ➤ “Ephphatha!”
[that is, “Be opened!”]
(Mark 7:34)



6. Pray It!

➤ ➤ Heavenly Father, we thank You for granting us Your Son, Jesus Christ, who came down from heaven to prepare ourselves, not just physically, but spiritually. May You bless us, so that we can open our hearts and continue to live in Your abundant love. Amen!

3. Reflect It!

- ➤
- Do I welcome Jesus' healing in my life? In what ways am I deaf and mute? Do I allow Jesus to open my ears and loosen my tongue?
 - Jesus shows great openness towards people of other races, different religions and different customs. As a Christian, do I have this openness?
 - As a recipient of Jesus' loving care and messianic ministry, do I respond to his personal initiative and saving work? How am I proclaiming the Good News in my life?

5. Live It! [Listening]

➤ ➤ **Listening** is the ability to continually give one's attention.

Are we able to listen to what God is trying to tell us in those silent and insistent moments?

This week, try to listen to God by selecting and reading a short passage of scripture (more than a verse but less than a chapter) daily.

Read the passage again, and this time, select a word, phrase or verse that you like. What do you like about it? What is the new message from God?



JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

WEEK B-O24 MARK 8:27-35



Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” They said in reply, “John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets.” And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter said to him in reply, “You are the Christ.” Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it.”

1. EXPLORE IT!

This passage is the turning point in Mark’s Gospel. It climaxes with Jesus’ self-revelation to the disciples’, the first recognition of Him as the Messiah. It also introduces the theme of the suffering Messiah.

People recognized that Jesus has been sent by God, saying Jesus was John the Baptist, Elijah or a prophet. Peter is the first among the disciples. Peter is also the first human to acknowledge Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed one.

The term “Christ” comes from the Greek Χριστός while “Messiah” comes from the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ (*Māšîaḥ*), both with the same meaning. The term is used in the Old Testament in reference to the king and the priest.

Jesus’ teaching comes only after Peter acknowledges He is the Messiah, where the

acceptance and acknowledgement of the Messiah are the first step to understand the Passion and the Resurrection. Jesus shows how He, the Messiah, is to be understood: to suffer, to be rejected, to be killed and to rise after three days.

While Peter openly called Jesus the Messiah, he did not grasp the suffering and death that Jesus would endure. Jesus turned to the disciples and although addressed Peter, intended for the other disciples and for us to understand: we must not think as human being do, but think as God does.



2. CONNECT IT!

We acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah, but it is often hard to understand and accept His suffering. Following Christ Jesus, as described in His Passion and Resurrection, we must carry our own cross and follow Him. Jesus' words indicate the standard He expects His followers to live up to. Jesus asks for a complete commitment.

Jesus wants us to have eternal life. Our life here on earth is to seek eternal life. Life on earth is not definitive, but transitory and relative; it is a means to be used to achieve eternal life in heaven.

4. REMEMBER IT!

**And he asked them,
"But who do you say
that I am?" Peter
Said to him in reply,
"You are the Messiah."
(Mark 8:29)**

3. REFLECT IT!

Are we sometimes tempted into making the life on earth a permanent one?

How often do we spend considerable amount of time on things that will soon become "unfashionable"?

How often do we complain about the time we spend in Mass or Adoration or reading spiritual books?

5. LIVE IT! [WISDOM]

Wisdom is a virtue but more importantly, it is the gift of the Holy Spirit. According to Augustine (De Trin. xii, 14), "Wisdom is the knowledge of Divine things."

We ask this week for the wisdom to know God's will, the meaning of carrying the cross and our desire to follow Christ. *"Each temptation we face is a mini-crucifixion; but each temptation we conquer is a mini-Resurrection."*
- Faith Noah

Write in your spiritual journal the temptations you face this week. Reflect on it, and offer it to God.

6. PRAY IT!

I will pray this prayer for the Gift of Wisdom in my Morning Offering Prayer.

Great is the wisdom of the Lord!
God Almighty, Your Wisdom includes
An understanding of what is fair,
What is logical, what is true,
What is right and what is lasting.
It mirrors Your pure intellect!

I entreat You to grant me such Wisdom,
That my labors may reflect Your insight.

Your Wisdom expands in Your creations,
Displaying complexity and multiplicity.

Your Wisdom is an eternity ahead of man.
May Your wisdom flourish forever!
Amen.



Jesus Teaches His Disciples a Humility Lesson

Jesus and his disciples left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him.

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." Taking a child, he placed it in the their midst, and putting his arms around it, he said to them, "Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me."



1. Explore It!

Verse 30-32: The proclamation of the Cross.

Jesus is travelling through Galilee but does not want the people to know this because He is still concerned with the formation of His disciples. He talks to them about "The Son of Man" who must be handed over. While the disciples listen, they do not understand and do not ask for any explanation. Perhaps they are afraid to show their ignorance.

Verse 33-34: A competitive mentality.

When they return home, Jesus asks, "What were you arguing about on the way?" They do not reply. It is this silence that shows their feelings of guilt, because they have been discussing amongst themselves who is the greatest. The competitiveness and prestige, which characterized the society of the Roman Empire, had infiltrated the Jewish community. Here we see the contrast: while Jesus is thinking of being the Messiah-Servant, the disciples are thinking about who among them is greatest. Jesus tries to descend while they try to ascend!

Verse 35-37: A Humility Lesson.

Jesus continues to teach and promote the ideal leader who is modest and serves others without hope of earthly reward. A child has no legal status in society, is insignificant, and can do nothing or return anything to the giver. Therefore, receiving a child is a good deed for an insignificant person or from Jesus Himself. Furthermore, whoever receives Jesus receives the Father who sent Jesus.

2. Connect It!

Mother Mary modeled for us great examples of humility in her whole life. She received the gift of God's son and then went immediately to serve her cousin Elizabeth, saying nothing about what happened. Pope Francis praised Mother Mary's humility as "The humility of the childlike is that of somebody who walks in the presence of the Lord, does not speak badly about others, looks only at serving and feels that he or she is the smallest.... That is where their strength lies."

3. Reflect It!

When asked to name the **four Cardinal Virtues**, St. Bernard of Clairvaux replied "humility, humility, humility, and humility." He said this because the word "cardinal" means "hinge," and everything hinges on humility. Humility opens the door to the hearts of others and to the heart of God.

How do we live in humility in the rough and tumble of daily life? Saint Paul said, "Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but (also) everyone for those of others." (Phil 2:3-4).

[4. Remember It!]

**"If anyone wishes
to be first, he shall
be the last of all and
the servant of all"**
(Mark 9:35)

5. Live It! [Modesty]

Modesty

quality or state of being unassuming or moderate in the estimation of one's abilities.

A very first lesson of practicing and living modestly is to serve others; serve our family: grandparents, parents and siblings. Pay attention to their needs and offer help by saying "May I help you...", "Can I help you with...", "I can do that for you..."

Try to offer help at least once per day to any member of your family and when you serve, start with this prayer "With Mary, I do this to love God".



6. Pray It!

*O God, who resists the proud,
and gives grace to the
humble: grant us the virtue of
true humility, where of Your
Only-begotten son showed in
Himself a pattern for Your
faithful; that we may never by
our pride provoke Your anger,
but rather by our meekness
receive the riches of Your
grace.*

(A prayer for Humility,
Our Catholic Prayers website)

Jesus Teaches Us How Not To Sin

WEEK B-O26

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

At that time, John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us." Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us. Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward.

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'



1. Explore It!

The Gospel has two sections. The first has to do with who can do the works of grace in the name of Jesus, who belongs and who does not. The second section deals with living out our inclusion as God's children.

John notifies Jesus that someone, not of their original team, was driving out demons in His name. Jesus responds by saying all truly good works come from and lead back to God. Jesus reveals that one doing a good and mighty deed need not have official credentials. The true credential for doing good is being human, created in God's image, and allowing God's mighty works to happen through us. Perhaps the true test of doing good work in God is the idea of inclusiveness. Contrast that with the concept of selectivity or exclusion, which both are not elements of Jesus' ways. John, who

asked the question about who belongs and who does not, receives a teaching concerning the mission of Jesus.

The second section of today's Gospel focuses on how we must be a blessing and not a prevention of God's goodness. Gehenna is a place where, "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." Jesus knows we do not want to spend our eternal life there, nor does He want us to go to Gehenna because He loves us dearly. Jesus teaches us many ways to stay away from sin by giving examples through metaphors—cut off our hand or pluck out our eye out if it causes us to sin. He uses these harsh examples to let us know how important it is for us to spend eternal life with Him. For Jesus, if we are children of God, entering the kingdom of God is our only option.

2. Connect It!



To enter the kingdom of God, we need to identify our bad habits and try to eliminate them. If someone has done you wrong, forgive them. Remember that if you forgive those who wrong you will also be forgiven for your wrongdoing to others. If you have a hard time forgiving someone, you can always ask God to give you the strength to be a strong person to forgive those people.

3. Reflect It!



What do we learn about redemption, penance, and holiness? Jesus tells the disciples that if something is getting in their way and keeping them from being good, they need to get rid of it. It is true that we have to spend years learning to be virtuous. We live our days between being “with” Jesus and being “without”. (The real sin which gains such condemnation by Jesus is that of causing others to be “without”).

4. Remember It!

***“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.”
(Mark 9:42)***

5. Live It! [Forgiveness]

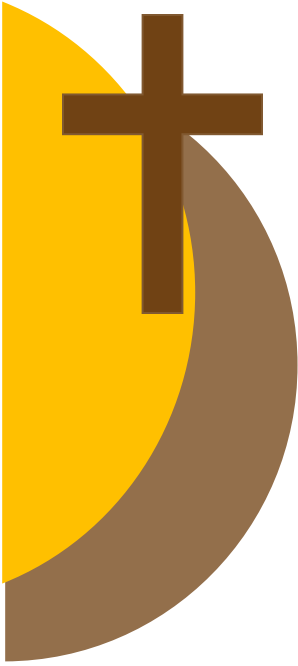
Forgiveness is the willingness to forgive someone for doing wrong against us.

Heaven is where Jesus wants us to spend our eternal life. Being human means we make mistakes and hurt others intentionally and unintentionally. From now on, let us make a choice to go to confession regularly to admit our mistakes to God and ask Him for His forgiveness. We must choose to stay away from sin and not repeat our mistakes.

Heaven is a place for the children of God. In your daily prayers this week, ask God to give you strength to forgive those who have done you wrong.

6. Pray It!

“O Lord, remember the words You spoke to me, your servant, which made me live in hope, and consoled me when I was downcast.” Ps. 119, 49-50



Jesus Teaches Us About Marriage – Male and Female

WEEK B-O27

MARK 10:2-16

The Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, "Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?" They were testing him. He said to them in reply, "What did Moses command you?" They replied, "Moses permitted a husband to write a bill of divorce and dismiss her." But Jesus told them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh.

Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate." In the house the disciples again questioned Jesus about this. He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.

1. EXPLORE IT!

The Pharisees have a "big question" for Jesus in today's Gospel. Divorce is the topic, but the Pharisees are looking to provoke Jesus into countermanding the Law of Moses. Jesus answers by going back before Moses time by quoting lines from our First Reading for today. The Pharisees fail in trapping Jesus, but Jesus teaches a lesson about marriage and the importance of this holy union.

Jesus wants to reinforce the teaching that marriage and a true loving relationship between a man and a woman is a gift from God that keeps on giving. A loving relationship, especially one blessed in

marriage is a covenant of continuing God's creation, where the man and the woman commit themselves to bring forth life.

God does not promise that this union will always be easy. Rather, Jesus highlights that the covenant made is lasting and therefore, divorce is a breaking of the covenant that a man and bride make to God. Divorce is the un-creating of the sacred design and commitment to assist God in the ongoing creation of each other. Jesus reinforces this teaching by calling on the disciples to bring the children to Him. Children represent the simplicity of heart and mind, and Jesus calls on all to be willing, in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, to be available to all that God has in store and the miracle of bringing children into the world.

2. CONNECT IT!

Marriage is a permanent relationship. It is a sacrament modelled by the relationship between Christ and the church. We should only marry when we are ready and willing to make a lifelong commitment. We should ground our love in God first, and in Him alone, then we can give to others, including a possible future marriage partner.

3. REFLECT IT!

Read the Scripture passage again and after drawing a large heart, write inside of it ways in which a husband and a wife can strengthen their marriage. What can children do to play a role?

Outside of that heart, write about the issues you think often divide families apart. Are there actions or feelings to overcome the negativity that can plague a family? From there, along the outline of the heart, repeatedly write the word "God blesses this Holy Union, a covenant to do God's will."

As you see, within a marriage, God is a central figure in any marriage, which can be a protector of a family from aspects that can divide a family. It is important that we, as children of God, be willing to keep the covenant established in Holy Matrimony, if that is the calling in which He calls us to take.

5. LIVE IT! [LOYALTY]

Loyalty is the quality of being loyal, a strong feeling of support or allegiance.

For this week, let us commit to the following in our own relationship with God:

1. Do your spiritual bouquet every night.
2. Be kind to others around you.
3. Help your parents to do house chores every day.

4. REMEMBER IT!

"But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.'"
[Mark 10:6-8]

6. PRAY IT!

Say the following prayer:

"The Lord is good to those who hope in him, for those who are searching for his love
(Lamentations 3:25)."

Then say a prayer with your team asking God to help you remain faithful to Him and the Church's teachings.

Jesus Asks Us to Share Our Fortune With Others

Week B-O28

Mark 10:17-30



As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: *You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.*" He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God." Peter began to say to him, "We have given up everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come.

1. Explore It!

The young man in today's Gospel wants to be friends with Jesus. He asks Jesus what he has to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus tells him that it is very difficult to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, even those who keep all of God's commandments. He goes on to tell the young man that he must learn to share all of his fortune. Yet for the young man, he is used to the lifestyle he lives, the wealth he has accumulated, and cannot imagine

anything differently. Jesus offers the young man something better, the Kingdom of Heaven. However, the young man walks away from Jesus because he is afraid of the risk.

Jesus tries to make him understand the difficulty in entering the Kingdom of Heaven, even for those who keep all of God's commandments. It is only through God and our relationship with Him that makes it possible.

2. Connect It!

Wealth and possessions often give us a sense of security and it becomes difficult to give such security up. Yet when we become attached to the advantages that our possessions bring, we worry about defending that interest. This applies to not just wealth, but also the desire for wealth, which can change us and make us slaves to the goods of this world. Jesus teaches us that while our wealth and possessions can sustain us here on earth, it is only by choosing God that we will be with Him in heaven.

3. Reflect It!

- ♦ What material items are pulling you away from God?
- ♦ How can you share what you have with those less fortunate?

5. Remember It!

**“Go, sell what you have,
and give to the poor
and you will have
treasure in heaven;
then come, follow me.”**
(Mark 10:21)



4. Live It! [Generosity]

Generosity: the virtue and quality of being kind, generous, and not selfish.

Being generous means we recognize the help needed in others and give willingly. Each night, reflect on the day on how you were generous, either physically with your items or spiritually with your time and effort. Were you able to share the “wealth” you had with others around you?

6. Pray It!

Lord Jesus, teach me to be generous;
teach me to serve You as You deserve,
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labor and not to seek reward,
except that of knowing that I do Your will.
Amen!



Jesus Reminds His Disciples to Serve Others

WEEK B-O29

MARK 10:35-45

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee

came to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." He replied, "What do you wish (me) to do for you?" They answered him, "Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left." Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" They said to him, "We can." Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John. Jesus summoned them and said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."



1. Explore It!



In today's Gospel, Jesus makes it clear that He is not a prince who comes to earth to pass out the riches to the nice people, to make the bad people perish, nor to grant wishes to His disciples. James and John ask Jesus for a small favour, two good seats at the victory party. Jesus responds by asking them whether they can pay the high price for these seats, drinking the cup and being purified in a manner which Jesus will go through to take His seat in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The rest of the disciples hear about the apparent self-centered request of James and John and become indignant. Jesus calls them all together for a little "come to

Jesus" conversation. This discussion is a sign that the disciples are slow of heart and shaky of faith. Jesus teaches the disciples that those in authority and those who have power are known as lords and worthy of being served. He, as their leader, has come to them to serve, not to be served. Jesus will lay down His life, as a Servant, and in many ways to reveal to them who He is and who they are to Him. Servanthood, rather than power and authority, is being dignified and Jesus will live His life out as a Servant by drinking the cup that will lead to His suffering.

2. Connect It!

Through Baptism, we are called to participate in Jesus' threefold ministry of priest, prophet, and king. As Jesus carries out His royal office by serving others, we also do the same. By serving others, we, as Knights of the Eucharist, also live out our slogan of self-sacrifice.

3. Reflect It!

We all have our own cup that we drink when we are baptized and given a baptismal name of one who served the Church. We are called to do as they had done, to do as Jesus did, to be servants to others. We will have our egos, our agendas, our persons, and our bodies purified through frustrations, failures, and real sufferings. Are you willing to truly drink the "cup" of your baptismal identity and allow Jesus to serve through you? How can you be an instrument of God's message to the world, a message of salvation?

4. Remember It!

***"For the Son of Man
did not come to be
served but to serve
and to give his life as
a ransom for many."
(Mark 10:45)***

5. Live It! [Service]

Service means to aid someone in need, a noble action that one could do anywhere.

This week, help your parents with house work such as washing dishes, sweeping, gardening, etc.

Come to church on Saturday and help clean the church.

6. Pray It!

Dear God, thank You for teaching us how to serve others. Please grant us the strength to do Your will, especially during times of frustration, and help us to be a shining light in sharing You to the world. Amen.



Jesus Heals a Blind, Bartimaeus

Week B-O30

Mark 10:46-52

As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd,

Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me." And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more, "Son of David, have pity on me." Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you." He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see." Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you." Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.



1. Explore It!

1. What is the attitude of the people of Jericho towards Bartimaeus, the blind man: what do they say and do?

2. What is the attitude of Bartimaeus: what does he say and do?

3. What is Jesus' attitude: what does he say and do?

Further Exploration:

If we read the scripture from Mark 8:22 to 10:52, we would understand a bigger picture of the teaching that Jesus gave His disciples and all of us.

1. Jesus must suffer and die and in 3 days He will rise.
2. The disciple must forsake all earthly impediments and depend totally upon God. Trust and serve like a child.
3. The humble disciple will receive earthly rewards for his service – including persecution. The persecution will help form his spirit in reparation for entering the kingdom of God.

These chapters in St. Mark's Gospel describe Jesus' healing of two blind men on the way to Jerusalem before His Passion. At the beginning of the journey, Jesus healed an anonymous blind man by spitting on his eyes and putting his hands on him. The disciples were like the anonymous blind man: they accepted Jesus as Messiah, but could not accept the cross they were called to carry (Mk 8:31-33). Their faith in Jesus was not strong. They continued to be blind! When Jesus insisted on service and the giving of one's life (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34), the disciples insisted on knowing who was the most important (Mk 9:34) and continued to ask for prominent places in the Kingdom of Heaven, one on the right and the other on the left of the throne (Mk 10:35-37).

2. Connect It!

In today's Gospel, there are two types of people that are portrayed: those who held Jesus up as someone that is like a king versus the blind man who is cast aside for his disability. In our daily lives, we can often categorize people that we encounter in a similar manner: rich versus poor. We see today that despite people's tendencies to discriminate and shun those who are considered to be "less", Jesus sees

everyone as His children. The blind man is rewarded for having faith and continuing to believe despite all of the negativity that was directed at him for wanting to be with Jesus. In a similar manner, we are called to be accepting toward all people, not just people who we deem to be "worth our time".

3. Reflect It!

- ♦ Imagine that you are looking into a mirror. Which image is it reflecting of you: that of Jesus, of the blind Bartimaeus, of the people?
- ♦ What lesson can we learn from the healing of the blind Bartimaeus?

4. Remember It!

Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you." Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way. (Mark 10:52)

5. Live It! [Sincerity]

Sincerity: Honest; free from hypocrisy or dissimulation

Practice this when you are in the bathroom or when you see yourself in the mirror. Say to yourself, "I love me as Jesus loves me."

When you see people in your everyday life: at school, in the street, at home (siblings and parents), on social media, etc., do you find yourself making some judgement against them? When you do, quietly say to yourself "Jesus, help me to love them as You love them".

In these two ways, practice and train your spirit to be strong and see Jesus in your everyday life. When the life has you down, you only need to focus on Christ to realize where you are. In Him all things are possible!

6. Pray It!

Consider the meaning that the passage has for you. Imagine you are sitting with the Lord Jesus Christ having a conversation about what you have read. What might you two talk about? Write out your conversation below.

Jesus Asks Us to Love God and Our Neighbor

Week B-O31

Mark 12:28-34

One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him, "Which is the first of all the commandments?" Jesus replied, "The first is this: *Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.* The second is this: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* There is no other commandment greater than these." The scribe said to him, "Well said, teacher. You are right in saying, 'He is One and there is no other than he.' And 'to love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself' is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that he answered with understanding, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And no one dared to ask him any more questions.



GOD

1. Explore it!

- What struck you most in the text? Why?
- Jesus criticizes and praises the scribes, the doctor of the Law. What specifically did Jesus criticize them on? What did He praise them for?
- What should our love of God be like and how should it be? What do the following words mean in the above verses (line 30): heart, mind, strength? Do all these words point to the same thing?
- What is the relationship between the first and second commandments? Why?
- Are we today closer or further away from the Kingdom of God than the doctor who was praised by Jesus? What do you think?

2. Connect it!

When we think of the "commandments" we often remember the commandments that Moses gave to us. We often recall these commandments because we grew up learning about them from our parents or from the teachings of the church. However, as we see today, the gospel also teaches us the greatest of all the commandments, which is to love God above all things and to love our

neighbors as ourselves. Loving God above all things means that we don't value the things we possess materialistically above the things such as family, friends, relationships, faith, and so many other things. In valuing material things we tend to overlook the gifts that God provides for us. Let us not forget about the things that God provides for us in our lives.

3. Reflect it!

1. What is our response to Jesus' great command: "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart... You shall love your neighbor as yourself*"? How do we try to put this twofold command into practice?
2. Are we capable of wholehearted love and service? If not, what do we do to improve our capacity for loving and giving?
3. Do we look to Jesus' total self-giving upon the cross? Is our life shaped and energized by the Divine Master's example of total self-giving and sacrificial love? Do we contemplate the Eucharist as the sacrament of love – of the One who has loved us to the end?

4. Remember it!

'To love God with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself.'
(Mark 12:33)

5. Live it! [Responsibility]

Responsibility: The state of being responsible, accountable, or answerable, as for a trust, debt, or obligation.

What are some of your responsibilities at home? At church? At school? Do you do your chores without complaining? Do you do your homework without someone nagging you? Do you go to Mass every Sunday with your family? Take some time to reflect on some of your responsibilities. Try to fulfil your responsibilities with a smile. Offer each task to Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

6. Pray it!

Pray that Jesus' twofold command may truly shape our daily lives. of Jesus and His sacrifice challenge us to embrace the poor and today's fragmented and world. Amen.



love-
impact and
Let the words
Eucharistic
love and
vulnerable in
wounded

Reference:

THE ORDER OF CARMELITES

<http://ocarm.org/en/content/lectio/lectio-31st-sunday-ordinary-time-b>

Jesus Appraises the Poor Widow's Contribution

Week B-O32

Mark 12:41-44

Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."

1. Explore It!

1. Why does Jesus praise the poor widow?

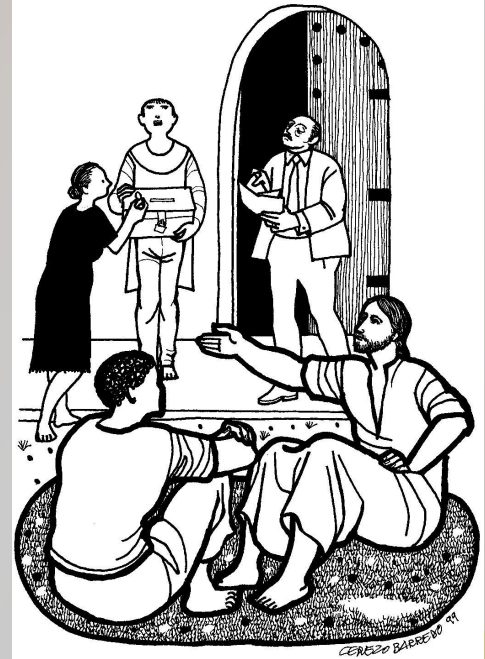
2. How is it that the widow's two coins are of more value than the large amount put in by the rich?

3. What message does this text convey to us today?

2. Connect It!

To give from our livelihood is not only an act of generosity, it is also an act of trust in God. We can only give from our livelihood if we truly trust that God will provide for us. Jesus Himself demonstrates the ultimate act of

generosity and trust in God as He gives His life for us on the cross. Likewise we can model our lives following the example of the poor widow's generosity and Jesus' sacrifice for us and devote our full lives to serving the church.



3. Reflect It!

1. How do you react to situations of extreme vulnerability, insecurity and poverty? Do you take the generous stance of the faith-filled widow in trusting God completely?
2. Do you trust that in the act of total self-giving and surrender to the divine, you shall experience the true beatitudes and the fullness of life?
3. What gifts do you have in which you can serve your community? Do you look to Jesus, the Divine Master, to learn from him the ability to give even when it hurts? Do you allow him to guide you so that you may humbly recognize your gifts and donate them generously at the service of the community and thus give glory to God? Do you trust that when Jesus looks at you, he sees the heart that gives everything?



4. Remember It!

**“FOR THEY HAVE ALL
CONTRIBUTED FROM THEIR
SURPLUS WEALTH, BUT SHE,
FROM HER POVERTY, HAS
CONTRIBUTED ALL SHE HAD,
HER WHOLE LIVELIHOOD.”
(Mk 12:44)**

5. Live It! [Kindness]

is an act of doing good to
bring happiness to others.

To be kind means to be considerate of others. Kindness brings a lot of positive traits that help shape the kind of person God wants us to learn and grow into. Being kind also means recognizing those that are in need of kindness, such as the poor or the secluded.

Each night, reflect on your day and think of times where you showed kindness, or where you could have shown it if you were a bit more aware. Write a small paragraph of what you did, or what you will do to make sure you share kindness throughout the day.

Reference:

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SISTER DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER
<http://www.pddm.us/LectioDivina-YearB/BBofWord-YB51-S4.htm>
[Sacred Space102fm](http://SacredSpace102fm)
<http://sacredspace102.blogspot.com/2012/11/11th-november-2012-32nd-sunday-in.html>

6. Pray It!

Pray that the spirit of *totus tuus* or total giving may animate our life of Christian discipleship and service. Pray also that the unjust structures that lead to destitution and greater abuse of the poor and needy in today's society may be rectified.

Leader: The poor woman approached unknown, without renown, a humble face among other faces; in her hand two little coins. The Son of Man looked; He saw the heart that gave everything.

Assembly: The eyes of the Lord on the poor.

Leader: Blessed are You, God our Father! You reveal to the humble the mysteries of the kingdom.

Assembly: The eyes of the Lord on the poor.

Leader: Blessed are You, God our Father! You choose those who have nothing, here they are, rich in faith.

Assembly: The eyes of the Lord on the poor.

Leader: Blessed are You, God our Father! You lower proud looks, you save the lowly.

Assembly: The eyes of the Lord on the poor.

(Adapted from *Commission Francophone Cistercienne, Tropaires des dimanches*, 137 // *Days of the Lord*, vol. 5, p. 297)



Jesus Will Come Again on the Last Day of the World

Jesus said to his disciples:

"In those days after that tribulation the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory, and then he will send out the angels and gather [his] elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky. "Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, at the gates. Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."



1. Explore It! ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Today's Gospel has a theme of alertness and being awake for the day of the coming of the Son of Justice. Jesus uses the lesson of the fig tree, whose buds indicate the coming of fruitfulness. As the fig tree and its blossom give a sign of what is to come, Jesus tells His disciples to begin to watch for the signs of disorder and "tribulations", a wake-up call to watch for God's response. While it is tempting to think that the response will be

anger and vengeance, Christ the King is the divine response. Jesus begins the rearrangement of things by announcing that the old order, symbolized by the vision of the planets falling, is coming to an end. Jesus is then the new and stable sign of the new order. As people once set their sense of permanence by the stars and season, Jesus establishes Himself as the new way of orderliness and holiness.

2. Connect It! ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

As we grow up, we often learn more about being prepared and responsible for the things that are happening in our lives. Ultimately, the tasks that we have in our lives that require a level of preparedness all teach us to be aware for indications to Jesus' coming on the last day. Daily tasks that involve arriving on time and meeting

deadlines all indicate this common theme. Jesus tells us that there is no way of predicting the final day that God has planned. The only way to truly be ready is to always live in a way of preparedness: receiving the sacraments regularly, growing one's faith, and being an active member of the church.

3. Reflect It!

A. Negative elements of apocalyptic imagery can easily daunt and overwhelm us. How do you ensure that this does not happen? How do you allow your heart to be consoled by the image of the glorious Son of Man, coming on the clouds to gather his chosen and faithful ones from all over the earth?

B. What are the sacred signs of the coming of the Lord in your life? How do you remain watchful, committing yourselves to the day that the Lord comes, with a deep attitude of faith and trust?

C. Do we continue to speculate as to the hour and modality of the Lord's second coming? Or do we allow our faith to be inflamed by the expectation of the Lord's coming?

D. How do we recognize the signs of salvation and fully participate in it?

4. Remember It!

**“And then they will see
‘the Son of Man coming
in the clouds’ with great
power and glory.”
(Mk 13:31)**

6. Pray It!

Dear Lord Jesus, we believe that joy and true happiness lies within You. Guide us to always seek the kingdom of heaven, to not worry about the earthly wealth and lose the reward You promised to those faithful and those who always seek You in all things. Amen.

5. Live It! [**READINESS**]

Readiness - an act of preparing for something that could happen at any time.

Our parents bring us to school and church to allow us to be ready for the “real world”; work, take care of others, share in God's love. Sometimes we don't know how important it is to be ready since each day brings new things!

Think about two things each night: What is something school helps us be ready for (like teamwork, studies, drills) and what is something church helps us be ready for (like praying, trusting in God)? Each night talk with your parents to understand how ready you are!



Pilate said to Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here." So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?"

Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."



1. Explore It!

Today's Gospel recounts the conversation between Pilate and Jesus:

- ♦ Pilate is concerned that Jesus is the king of the Jews and would challenge the Roman Authorities. He is worried about his reputation as he recently accepted the position as governor of Judea and wanted to keep everything peaceful.
- ♦ Jesus does not answer Pilate's questions directly. Rather, Jesus affirms that He is a king; but His Kingdom does not belong to this world.
- ♦ Jesus adds that He came to be a witness to the truth. In Greek, a witness is a martyr, one who affirms by his life, his blood; everything that he is and he has, and the truth that he believes. Jesus gives His life for the truth, the Word of the Father (Jn 17:17).

Let's listen carefully to each word that comes from Jesus. Think and answer the following questions:



1. If Jesus is a King, what kind of King is He?
2. Jesus repeats three times that His kingdom "is not of this world". If His kingdom does not belong to this world, what kind of kingdom is it?
3. Is it the truth that Jesus came to be a witness and to set us free from sin?



2. Connect It!

When we think about kings and rulers, examples that often come to mind are political figures that we have learned about through history or from those who are currently political leaders today. In the Gospel reading today, when Pilate asked Jesus if He was the king of the Jews, he was thinking about someone that is like a political figure who existed on the earth. Jesus is indeed a king as He explains, but He isn't a king like any that we might have learned about. Unlike the kings we learn about in our history books that were considered monumental for their wonderful or horrific deeds, Jesus is a king that promotes love, humility, and generosity. Jesus is a king that we can talk to and is our friend, not like the kings from the history books that lived far away behind cascading walls of their fortified castles. Even today we are able to walk with Jesus and talk with Him.

6. Pray It!

Lord, teach us how to reverence and adore You through humility and understanding. Allow us to know Your love and sacrifice so that we may fully appreciate all that You've done for us. Amen.

3. Reflect It!

- Listening to today's Gospel, we note that Pilate tried to make contact with Jesus and tried to have a dialogue with Him to know Him more. In our own life, do we ever tried to enter into, ask, call or/and hold a dialogue with the Lord?
- Knowing that Jesus is truly a king and His kingdom is in heaven, do we ever wish to enter into His kingdom in our lives? If yes, what have we done to earn His kingdom?

4. Remember It!

“You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.” (John 18:37)

5. Live It! [Reverence]

an honour or respect that is felt for or shown to someone.

Many people deserve our reverence because of the knowledge, love, and sacrifices they made for us, whether we know it or not. Some great examples are our grandparents, who might have taken care of your parents AND you as you were growing up. Another is our teachers, who are a source of information for us to grow. And of course Jesus, who continues to teach us to live faithfully.

Showing reverence doesn't just have to be for people. Each night, think of things or places that deserve reverence and talk to your parents about them (hint: one example is where you go each Sunday!). Can you make the connections why they're important?

References

- Daily Reflection by Larry Gillick, S.J. November 25, 2012: <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Archive/2012/112512.html>
- Lection Divina, Sunday November 25, 2012

BE ALERT FOR THE COMING OF JESUS

WEEK C-AI

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Jesus said to his disciples,

"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads

because your redemption is at hand. Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth. Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man."

1. Explore It!

1. Go back and re-read verses 25 – 26. Did you feel fear or peace? Why? (Take a few minutes to exchange your answers with your classmate on either your left or right side.)
2. Now, re-read verses 27 – 28. Hope is the feeling of anticipation and renewal in our hearts. Since we believe in Jesus and are His followers, we too will be saved.
3. Let's read verses 34-36 again. Be watchful for Jesus' second coming to the world. He comes when we least expected. Jesus also reminds us to pray constantly and ask for strength to wait for His coming.



2. Connect It!

Many families are too familiar with the kind of fatigue Jesus refers to here. We may be concerned about a family member's health, our job security, our children's education, or any number of other concerns. All these are important matters. Jesus does not promise an end to daily worries and fears, but He does teach His disciples that they will have the strength to withstand anxiety if they stay focused on Him, remaining vigilant for His return and praying for strength to endure all tribulations. Through prayer, God helps us stay focused on that which is most important in our lives.

3. Reflect It!

We cannot know when the end of the world will arrive or even when our lives will end. Therefore, what can we know or do to prepare for it? The answer is to always remain alert:

- ⇒ Avoid things that keep us away from God; always keep God's commandments and live them truthfully. What things will you avoid to ensure you live by God's commandments?
- ⇒ Pray constantly and ask God for strength to wait for His coming so that the day we die, it will be a day of joy, not terror.

4. Remember It!

“BE VIGILANT AT ALL TIMES AND PRAY...” (LUKE 21:36)

5. Live It! [Watchfulness]

Watchfulness is a state of being constantly attentive and responsive to signs of opportunity, activity, or danger.

Spend this week to watch and be cognizant of a sin you repeatedly commit and make a promise to fight it. Before our battles against sin, we must know

- (1) What is sin?
- (2) When and/or where we are tempted to sin?
- (3) Why do we sin?

To fight the sin, we need to pay close attention to What/When/Where and do the following:

1. Always pray and ask God for help and strength to fight it.
2. Come up with something positive to do instead, such as reading, listening to music, exercising, etc.
3. Change your schedule and/or go to different places.

6. Pray It!

Lord, help me during this Advent Season, which begins today, to see that the priority in my life is preparing me for a truly “spiritual” Christmas. I know it is a busy time of the year. Help me to remain focused on fighting my sin so that I can be worthy to celebrate the birth of Jesus and to receive Him in my life. Amen.

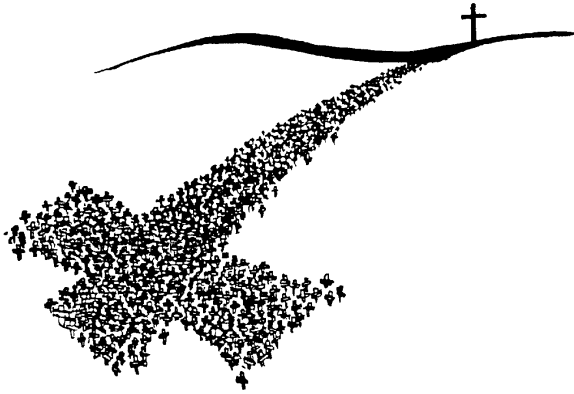


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- Daily Reflection by Larry Gillick, S.J. December 2, 2012: <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Archive/2012/120212.html>
- Lection Divina, Sunday December 2, 2012
- http://www.scborromeo.org/biblestu/c_adv_1.pdf



PREPARE THE WAY FOR JESUS



In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. John went proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah: A voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

1. Explore It!

1. **Tiberius Caesar** was an ancient Roman emperor who ruled from year A.D. 14-37
 2. **Pontius Pilate** was the prefect of Judea in A.D. 26-36
 3. **Herod** is Herod Antipas in 4 B.C. – A.D. 39
 4. **Herod** and **Philip** are sons of **Herod the Great**
 5. **Annas** was the high priest from A.D. 6-15
 6. **Caiaphas** was son-in-law of **Annas** and high priest A.D. 18-37
 7. **John the Baptist** is the son of **Zechariah**
 8. **Zechariah** is the father of John the Baptist. He was a priest belonging to the order of Abijah.
 9. **Baptism of Repentance** is turning from sins and turning to a new life with good behavior.
 10. **Isaiah** is a hopeful, faithful and loving prophet of God who predicted the coming of Jesus Christ. He lived 700 years before the birth of Jesus.
- ◆ For centuries, the Israelites lived in expectation of the coming of the Messiah. In 63 B.C., Rome invaded Palestine and imposed a severe form of slavery on the people. With Rome's rulings, Jewish people were desperate for the coming of the political Liberator, the Saviour who will save and deliver them from Rome.
 - ◆ The presence of John the Baptist in the desert was a sign that God was once again visiting His people. John appeared as a prophet and announced the coming of "the salvation of God".
 - ◆ John preached, baptized, and invited people to prepare the way of the Lord through a baptism of repentance. He successfully opened many hearts to repentance and eventually led people to believe in Jesus.

3. Reflect It!

2. Connect It!

During the season of Advent, we choose to add many activities to our family's schedule to prepare for our celebration of Christmas. John the Baptist reminds us that our repentance is another way in which we can prepare for the Lord's coming and our celebration of Christmas. Parish communities often offer a communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the Advent season. Your family might choose to participate in the communal celebration of the sacrament, or you might seek out this sacrament on an individual basis.

John the Baptist's mission was to prepare the way of the Lord. He preached and prepared people for the coming of Jesus. His message was clear and simple - turning away from sin and towards a new life with good behaviour.

Today, we again hear John's message through the Gospel. How will you respond to John's message?

We are living in a Christmas season, a wonderful time of the year. We are preparing to give gifts and receive them as well. How can we prepare a gift to give to Jesus and open our hearts to receive Him? What gift should we prepare? What about our repentance? Is it a worthy gift for Jesus?

Yes, it is. It is Jesus' most favourite gift to receive from us.

4. Remember It!

"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths..."
(Luke 3:4)

5. Live It! [Integrity]

Having **integrity** is having quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.

6. Pray It!

God the Father, we are waiting for the coming of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to prepare our gifts for Him by truly turning from sin and opening our hearts to receive Him. Amen.

Being honest with ourselves is a great first step in preparing for Jesus. We understand what we're missing, and know what we need to do towards making it right. Each night, sit with your parents and talk about one thing you're lacking when preparing for Jesus, and discuss the steps you need to make it right!

References

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Lectio Divina, Sunday, December 9, 2012

Change Our lives for Jesus

Week C-A3

Luke 3:10-18

The crowds asked John the Baptist, "What then should we do?" He said to them in reply, "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He answered them, "Stop collecting more than what is prescribed." Soldiers also asked him, "And what is it that we should do?" He told them, "Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be

satisfied with your wages." Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Exhorting them in many other ways, he preached good news to the people.



{ I. Explore It! }

(V. 10) **the crowds** asked John the Baptist, "What then should we do?"

John: "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise." John did not tell the crowd to offer animal sacrifices, fast, or do old rituals. He tells them to do something more radical, *do charity to neighbors*. John's teaching is similar to Jesus'—Love your neighbors as yourself

(v. 12) **Tax Collectors** asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

John: "Stop collecting more than what is prescribed." Tax collectors were despised by the Jewish people because of their greed and collaboration with the Roman occupiers. They collected more than the Roman tax system requires and then kept the extra coins. John tells them to do ethical works.

(v. 15) **People** are filled with expectation that, "John might be the Messiah"

John: "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Many false prophets claimed the title to deceive people. John is not. Rather, he tells the people that he is not the Messiah and points them to Jesus, who is to come. John preaches and acts ethically.

2. Connect It!

The theme of the season of Advent is sometimes described as a period of waiting for the birth of Jesus. However, today's Gospel reading suggests something different. John the Baptist did not tell the crowds to wait for the Messiah. He told them to prepare for the Messiah through acts of repentance. If Advent is a time of waiting, it is not the sitting in the doctor's office kind of waiting.

It is a busy time of preparation, more like the waiting we might do when preparing for dinner guests. Our challenge is to not make this season a frenzied time, but rather a time of joyful anticipation and making ready for God who comes to dwell among us and changes our lives with the gift of salvation.

{ 3. Reflect It! }

Today's Gospel paints a beautiful picture of people with repentant hearts and the ethical teachings of John the Baptist. Ethical living is an important issue nowadays. Companies want us to think their products are ethical. People act and make others think they are ethical. Yet ethical classes are no longer covered in public school curriculums and parents are finding it challenging to teach their children ethics, values, and morals. Nevertheless, the media avoids discussion and coverage of ethical living because they find the issue complicated, confusing, and guilt-inducing.

Is ethical living really that complicated?

{ 6. Pray It! }

Lord God, I find myself surrounded by values that have no place in Your kingdom. That which is most sacred to You is trivialized and made common. Television, movies, newspapers, works associates, even neighbourhood families accept as natural: sexual infidelities, drunkenness, drug use, violence, and pornography. I see these things so regularly that I find myself growing callous to what I used to find shocking. Part of me wants to follow Your teachings. Part of me wants to "fit in" and make friends easily. Amen.



{ 4. Remember It! }

"...HE WILL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE." (LUKE 3:16)

5. Live It! [ETHICS]

"Ethics not only directs a man on how to act if he wishes to be morally good, but also obligates him to do good and avoid evil."

- a definition from Catholic Encyclopaedia.

Social media is transforming the way we live. There are a lot of moral and ethical choices on the internet. We should learn and develop a moral compass to guide us through those choices. Let us call it a R³-Compass and use the compass' guide while we are on the internet.

Respect people's privacy:

- Do I have a permission to post photos or videos of others?

Respect people's feelings:

- How will people feel when we post Photos/ videos on FB or Instagram?
- How will people feel when we post a text message on social media?

Respect people's property:

- Should I download or share songs, games and videos?
- Should I use cracked/hacked games and computer software?



Mary Brings **Jesus** to Elizabeth and John the Baptist

Week C-A4

Luke 1:39-45

³⁹ Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴² cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."



1. Explore It!

Verse 39-40: Mary's visit with Elizabeth

After the angel informed her that Elizabeth was pregnant, Mary immediately went to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Mary travelled more than 100 kilometers from Nazareth to the mountains of Judea at a time when coaches and trains were unavailable. During the meeting, they discovered in each other a mystery that they did not yet know, which filled them with great joy.

Verse 41-44: Elizabeth's greeting

Elizabeth represented the Old Testament, which was coming to an end; Mary, represented the New that was about to begin. In the meeting of Elizabeth and Mary, the gift of the Holy Spirit manifested itself and caused the child in Elizabeth's womb to rejoice. To this day, Elizabeth's words are part of the best known and most recited Psalm in the whole world, the Hail Mary.

Verse 45: Elizabeth praises Mary

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." Elizabeth's praise of Mary was brought to completion when Jesus praised his mother, "Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it" (Lk 11:28).

2. Connect It!

Having a family that can support you throughout any ordeal or joyous occasion is a blessing. They provide foundation and stability, especially in any unexpected changes. Recognizing the presence of God with others help us become closer and find solace in knowing one is on the right path.

Ever work on a large puzzle in a group? Notice how others found patterns or shapes you couldn't. God works also in this way for us; observe that sometimes we need the help of others to recognize God's presence and action in our lives.

3. Reflect It!

⇒ What pleased or touched you most in this text? Why?

Perhaps it was the care that Mary had for her cousin after the angel informed her that Elizabeth was pregnant. Mary hurried and travelled by foot to visit and help Elizabeth who lived 100 kilometres away.

⇒ Do we really care for others like Mary cared for Elizabeth or do we just think we do?

⇒ Do we deceive ourselves to feel good?

[4. Remember It!]

**"Blessed are you
who believed that
what was spoken
to you by the Lord
would be fulfilled."
(Luke 1:45)**

5. Live It! [CARING]

Caring: The virtue of understanding, kindness, concern, and compassion for others.

"I have a brother who is severely visually impaired and categorized as a blind person. As well as being blind his left hand is partly paralyzed so that he cannot use it.....I decided to accept the responsibility to take care of my brother.....It was a big responsibility because I had to cook for both of us every day and clean everything, as he cannot do many of the things that would be done by the average individual. I had to sort out his belongings, take him to places where he needed to be and fill out all his forms. Prior to my brother moving in I thought that caring for him would occupy my time and stop me from my studies and that I would fall behind everyone else on the course. However, I now realize that whilst caring for my brother, a whole new horizon opened up in front of me. I discovered that there is much more to this life; **this life is not just about me.** My personality and character grew so much....The word 'service' found a very deep new meaning and value in my mind and heart." (Entry 2009 Lifewide Learning Prize).

Let's show our love and care to at least one of our family members this week:

I will _____

for _____.

6. Pray It!

Lord, during this time of prayer, we want to enter into a deeper relationship with You. We want to experience your loving presence in the daily activities of our lives. As Christmas Day approaches, we want to grow in a sense of love and care for those less fortunate than ourselves, and lead us to grow in a sense of responsibility for our brothers and sisters. Amen.



References:

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THE BOY JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

The Holy Family

WEEK C-C1 Luke 2:41-52



Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers,

listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

1. EXPLORE IT!

The feast of the Passover is observed by the Israelites to commemorate the first Passover, when God delivered them from slavery in Egypt. All of the Israelites are required to make a pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem. Families often travel together in caravans, like the Holy Family did in today's Gospel. On their way back to Nazareth, Joseph and Mary thought that Jesus was in the caravan and when they could not find him, they went back to Jerusalem where they found Him in the temple. Even though Jesus said that He must be in the temple, "He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them."

2. CONNECT IT!

In today's Gospel, we have a glimpse of Jesus as a child. Although Jesus has great understanding of Scriptures and causes the teachers to be astounded, He listens to the teachers and asks questions. Similarly, we can gain knowledge and understanding as we continue to listen and ask questions. More importantly, Jesus shows great humility when He returns to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph and obeys them.

Mary, while she does not understand what Jesus is saying, teaches us the art of contemplation by keeping "all these things in her heart." She does not dismiss any event. Instead, she meditates and reflects deeply and thoroughly all that happens.

3. REFLECT IT!

When you are in the midst of the teachers or the youth leaders, you can gain much understanding by doing what Jesus did: listening and asking questions. It is only when you fully understand, do you grow in wisdom. It is the same as in school, with VEYM and in your spiritual journey.

Do you ask questions with the purpose of gaining understanding? Do you listen to internalize so you can incorporate what you learn into your life? How do you converse with God, to listen and ask Him questions?

4. REMEMBER IT!

*"And Jesus advanced
in wisdom and age
and favor before God
and man."
(Luke 2:52)*

6. PRAY IT!

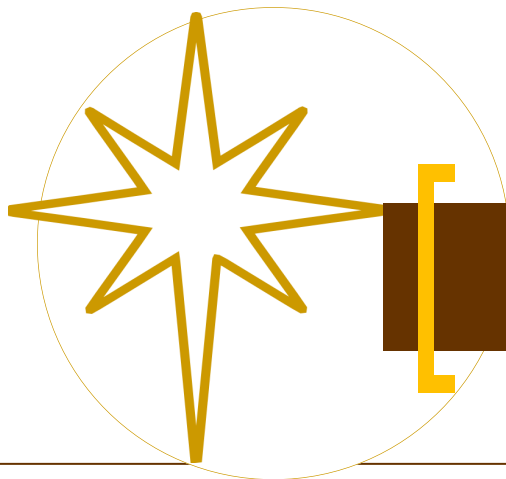
O Jesus, help us to be good students and learn from our teachers, our youth leaders, but most importantly You. Open our ears and our hearts to listen as we ask questions so that we come to recognize You in our lives. Through the intercession of Mary, we ask this of You, Lord Jesus, who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

5. LIVE IT! [UNDERSTANDING]

Understanding: one of the gift of the Holy Spirit that gives us a deeper insight and penetration of divine truths held by faith, and to help us recognize how God wants us to live.

The Scriptures is one of the foundations of the VEYM. Make it a habit to read the Scriptures daily and ask the Holy Spirit to bestow the gift of Understanding abundantly upon you. Learn from Mary and contemplate upon the readings. Ask your youth leader, your chaplain assistant, or your chaplain for their insights to help with your understanding as well.



Epiphany of the Lord**FOLLOW JESUS' STAR**

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel." Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen



at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

[1. EXPLORE IT!]

Israel had been waiting and hoping for the Messiah, a Davidic king, foretold by so many prophets to come and restore the kingdom. The prophecy was not a secret to only the Israelites as demonstrated by the magi in today's Gospel. For several centuries, Israel was ruled under foreign powers: Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans. King Herod was not a Davidic king but

was appointed by the Romans. When the magi told him that they were going to do homage to the newborn king (i.e., give formal public acknowledgment of allegiance), Herod was troubled. He asked them to find the child and report back, not so he can do homage as well but so that he can eliminate the threat. However, the magi was warned in a dream and did not return to Herod.

[2. CONNECT IT!]

Today, we celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord – the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the magi. God is Lord over all peoples, not just the Israelites. When the magi received God's revelation by means of the star, they left home and followed it, bringing with them treasures to pay the newborn king homage. As Eucharistic Youths, we should follow the magi's example by intentionally seeking Jesus and properly preparing the gift of self to offer Him, especially when we attend Mass.

[3. REFLECT IT!]

When visiting someone, it is custom to come bearing gifts as a sign of respect. The gift also says much about both the giver and the receiver. The magi gave their treasures – the thing they greatly valued – gold representing Jesus' kingship, frankincense for His divine priesthood, and myrrh for His sacrificial death.

How about you? When you visit Jesus (at Mass, Eucharistic Adoration or Visitation, in prayers), how do you prepare to meet Him? What gifts do you offer? What do the gifts say about

[4. REMEMBER IT!]

***“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.”
(Matthew 2:2)***

[5. LIVE IT!] [REVERENCE]

Reverence – deep respect; veneration; honor

Let us imitate the magi in giving reverence to God by preparing ourselves for Mass. Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation so you can be in the state of grace to receive the Eucharist. Prepare a gift and present it during the offertory as a prayer (the gift can be yourself, family and friends, joy, happiness, anxiety, and even sin). Remember to genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament and bow at the appropriate times as external signs of showing respect to God.

[6. PRAY IT!]

Evening Prayer for
Epiphany Cantic – Revelation 15:3-4

Mighty and wonderful are your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Righteous and true are your ways,
O King of the nations!
Who would dare refuse you honor,
or the glory due your name, O Lord!
Since you alone are holy, all nations shall
come and worship in your presence,
your mighty deeds are clearly seen.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.



Baptism of Jesus



WEEK C - BAPTISM OF JESUS

LUKE 3:15-16.21-22



Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. John answered them all, saying, “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

1. EXPLORE IT!

John the Baptist is the last prophetic voice of the promise of the Old Testament. He is called to prepare the people of Israel for the coming of the Lord. In this Gospel account of Jesus' baptism, we hear John the Baptist address the confusion of the people who thought that he might be the Messiah. In response, John contrasts the baptism that he performs with the Baptism that Jesus will inaugurate. John the Baptist says that he has baptized with water, but that someone will come and baptize with the Holy Spirit. The type of baptism that John performed was not yet a Christian Baptism; it was only a preparation for Christian Baptism through which sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received. John's mission was to

prepare people to receive God's forgiveness through the baptism of conversion, which meant a change in the way one sees their relationship with God. According to the prophet, changing one's life means practicing fraternity and justice. People are invited to be open to the person of Jesus, the saving Messiah. In the first scene of the Gospel passage, John prophetically affirms that there is one “who is mightier” than he who is to come, a term used in the Old Testament to signify an attribute of the Creator, considered sovereign of the universe and of history.

“I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals.” Loosening the thongs is a task of a slave. John uses this humble gesture to describe himself as a servant of the Messiah, moreover he feels

humble and unworthy to the person of Jesus.

In the second scene, God Himself reveals Christ with solemn words: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased”. This scene is choreographed with the heavens opening, the Spirit descending in the form of a dove, and a voice from heaven all showing the divine quality of the words pronounced on the person of Jesus Christ. This meeting is verified in the person of Jesus. John the Baptist presents Jesus as the Messiah – who in the Old Testament remains simply a man, even though perfect – and now God defines Jesus as the “beloved” Son. To be called “my beloved son” means both that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and also metaphysically explains Jesus' divine nature.

2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus' baptism inaugurates his mission. Similarly, our Baptism inaugurates our mission as Christians.

3. REFLECT IT!

We have been baptized in the name of Christ, "in the Holy Spirit and fire." How are we responding to God's call to experience God's solidarity with our personal history? Are we willing to follow the way of Jesus, the Suffering Servant?

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"You are my beloved Son;
with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3: 22)**

5. LIVE IT! [PURITY]

Purity is the virtue of benevolence - acting without any trace of evil or selfish motives.

Today, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, thank God for the gift of your own baptism and renew your own baptismal promises:

V. Do you reject Satan? *R. I do.*

V. And all his works? *R. I do.*

V. And all his empty promises? *R. I do.*

V. Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth? *R. I do.*

V. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?
R. I do.

V. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?
R. I do.

V. God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever.
R. Amen.

This week, resist the devil, keep yourself pure, live holy, and pray to stand firm in God's will.

6. PRAY IT!

Lord God, we implore You to sustain us with Your grace so that we may behave truly as children of the light. Grant us the strength to abandon the habits of the old man so that we may be constantly renewed in the Spirit, clothed and imbued by the thoughts and feelings of Christ. Lord Jesus, you willed to be baptized by John the Baptist with the baptism of penance. We turn the eyes of our heart to You so that we may learn to pray as You prayed to the Father at your baptism, with filial trust and complete faithfulness to His will. Amen!

Jesus at the Wedding in Cana

WEEK C-02 JOHN 2:1-11



There was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." Now

there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

1. EXPLORE IT!

The wedding at Cana is the location of the first miracle Jesus performs. It is significant that out of all the places where Jesus could perform His first miracle, He would choose a wedding feast, a celebration of the sacramental union. At the bequest and intercession of His mother, Mary, Jesus turns water into wine. Here, as elsewhere in the Bible, Mary is not mentioned by name, but referred to as mother of Jesus. Mary is influential in the first miracle, as she is important in the Bible as one who not only gave birth to Christ, but is present during His crucifixion and is a witness to His glory. Mary entrusted everything in Jesus, knowing that Jesus is God and nothing is impossible for Him.

2. CONNECT IT!

Mary puts all her trust in her Son and Jesus responds by performing His very first miracle, turning water into wine. As the Mother of our Church, Jesus reminds us that through Mother Mary's intercession, we too are able to become closer to God. We need to trust Mary with all our worries and troubles because she will bring them to Jesus. We also need to "do whatever he tells you," as Mary told the servants at the wedding.

3. REFLECT IT!

We are blessed to have Mary, our Mother, as our protector and guide to Jesus' blessings. We seek her help to have a heart full of love and a watchful eye to recognize when others need help. What are some ways we can trust Mary with our worries and troubles?

4. REMEMBER IT!

***“Do whatever he
tells you.”***

(John 2:5)



5. LIVE IT!

[**SYMPATHY**]

Sympathy is a feeling or impulse of compassion.

During your evening prayers, make a list of people you have come across during the day and think about their needs. Ask God to protect them and grant them blessings to ease their burdens and to meet their needs. Use the prayer in the “Prayer It!” section below.

6. PRAY IT!

Dear Lord, I want to take a minute, not to ask anything from You, but to simply pray for my (father, mother, uncle, etc.) _____.

Please protect _____ and grant him/her the graces that he/she needs at this times. Amen.



JESUS IS THE MESSIAH



WEEK C-O3

LUKE 1:1-4; 4:14-21

Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all.

He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

1. EXPLORE IT!

Luke was a Syrian from Antioch. He was a physician by profession, a man of culture with perfect Greek. He was not an Apostle but was an early Gentile convert (about A.D. 40) and a disciple of Paul. The name Theophilus means, “beloved of God”. Who Theophilus is remains unknown and could be generic for “all Christians”.

Today’s Gospel recalls the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry after He was baptized and tempted in the desert. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at His baptism (Luke 3:22)

and He was full of the Spirit and led by the Spirit when He went into the desert (Luke 4:1). Jesus returned to Galilee filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus returned to Nazareth, where He had grown up. Jesus was a teacher. As such, He had the authority to address people about God and God’s plan. Jesus was teaching openly in the synagogues, the Jews’ place of worship. Those in Nazareth thought that they knew Him and His origin.

In the synagogue on the Sabbath day in Nazareth, Jesus reads the passage from the prophet Isaiah (Is 61:1-2). This is where the prophet announces the coming of a messiah who will free the people from all their afflictions.

“The poor” refers not simply to a social condition, but also to a religious attitude of indigence and humility towards God. It refers to those who do not rely on their possessions and merits, but trust in God’s goodness and mercy. Likewise, “release” is seen to be a spiritual sense – becoming free from the blindness and oppression of sin.

Today, the promise is fulfilled. The waiting is over, the Messiah has arrived.

3. REFLECT IT!

Jesus publicly states that what He reads in the scroll of the prophet Isaiah is going to be translated into the works of His life by which He will be known. The people in His town thought they knew Him because they knew His parents. Jesus is asking all His hearers to get to know Him in faith that He, Jesus of Nazareth, is the One the prophet Isaiah foretold.

How can we get to know Jesus in faith?

6. PRAY IT!

Imagine yourself sitting in the synagogue with Jesus. Jesus says that He is the Anointed One, the Messiah, and that He will bring good news, sight, freedom, and life into this world. He invites you to be with Him in this mission. What is it that you would want to say to Him?

2. CONNECT IT!

We are baptized into Christ, into being public, into accepting our identities, and being who we believe we are. More happened than merely water being poured on us during our baptism. We were anointed with the oil of holiness. The word “Christ” means, “Anointed”. Holiness, then, is centered on being holy as something we received. We are not holy because of what we do. We are holy because of who we are in Christ - blessed, anointed, and presented to also bring good news, sight, freedom, and life into this world with Jesus.

4. REMEMBER IT!

“Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”
(Luke 4:21)

5. LIVE IT! [RESPECT]

Respect is an act of giving particular attention and opening up to the Spirit of the Lord. We expect to be treated with respect by others but we will need to treat ourselves with respect first. In baptism, we were anointed with oil. We are called to holiness.

This week, open up to the Spirit of the Lord and live the call to Holiness with our heart, mind, and soul. Treat others with dignity and honor as brothers and sisters in Christ.



The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

Week C-O4

Luke 4:21-30

Jesus began speaking in the synagogue, saying: "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?" He said to them, "Surely you will quote me this proverb, 'Physician, cure yourself,' and say, 'Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.'" And he said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went away.



1. EXPLORE IT!

Last Sunday's Gospel ended with the same setting that begins today's Gospel. Jesus reads a passage from Isaiah in the synagogue, telling His listeners that He is the One who fulfills the same prophetic announcement. The waiting is over and the Messiah has arrived.

The people in the synagogue knew Jesus. They showed admiration and astonishment at His charm and eloquence. They were His neighbors and His relatives. They were excited and expected Him to do great things for them. After all, they knew Him. They watched Him grow up and thought of Him only as human.

Knowing their self-centered excitement, Jesus performed no miracle for the Nazoreans, but instead reproached them. Jesus made two scriptural references to a well acquainted widow (1 Kings 17:1) and leper (2 Kings 5:14). God cares for them through Elijah and Elisha. The congregation knew immediately what He was saying by making these references. Faith, not familiarity, is required for miracles. They lacked faith to believe that He is the fulfillment of the scripture (Isaiah 61:1-2).

The people were furious. Their pride was so badly hurt that they were ready to kill Him. Not only did they refuse to accept Jesus, they wanted to get rid of him. But His hour had not come. He walked away, leaving the crowd paralyzed.

2. CONNECT IT!

In today's Gospel, the people of Nazareth know Jesus very well. Nazareth is a small village. They know He is the son of Joseph. They speak highly of Him and are amazed at His gracious words, yet they question His background. Jesus is someone the townspeople know, but do not accept even after they heard of all the miracles Jesus did. Jesus teaches us today about how pride can get in the way of receiving feedback that would make us a better person. This does not only apply to us, but those in position of leadership and power. Jesus encourages us to be open, to be willing to change, and to be willing to help others and ourselves, be a better person.

3. REFLECT IT!

Pride is one of 7 cardinal sins or deadly sins. Pride is the most deadly sin of all. It is written (Sirach 10:15), "Pride is the beginning of all sin." The antidote for pride is humility, "A quality by which a person considering his own defects has a lowly opinion of himself and willingly submits himself to God and to others for God's sake."²

We often find it difficult to listen to someone we know well or someone we see inferior or of lower status than us. Familiarity may prompt us to judge quickly. Do you recall a moment you took offense at your friend who just told you the truth about yourself? How did you feel? Were you filled with fury?

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place."
(Luke 4:24)**

5. LIVE IT! [ACCEPTANCE]

Acceptance is the act of accepting something or someone.

Learn to accept the truth; sometimes it is different from our ideas or standard. Accept and learn from others, especially if they are inferior or of a lower status than us.

Take notice this week if you heart *fills with fury* when someone corrects you. Record the "incidence" in your spiritual journal.

6. PRAY IT!

I thank You for being above us and knowing what is best for us. In this life, we are all searching for our purpose and asking for Your will to be done. I pray that as each of us comes to a point in our lives where we dare to ask You to reveal Your will for us, You will put us in a place of acceptance of what You reveal to us. It may not be what we want, but it will surely be what we need in order to live a life fully invested in You. Amen.

¹ http://www.scborromeo.org/biblestu/c_ot_4.pdf

² <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/o7543b.htm>



WEEK C-O5
LUKE 5:1-11

BELIEVE IN JESUS

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Simon said in reply, “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.” When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that the boats were in danger of sinking.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

1. EXPLORE IT!

Lake of Gennesaret is the ancient name for the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was teaching the crowd on Simon’s boat. The early Church fathers saw in Simon’s boat a symbol of the pilgrim church on earth. Christ got into the boat in order to teach the crowds; and from the barque of Peter, the Church, He continues to teach the whole world today.

Jesus asked Simon to go for a catch. It seemed unusual for Simon to lower the net as nighttime was the normal time for fishing. Simon and his friends had worked hard throughout the day and had caught nothing even during the normal peak time. Yet, something happened where Master Jesus allowed Simon to reply, “At your command I will lower the nets”. Following Jesus’ command does not mean Simon acted unreasonably or irrationally. He does have a reason to not lower the nets, but Simon’s trust in Jesus goes beyond reason and he does not contradict Jesus.

Although the spotlight is on Simon Peter, the companions are in the shadows and are ready to help. Another boat accompanies Simon's boat to the deep water and is able to help Simon with the miracle catch. This is truly a miracle because first, the fish was not caught earlier, and second, because the weak nets were able to catch enough fish to fill nearly two boats.

The Gospel according to Luke begins to use the name, "Simon Peter" after this miracle catch instead of just simply calling him, "Simon" as done earlier (Not until Luke 6:14 does Simon's name change to Peter). Simon Peter addressed Jesus as Lord instead of Master. He recognizes the presence of the divine and his sinfulness as he says, "I am a sinful man." One does not have to be sinless in order to approach Jesus. Jesus' mercy helps us to recognize our sinfulness and to repent.

"From now on" marked the beginning for Simon Peter, James, and John as a new period of salvation: they left everything and followed Him.

2. CONNECT IT!

After working hard, Simon's net remained empty. How often do we work hard but don't seem to have what we want? Do we feel empty, helpless, lost, and disappointed? The emptiness of Simon's life is not the lack of fish. In today's Gospel, Jesus shows Simon Peter the vision of a fisher of men, of a personal relationship with Jesus, where Simon Peter is ready to leave the boat and the net to follow Jesus.

How often do you allow Jesus into your life? Have you experienced the fullness that Simon Peter felt after he obeyed Jesus' command?

3. REFLECT IT!

While Jesus gets into Simon's boat without being asked or invited, Simon allows Jesus to do so and begin to follow Jesus' command. How do you allow Jesus into your life?

4. REMEMBER IT!

"Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." (Luke 5:5)

5. LIVE IT! [TRUST]

How do you follow and cooperate with Jesus, especially with what Jesus demands of you? How do you learn from Simon Peter to say to Jesus: "At your command I will ..."?

Write in your spiritual journal an experience when you wanted to do "your way" and when you put your trust in Jesus and followed His command.

6. PRAY IT!

O Christ Jesus, when all is dark and we feel our weakness and helplessness, give us the sense of Your presence, Your love, and Your strength. Help us to have perfect trust in Your protecting love and strengthening power, so that nothing may frighten or worry us, for, living close to You, we shall see Your hand, Your purpose, Your will through all things. (St. Ignatius of Loyola)

JESUS PROCLAIMS GOD'S BLESSINGS

WEEK C –O6

LUKE 6:17, 20-26



Jesus came down with the Twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground with a great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for

joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way."

I. Explore It!

In today's Gospel, we listened to Luke's account of Jesus teaching His disciples the Sermon on the Mount. Luke lists four Beatitudes with their antitheses. During Jesus' time, Israel had not been a free state – it was under the Roman power which appointed Herod as king. People were suffering as they waited for the Messiah to come and restore the Davidic kingdom. Jesus consoled them by teaching them the Beatitudes, the blessed way to live this temporal life in preparation for the eternal life to come. He also warned them that the comforts of this temporal life is not a guarantee for the eternal life, but that they may cause eternal suffering.

The Beatitudes say blessed are the poor, the hungry, the weeping, and the persecuted; their antitheses say woe to those who are rich, filled, laughing, and spoken well of. Who are the poor, the hungry, the weeping, and the persecuted?

- The poor are those who are humble and aware of their spiritual lack and of their need for God. They are able to open themselves up to God and find joy of having God as the greatest treasure. On the other hand, the rich are those whose treasure is of earthly value (such as money) and do not seek God as the ultimate treasure.

- The hungry are those who are yearning for justice for everybody and because there is so much injustice in the world, they suffer intensely. The closer they are to Christ, the more intense their love and their hunger. In contrast, the filled are those who are satisfied with the status quo because they are not suffering injustices, either against them or others.
- The weeping are those who recognize the sufferings of others as their own. The sins and indifference of others towards God that fills them with sorrow. On the contrary, those who are laughing enjoy their lives without considering the suffering of those around them.
- The persecuted on account of the Son of Man are those who found everything that the human heart is looking for but cannot find outside of Christ and have chosen to live the way of Christ even in the face of adversary. They have received the gift of being drawn into the very heart of Christ's silence which is more joyful than the greatest joys the world can offer. Inversely, those whom people speak well of are those who live in such a way that does not raise oppositions to the societal norms when those norms go against Christ's teachings.

{ 2. Connect It! }

The last article of the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed speaks of our belief in life everlasting. That's our ultimate goal: to be in the kingdom of God eternally. Jesus has come to show us the way to heaven by teaching and living the Beatitudes. He also gives us the necessary graces through the Sacraments to enable us to live the Beatitudes so we can imitate Christ.

{ 3. Reflect It! }

Whether you are poor or rich, hungry or filled, weeping or laughing, persecuted or honored, are you working towards the ultimate goal? Knowing that the ultimate happiness, or beatitude, is being with God eternally, how will this change the way you live?

{ 4. Remember It! }

**"Blessed are you who are poor,
for the kingdom of God
is yours."
(Luke 6:20)**

5. Live It! [**OPTIMISTIC**]

Optimistic – reflecting a favorable view of events or conditions and the expectation of a positive outcome

"Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit" (CCC 1817). It is with this hope that we can be optimistic. On a daily basis, reflect back on your day and ask yourself these questions: How do today's happenings help me get closer to God? How have I lived the Beatitudes today? What can I do better tomorrow?

{ 6. Pray It! }

Act of Hope
O Lord God, I hope by Your grace for the pardon of all my sins and after life here to gain eternal happiness because You have promised it who are infinitely powerful, faithful, kind, and merciful. In this hope I intend to live and die. Amen.

JESUS ASKS US TO LOVE EVEN OUR ENEMIES

Jesus said to his disciples:

“To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.



“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

1. EXPLORE IT!

With the Mosaic covenant, Israel must obey the Law of Moses to obtain blessings or suffer curses for disobedience. The Law of Moses is extensive and reflects the human justice which demands a life for a life, an eye for an eye, etc. Jesus came to bring God's justice in a radical way: the way of love and mercy. He taught his disciples the golden rule of “do to others as you would have them do to you.” He challenged them to “be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” Through this, we have a glimpse of God's incomprehensible love and mercy.

2. CONNECT IT!

As children of God, we are all called to be holy or to be “set apart”. We can no longer act in conformity to the world; we cannot be set apart while following the way of the world. Jesus teaches us exactly how to be set apart in today's Gospel and He lives by it. Most notably, before dying on the cross, Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them...” Instead of retaliating, Jesus stops the cycle of vengeance and hatred. He repays insult with prayer, wrong with forgiveness, and hate with love.

3. REFLECT IT!

Whenever you pray the “Our Father,” pray slowly and deeply reflect especially on the words **“forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”** Do you realize that in order to receive forgiveness from God that you have to forgive others? Do you pray with intention of asking God to help you be merciful towards others?

4. REMEMBER IT!

Do to others as you would have them do to you.”
(Luke 6:31)

5. LIVE IT! [**FORGIVENESS**]

Forgiveness – the act of granting pardon for an offense; ceasing to feel resentment against someone.

When you receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God forgives your sins and restores your relationship with Him. Thus, if someone wrongs you, forgive them and also restore your relationship with them. As God reconcile you to Himself, try your best to reconcile those who wrong you to yourself. Ask the Holy Spirit for help in restoring and strengthening your friendship with others.

6. PRAY IT!

Our Father,
who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day
our daily bread; and forgive us our
trespasses as we forgive those who trespass
against us; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.



Jesus Teaches Us, "Be True To Ourselves"

WEEK C-08

Luke 6:39-45

Jesus told his disciples a parable, "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye.

A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thorn bushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. "A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."



1. EXPLORE IT!

In this parable, Jesus gave us several vivid images to warn us of three dangers:

- Beware of false prophets: Jesus was referring to the Pharisees who would not listen to His Words. They were blind guides because they were supposed to be the teachers of Israel, but they had no idea what God commanded. They had led many people astray. Those who follow false prophets and false religions shall perish. Jesus wanted His disciples to see clearly that He is the perfect Master who did not just preach, He lived with them and walked the talk. Jesus teaches us about Himself, His life witness, and His way of living. If we follow Christ who is perfect, we shall be made perfect with Him.
- Beware of self-righteousness and hypocrisy: It is human nature for us to see other people's failures more clearly and quickly than our own faults, even though our faults may be much larger (wooden beam) than their mistakes (splinters). Jesus asks us to be open and accept others as brothers and sisters without judging them and to examine our own conscience first. This openness toward others will arise in us when we place our trust in God as His children.
- Beware of a deceived heart. – God wants and demands that we are true in our hearts. If the heart is right, the fruit is good, no matter how bad it looks to others. If the heart is evil, the fruit is evil, no matter how good it looks to others.

2. CONNECT IT!

Who do we follow in our lives? People who consider themselves the masters of truth and superior to others are blind guides. If we don't place our faith in Jesus Christ, then we are spiritually blind. How do we gain sight for life? As we read God's Word, we are taking in biblical truth and our eyes can see more and more clearly. The more we learn about Jesus and practice His teaching, the more we will be like Him, our teacher. Even when we have sight, there can be blind spots. How often do we look down on others and their mistakes and forget that we are no better in God's eyes? Ask God to help us remove the obstacles that distort the way we see our lives, the world, our neighbors, and God. It does not matter how much money we give, how precisely we follow the rules, or how often we attend church. To be a true follower and disciple of Jesus Christ, our words and actions must truly reflect the goodness of our hearts.

3. REFLECT IT!

- Am I a blind guide, steering other people away from God? Am I spiritually blind, not seeing or accepting God in my life?
- How do I make a practice of thinking the best of other people, instead of judging them?
- What do my speech and my actions indicate about my heart?

4. REMEMBER IT!

**“A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.”
(Luke 6:45)**

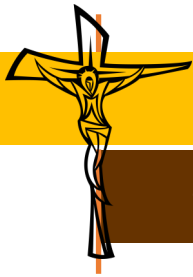
5. LIVE IT! (AUTHENTICITY)

Authenticity - the quality of being real or true.

Each night, examine your conscience and pray to Jesus to help you see your sins. Make a commitment to remove a sin (wooden beam) that prevents you from seeing God in other people clearly.

6. PRAY IT!

Dear God, keep us from the influence of false prophets, save us from self-righteousness and hypocrisy, and deliver us from a deceitful, deceived heart. Help us to become more aware of our own inadequacies, so that we may become more humble and gentle toward other people. Amen.



Facing Temptations Like Jesus

Week C-L1

Luke 4:1-13

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, One does not live on bread alone." Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him, "I shall give to you all this power and glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me." Jesus said to him in reply, "It is written: You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve." Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written: He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you, and: With their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone." Jesus said to him in reply, "It also says, You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test." When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.



1. Explore It!

Before His public ministry, the Spirit led Jesus into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. The desert is perhaps a reference to the Judean wilderness. In other passages of the Gospel of Luke, the desert is the place of demons (Luke 8:29, 11:24).

The number 40 is the number of transition and change: 40 days of rain in the flood, 40 years from Egypt to the promise land, 40 days from private life to public ministry, and 40 days from resurrection to ascension.

The three temptations of Jesus are the same three temptations which were Israel's downfall during their desert experience: they complained about the manna, they worshiped the golden calf, and they tested God. In each case, Jesus shows what they should have done.

The devil knows the Scripture very well, even better than any Christian. The devil uses selective quotes and tries to influence our choices. We must be aware that Holy Scripture is not a collection of individual verses that one can pick and choose to make a point. Holy Scripture is the story of the salvation of God's people and we must always use the Holy Scripture in the context intended by the human authors under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In order to know the context, reading five verses before and after the selected verse is insufficient.

Notice that Jesus, in this reading, refers to different books quoted by Satan to establish the context of Satan's quotation. Holy Scripture never contradicts itself and individual verses should be used very carefully.

When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time. We have to remember that the devil will never stop tempting us. "Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking

2. Connect It!

The devil throws temptation at us every minutes, hours, and days in our lives. As a VEYM member, the Eucharist is the center of our lives which is also the shield to block all temptations thrown at us. To raise that shield, all we have to do is make the sign of the cross and say,

“Lạy Chúa Giêsu Thánh Thể, con yêu mến Chúa.”

3. Reflect It!

Let us reflect on the temptations Jesus faced.

The temptation of hunger

Hunger is when man is at his weakest. We try to satisfy our immediate need. Even with the intensity of bodily hunger, we need much more than just food. Every desire and hunger is ultimately a desire for God. We hunger for so much, for our own life, for our family, for the ministry. These desires are not necessarily bad; the problems come from what we do when we are hungry. All too often we allow these hungers and desires to consume our attention. We seek immediate gratification and we lose focus on God and heaven.

What is your hunger?

4. Remember It!

“You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.” (Luke 4:8)

The temptation of power and glory

We face the temptation for **power and glory** often. After we offer God our hunger and desire, when we trust God to act in our best interest and as things go our way, the results are amazing; school is great. Who gets the credit? Our egos get in the way and we begin to look for honor and recognition. The truth is every good thing we do is a gift from God. It is God who we should honor and glorify.

How do you feel when no one says “thank you” or “good job” for the job well done?

The temptation of trust

When things are going so well, it is easy to say Lord, I **trust** in you. But when our hunger is unfilled, prayer is unheard, do we still trust Him? Do we say God, if You love me, please do this for me?

What is your unheard prayer?

5. Live It! [Determination]

Determination is a quality that makes you continue to try to do or achieve something that is difficult.

You will make the commitment to fast this Friday. Write your commitment in your spiritual journal with three things you hunger/desire for.

On the night before a VEYM meeting, take a moment to review your week.

Are your hungers filled? How so?

If they are unfilled, how do you feel?

6. Pray It!

Write your prayer to ask for determination to love and trust God unconditionally.

The Transfiguration of Jesus



About eight days after he said this, he took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But he did not know what he was saying. While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they

became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They fell silent and did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen.

1. EXPLORE IT!

A few days earlier, Jesus had said that He, the Son of Man, had to be tried and crucified by the authorities (Lk 9:22; Mk 8:31). According to the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, the disciples, especially Peter, did not understand what Jesus had said and were scandalized by the news (Mt 16:22; Mk 8:32). Jesus reacted strongly and turned to Peter calling him Satan (Mt 16:23; Mk 8:33). This was because Jesus' words did not correspond with the ideal of the glorious Messiah whom they imagined. The disciples were not ready to accept the suffering and death of their Master, Jesus. Jesus had already warned them on two occasions and will do it a third time again. In order to encourage them and provide them with the strength to face this crisis, Jesus allows Himself to be transfigured in their sight.

As soon as Jesus starts praying, His appearance changes and He appears glorious. His face changes and His clothes become white and shine. It is this glory that the disciples imagined and expected the Messiah to be. Yet what follows this scene of the transfiguration foreshadows that the way to glory is quite different from what the disciples had imagined. Instead, the transfiguration will be a call to conversion.

Together with Jesus and in the same glorious state are Moses and Elijah, two major figures in the Old Testament that represent the Law and the Prophets. They speak with Jesus about "the Exodus brought to fulfillment in Jerusalem". Thus, in front of the disciples, the Law and the Prophets confirm that Jesus is truly the glorious Messiah, promised in the Old Testament and awaited by the whole people. They confirm that the way to Glory is through the painful way of the exodus. Jesus' exodus is His passion, death, and resurrection.

While Peter was speaking, a cloud descended from on high and covered them with its shadow. The cloud is the symbol of the presence of God. The cloud accompanied the multitude on their journey through the desert (Ex 40: 34-38; Nm 10:11-12). Later when Jesus ascended into heaven, He was covered by a cloud and they no longer saw Him (Acts 1:9). This was a sign that Jesus had entered forever into God's world.

A voice is heard from the cloud that says: "This is my Son, the Chosen, listen to him". With this same sentence, the prophet Isaiah had proclaimed the Messiah-Servant (Is 42:1). First Moses and Elijah, now God Himself presents Jesus as the Servant-Messiah who will come to glory through the cross. The voice ends with a final caution: "Listen to him!" As the heavenly voice speaks, Moses and Elijah disappear and only Jesus is left. This signifies that from now on, only He will interpret the Scriptures and the will of God. Jesus is the Word of God for the disciples:

"Listen to him!" Although the disciples would have wanted to prolong this experience, Jesus reminded them that they needed to come down the mountain; to the reality of daily life with its joys and sorrows, with its comfort and obstacles, with its trials and blessings. The transfiguration teaches us that suffering and glory are intertwined and that we always need to focus on Jesus, God's Beloved Son, and listen to Him.

2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up to the mountain to pray to God the Father to prepare Himself as He goes to Jerusalem to face the suffering He will endure during His Passion. The apostles witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus, where He transforms and His clothing becomes dazzling white. Through this event, Jesus teaches us to pray constantly to God in every event of our lives. When we pray, we place our lives under God's loving care so that God's light can illuminate our lives and our choices. We must put our trust in God and allow Him to transform us.

3. REFLECT IT!

1. Remember your peak and most profound experiences of God, when you felt very close to Him and Him to you. Remember how these experiences changed your life. How did it feel after you came down from your mountain experience? Are you able to continue encountering God and Jesus in your daily ordinary life?

2. Are there times in your life when you felt there was a great cloud between you and God? When praying to God, we became transfigured and come to realize Jesus was there the entire time.

3. Are you able to recognize God's glory in the midst of your problems, difficulties, and pain? Listen to the voice of Jesus, what is he saying to you?

4. REMEMBER IT!

"This is my chosen Son; listen to him."
(Luke 9:35)

5. LIVE IT!

1. Spend some time each day this week to pray and meditate before an image of Christ – crucifix, image of the sacred heart, or divine mercy, etc.
2. Pray for each member of VEYM, both active and non-active members, especially those who are facing some difficulties in their lives.

6. PRAY IT!

God our Father, You have shown us the glory of Your Son so that we may never feel discouraged in times of difficulty. Help us to hear Your Son. Enlighten us with Your word that we may find the way to Your glory. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Jesus Calls Us To Repent



WEEK C-L3

LUKE 13:1-9



At that time some people who were present there told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. He said to them in reply, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent! You will all perish as they did! Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!”

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.

And he told them this parable: “There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener, ‘For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. [So] cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?’ He said to him in reply, ‘Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.’”

1. EXPLORE IT!

In today's Gospel, two historic events are presented as a backdrop for the parable of the Barren Fig Tree by Jesus. The first event mentioned an incident about a falling tower and the second is about those who suffered by Pilate mixing blood with their sacrifices. Jesus reminds them that physical suffering is not caused by sin necessarily, which was the common religious thought at the time. Jesus tells them that while others suffered and some died, those in front will certainly suffer unless they repent. To show them that they have time to experience the compassion of God, relates a picturesque parable.

2. CONNECT IT!

The gardener in today's Gospel wants to give the fig tree a second chance. He is ready to work another year tending the tree so that the orchard owner does not cut it down. As the gardener is patient and caring towards the fig tree, our Lord is even more caring and patient with us. Our Lord is rich with patience and mercy. He loves us dearly. He sees us with eyes of hope and love. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.” God sent Jesus Christ to convert and save all people. God never gives up on us, even when we sin, and He never wants us to give up on others or ourselves either. Let us learn from the gardener, His patience, and let us stop saying things like, “I’ll never make it,” or “that bad kid will never change.”

3. REFLECT IT!

GOD'S WORDS

Directions: God speaks to us through the Bible, drawing us to the Word of the Lord. Read the Scripture passage and focus on what part speaks to you. Do these words connect to something happening in your life right now? Read the passage again. Are there any other words that jump out at you? In the space below, write the words that have significance to you. Include a drawing that shows how these words connect to your life today.

4. REMEMBER IT!

*"But I tell you, if you do not repent,
you will all perish as they did!"
(Luke 13:3)*



6. PRAY IT!²

Dear Heavenly Father,

You are my Lord and my God. I come before You now to offer myself to You Lord God – all of me – my body, my mind, and my soul. All I have, all I am, are Yours and Yours alone.

O Lord God, as I submit myself to You, I commit to let go of my bad habit _____ this week. Lead me Lord, onto and along that narrow path which You have chosen for me, so that my destiny may be fulfilled exactly as You have planned since before I was in my mother's womb.

Father, I pray this in the mighty name of Your son, Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord and my Saviour. Amen!

5. LIVE IT!

[COMMITMENT]

Commitment is pledging yourself to something or someone with dedication and loyalty. Making a commitment is making a promise or a vow.

This week, choose one bad habit and commit to let go of that habit. Ask God give you strength and courage to do so.

Reference

¹ Daily Reflection of Creighton University's Online Ministries, <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Archive/2013/030313.html>

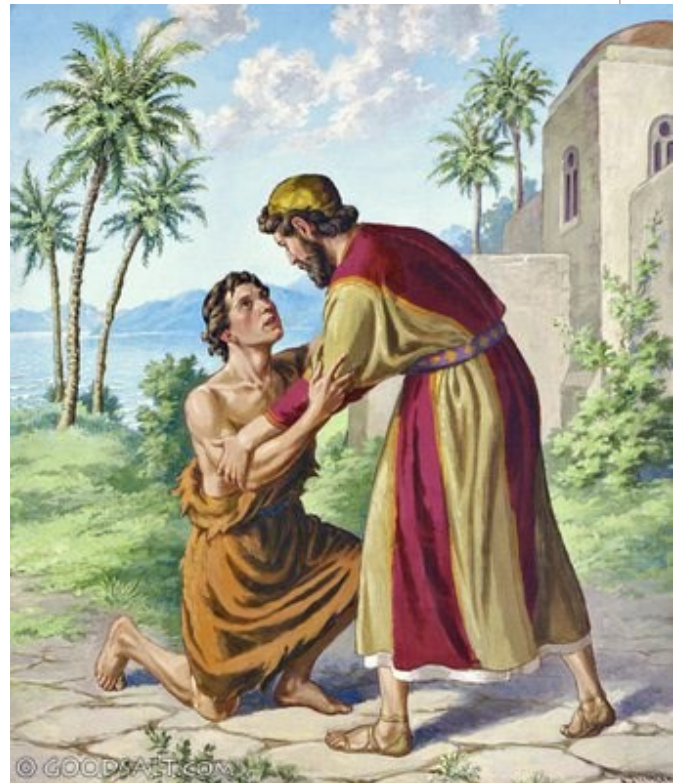
² A prayer of Commitment to God, <http://www.hiskingdomprophecy.com/a-prayer-of-commitment-to-god/>

Jesus tells us about the Father's love for the Lost Son

WEEK C-L4

LUKE 15:1-3, 11-32

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them he addressed this parable: "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."' So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began. Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'"



1. EXPLORE IT!

Today's Gospel is about the parable of the prodigal son or the lost son. Jesus tells this parable right after He tells the Parable of the Lost Sheep and the Parable of the Lost Coin. His audience were the Scribes and Pharisees who were complaining to Jesus that He associates with tax collectors and sinners (Luke 15:1-2). This parable is not necessarily intended for the disciples alone, but it appears that this parable is directed to the religious, self-righteous leaders of the Jews.

It is a moving story that teaches us about God's love for us and His willingness to forgive us no matter what we have done.

2. CONNECT IT!

The parable depicts three main characters: the father, the elder son and the (younger) lost son. It brings out the merciful aspect of the father. He is awaiting for his son's return, perhaps searching daily for his son from a distance: "While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion." He is the image of God, the Father mercifully receiving the repentant sinner.

The mercy of the compassionate father contrasts with the severe attitude of the elder son. He takes an attitude of arrogance not only towards his brother, but also towards his father. He does not want to accept his brother's conversion. In this, we can see the attitude of the Scribes and Pharisees who do not associate with "sinners," criticizing and condemning others. They often harbor judgments: "She's always _____," "I hate the way he _____," "Why do they always _____."

The lost son is a sinner who recognizes his misery and fault and returns home. He is willing to give up his rights as his father's son and takes on the position of a servant in repentance of his fault. It demonstrates true humility and true repentance.

5. REMEMBER IT!

[SELF-DISCIPLINE]

Self-discipline is the ability to control one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses; the ability to pursue what one thinks is right despite the temptations to abandon it.

Make a list of things to do and check it off when done. Also, make a schedule for the tasks, chores, studying, or practices. Do them according to the schedule.

3. REFLECT IT!

Re-read the Connect It! section and answer this question: which person (the father, the younger son or the elder son) in the parable do you identify with most and why?

4. LIVE IT!

**"...LET US CELEBRATE
WITH A FEAST, BECAUSE
THIS SON OF MINE WAS
DEAD, AND HAS COME TO
LIFE AGAIN; HE WAS LOST,
AND HAS BEEN FOUND."
(LUKE 15:23-24)**

6. PRAY IT!

Dear Lord, please do not let me continue putting off until later what I can do today. I do not know what tomorrow may bring or how many days I have on this Earth. Please instill in me a sense of urgency and help spur me into motion rather than squandering my free time.

Jesus' Mercy Towards a Woman Caught in Adultery

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him.

Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She replied, "No one, sir."

Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore."



I. EXPLORE IT!

The punishment for adultery is death by stoning or other means of execution (Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22-23).

By Roman decree, Jews could not put anyone to death. Therefore, when the scribes and Pharisees brought the adulterous woman before Jesus, they were seeking to trap Him, forcing Him to choose between the Law of Moses and the authority of Rome. This is similar to the tribute money trap (Mark 12:13-17) the scribes and Pharisees setup to trick Jesus in the Gospel according to Mark.

This is the only passage in the Scripture where Jesus writes anything. Church Fathers suggest that Jesus was invoking Jeremiah 17:13, "*Lord, on whom Israel's hope is fixed, all who reject you will be inscribed in the dust, for they have rejected the source of living water, the Lord.*" Alternatively, it could be that Jesus just showed disinterest in the proceeding.

In the death penalty case, the witnesses against

the accused were to take the initiative in carrying out the execution (Deuteronomy 17:7). Jesus asked the scribes and Pharisees to do an examination of conscience before proclaiming themselves worthy of carrying out judgment. Jesus did not give them the excuse to throw the first stone.

The scribes and Pharisees were elders in the community and were considered wise. They recognized that Jesus had flipped the trap back on them and now faced a dilemma. If they stoned her, they had to answer to the Romans. If they did not, they would be rejecting the Law of Moses.

Jesus says to the adulterous woman, "Go, and from now on do not sin anymore." Jesus hates sin. The lesson of this story is not that sin is of no importance or that God does not punish sin; rather, God extends mercy to the sinner so that he may turn from his sin. He condemns the sin but not the sinner.

2. CONNECT IT!

Through the story of the adulterous woman, Jesus reminds us that we are all sinners and need God's forgiveness. Furthermore, there will be times when we hurt others or when others hurt us. Jesus calls on us not to pass judgement. Rather, we all need to forgive others who have wronged or hurt us. We should not judge or condemn others. Instead, like Jesus, forgive and give others a second chance. Help others to discover Christ, to find the right path to live a holy life. Through our actions, through our prayers, we are able to help each other be better.

3. REFLECT IT!

Read the Scripture passage and answer the questions below.

1. Who are the people in your life that come to mind when you read this passage?

2. Why did this passage make you think of them?

4. REMEMBER IT!

"Neither do I condemn you. Go. [and] from now on do not sin any more." (John 8:11)

5. LIVE IT! [GENTLENESS]

Gentleness is having or showing a kind and quiet Nature; it is not harsh or violent.

In what ways can you help the person (or people) mentioned in the **Reflect It**?

6. PRAY IT!

Prayer for Healing

Lord, look upon me with eyes of mercy, may Your healing hand rest upon me, may your life-giving powers flow into every cell of my body and into the depths of my soul, cleansing, purifying, restoring me to wholeness and strength for service in Your Kingdom.
Amen.

Do you plan to go to confession during Lent? Make every effort to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation this week.

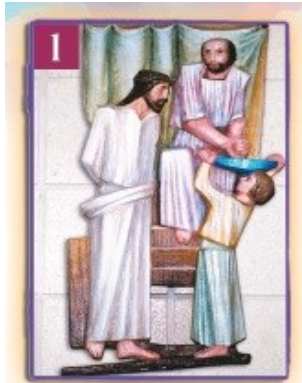


¹ http://www.scborromeo.org/biblestu/c_lent_5.pdf

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

WEEK C - PALM SUNDAY

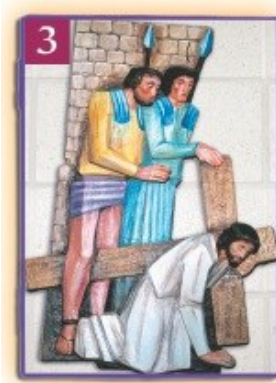
LUKE 22:14-23, 56



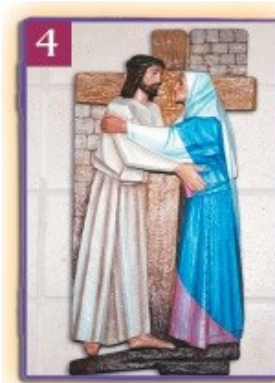
Jesus is condemned to death.



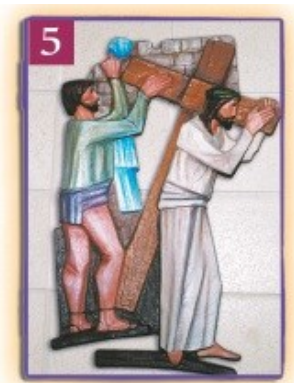
Jesus takes up His cross.



Jesus falls the first time



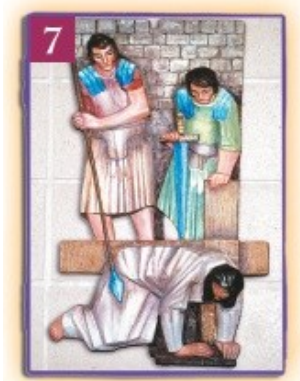
Jesus meets His mother



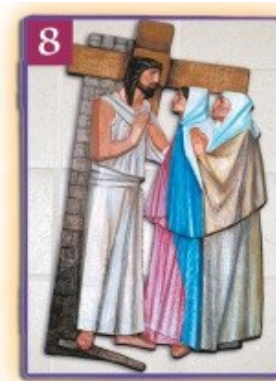
Simon helps Jesus carry the cross.



Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.



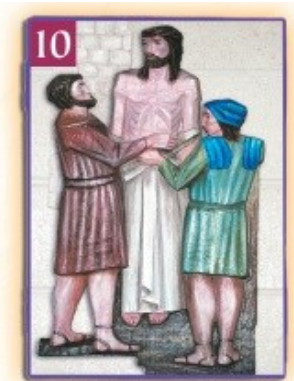
Jesus falls the second time.



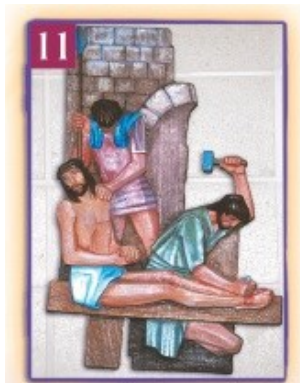
Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem.



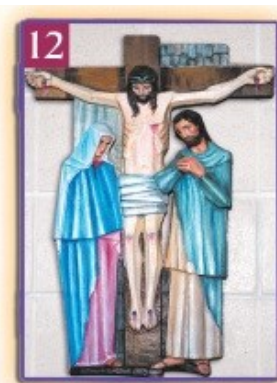
Jesus falls the third time.



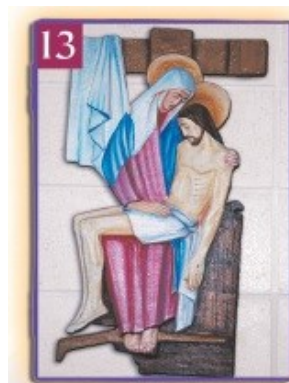
Jesus is stripped of His clothing.



Jesus is nailed to the cross.



Jesus dies on the cross.



Jesus is taken down from the cross.



Jesus is buried in the tomb.

1. EXPLORE IT!

Today's Gospel retells the Passion of Christ: the woman anointing Jesus, the plotting of Judas, the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, the institution of the Eucharist, the agony in Gethsemane, Judas' betrayal, the arrest, Jesus' trial, Peter's denial, Pilate's questionings, the scourging, the crowing with thorns, the way of the cross, the crucifixion, the death, and

burial. On the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb to commemorate Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt, Jesus instituted the Eucharist, thereby sacrificing Himself as the most perfect Lamb. Jesus has transformed the Passover into His Salvation, which deliver the world out of slavery from sin and death.

2. CONNECT IT!

Every scene in today's Gospel has a thread that holds it all together. We need time to be there, to let it be done again in ever so slow motion. Jesus' words, gestures, sufferings, all say the same thing. The very same things He was saying through His gestures and words all His life. By staying faithful to His identity and mission, Jesus provoked the religious and political leaders to such a point that He, Jesus, was firm and died on the cross for all that He stood for. If Jesus had pulled back His teachings, toned down His accusations and arguments, He would have not been faithful, but then He would not have died so tortuously. Jesus kept stepping it up and so at the end, He stepped up to the cross.

Throughout Holy Week, we will continue to reflect on the events of Jesus' passion and death. We are invited to believe, receive, and be humbled in Jesus giving back our lives by letting His be taken.

3. REFLECT IT!

There are many ways to make sacrifices. The driving force behind every sacrifice is agape (selfless love, sacrificing love). Agape is the love that Jesus has for us when He dies on the cross. Agape is the love God wants from us; it is the love that we must have toward others.

- Who would you sacrifice for? Is it only people who love you? Is it only people whom you like? What about those who has no relations or even bad relations with you?
- Why would you sacrifice? Is it out of love (agape)? Or is it so that they owe you?

4. REMEMBER IT!

**“This is my body,
which will be given
for you; do this
in memory of me.”
(Luke 22: 19)**

5. LIVE IT!

SACRIFICE

Sacrifice – the surrender or giving up of something prized or desirable for the sake of someone else.

- ◇ To help us participate more intimately in the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, make an effort to spend an hour in Eucharistic Adoration.
- ◇ If you have not done it yet, watch Mel Gibson's film, *“The Passion of the Christ”* to witness a deeper insight and more incisive experience of the Lord's Passion.

6. PRAY IT!

Almighty and eternal God, You have given the human race Jesus Christ our Savior as a model of humility. He fulfilled Your will by becoming man and giving His life on the cross. Help us to bear witness to You by following His example of suffering and make us worthy to share in His resurrection. Amen.



Jesus Rises from the Dead

WEEK C-EASTER SUNDAY

JOHN 20:1-9

The Empty Tomb

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead.



1. EXPLORE IT!

Mary of Magdala was in shock because she did not understand what had happened. She saw Jesus' crucifixion and saw the soldier thrust a spear in His side. Yet the stone was no longer in front of the tomb and Jesus' body was no longer there.

The joy of the apostle John is apparent in today's Gospel. John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, remembered everything Jesus had said would happen and all the promises He had made. Jesus is alive and His love is stronger than death! Through His resurrection, Jesus conquers death and sin.

The reality of Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead is the basis of our hope.

2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus calls on each one of us to come to the tomb and discover Him. We may be in the dark about how the Resurrection took place, yet Jesus is telling us that we must be like the disciples, to believe without seeing and to allow the Christ's resurrection to begin in each one of us. In other words, share Christ and show others that Jesus is our savior and our life.

3. REFLECT IT!

Just as the joy and hope the disciples experienced in discovering an empty tomb and that our Lord has resurrected, so too are we called to discover the same joy and hope in Jesus Christ. How will we cherish the presence of Christ Jesus, who is alive within us today?

5. LIVE IT! (HOPE)

Hope is a feeling from the heart of an expectation for something to happen. When we hope, our heart can heal, our desires and dreams can be fulfilled, and our days become brighter. Through hope, our journey becomes lighter as we shift our focus from our hardships to our wishes.

For this week, pray the Act of Hope each night when completing the spiritual journey.

(Act of Hope)

O my God, relying on Your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Your grace and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

4. REMEMBER IT!

"THEY HAVE TAKEN THE LORD FROM THE TOMB, AND WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY PUT HIM."

(LUKE 20:2)

6. PRAY IT!

Lord, our Father,
by raising Christ Your Son,
You conquered the power of
death and opened for us the way to
eternal life. Let our celebration today
raise us up and renew our lives by
the spirit that is within us. Grant this
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Your son, who lives and reigns
with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.
Amen.

Jesus Strengthened the the Faith of Thomas

WEEK C-E2

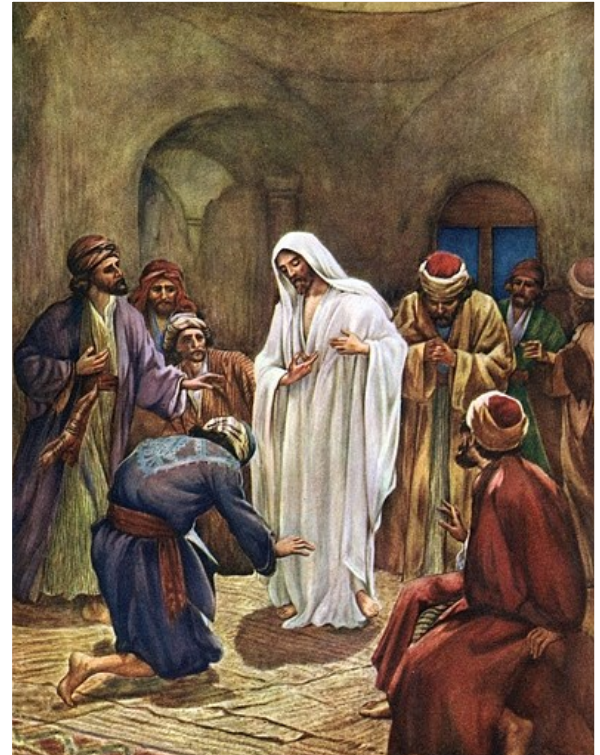
JOHN 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.



1. EXPLORE IT!

Just as the first day of the week refers to Sunday, the first Easter Sunday is the day Jesus rose from the dead. John wants to make it clear that this is the Apostle's *first* encounter with the Risen Christ. Jesus came and stood in the midst, emphasizing the spiritual qualities of the resurrected body of Christ.

Jesus said "Peace be with you" and showed the apostles his hands and his side. The disciples saw and believed. Jesus gave the apostles the power of the Holy Spirit and sent them with the full authority of God. Apostleship continues today through apostolic succession, which is the line of bishops stretching back to the apostles who continue to be safeguarded by the Holy Spirit. When you hear the Bishop speaking, you are hearing God speaking.

Thomas is one of the twelve apostles. This designation remains even though one of them has defected. The apostles bore witness to the Risen Christ and for Thomas; although he knew the other apostles well, he did not trust them. He wanted to see and touch Jesus himself just as the other apostles had done. One week later, Jesus appeared under the same circumstances. After the greeting, "Peace be with you", Jesus asked Thomas to probe His wounds. Jesus did not stop Thomas from seeking knowledge and evidence of Jesus' resurrection. We are unsure of whether Thomas took up the offer to check Jesus' hands and side. Yet we know that Thomas' response is the most complete affirmation of Christ's nature: My Lord and My God.

We are blessed with the gift of Faith without seeing. It is the Faith that the apostles received and through the Holy Spirit, they are sent to preach the Gospel of the Risen Christ.

2. CONNECT IT!

It's often said, "I'll believe it when I see it." But In this day and age, we see a world around us with war, famine, natural disaster, injustice, etc. We are overwhelmed by its destruction. We feel helpless and powerless to do anything.

In Spiritual Exercise, Ignatius Loyola reverses the saying: "When I believe it, I'll see it." We believe in the Risen Christ, our Lord and our God and we will see the world full of goodness and opportunity, a place that God created, sustains, and loves. Faith gives us a right vision of the world, a vision of life, of work, and of love.

What do you believe? What do you see?

3. REFLECT IT!²

We have our doubts, our fears, our shames, and our desires to see just a little bit more so that our faith will be strengthened. It seems that God knows us more than we know ourselves. A little bit more would always be just a little bit more of what we would want. Thomas wanted to see more than what he heard his companions had seen. Seeing is not believing, but rather, believing is a way of seeing beyond what can blind us.

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"...Blessed are those
who have not seen
and have believed."
(John 20:29)**

6. PRAY IT!

Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that You are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that Your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because You have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

This seeing beyond is the gift of the Spirit and it leads to our being sent out beyond as well. We are sent, as he was sent to us, to attract others to the Sender. How we live this faith-seeing is a graceful insult to this seeing-everything world. We who try to live this beyond-sight way are a sign and wonder for this present age. Our struggles to live faithfully, with hope and love, and then going out and being sent, are the miracle of our times. We are the reminders that there is something beyond ourselves and what we see is a relic of the creative love of God. As reminders, we make anew this creating love and Easter is our time for going out and beyond.

5. LIVE IT! [FAITH]

"Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself." (CCC #1814)

Faith is knowledge and trust (YouCat #21)

Faith apart from work is dead. We are the disciples of Christ. We must not only keep the faith and live it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it. Please write your plan to

Profess the faith:

Bear witness to the faith:

Spread the faith:

¹http://www.scborromeo.org/biblestu/c_east_2.pdf

²<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Archive/2013/040713.html>

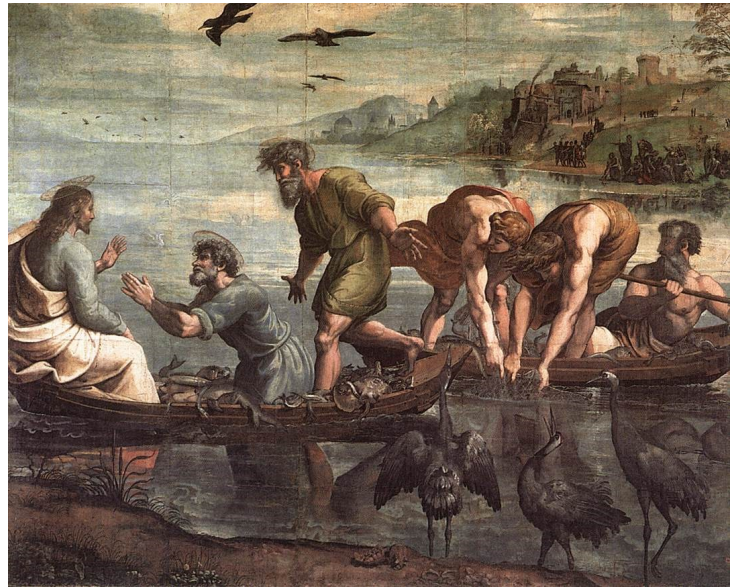
Peter Professed His Love to Jesus

Week C-E3

John 21:1-19

At that time, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way. Together were Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We also will come with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. When it was already dawn, Jesus was standing on the shore; but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, have you caught anything to eat?" They answered him, "No." So he said to them, "Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something." So they cast it, and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish. So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad, and jumped into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards, dragging the net with the fish. When they climbed out on shore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of one hundred fifty-three large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come, have breakfast." And none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they realized it was the Lord. Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish. This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." He then said to Simon Peter a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." Jesus said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that Jesus had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to



you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

1. Explore it!

In a previous appearance, Jesus directed the disciples, "as the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21).

In today's Gospel reading, the disciples were on the Sea of Galilee, getting back to their old life after Jesus' death and resurrection. *I am going fishing... We also will come with you... But that night they caught nothing.*

Jesus was standing on the shore and the disciples did not recognize Him until after they listened to His directions to cast the net on the right side of the boat and they caught a large number of fish. Peter was eager to meet Jesus and jumped into the sea to swim to shore. Once all the disciples had arrived onshore, Jesus took the bread and gave it to them as well as the fish. This was now the third time Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples after rising from the dead.

The charcoal fire mentioned in today's Gospel is significant because the only other mention of a charcoal fire in the Gospel is when Peter denied Jesus three times (John 18:18). Now at this charcoal fire, Jesus asked Peter three times whether he loved Him. Peter's three-fold affirmation beside the charcoal fire is a reversal of Peter's three-fold denial beside the other charcoal fire.

Peter, do you love me? ... Yes, Lord, you know that I love you ... Feed my lamb

Peter, do you love me... Yes, Lord, you know that I love you ... Tend my sheep

Peter, do you love me... Yes, Lord, you know that I love you ... Feed my sheep

While lambs will not wander far from the flock, it needs feeding; sheep need guidance (tending) as well as nourishment. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is turning his earthly flock over to His duly appointed minister, Peter.

2. Connect It!

Just as Peter was initiated through the four Sacraments, Jesus also wants and welcomes us to experience and receive the Sacrament of Baptism, Reconciliation, Communion, and Confirmation. Jesus is calling us to live out and be a witness to our Lord, Jesus Christ, by growing in our faith and experiencing firsthand, through the Sacraments, what it means to be a child of Christ.

We are in the season of celebrating our belonging, our being included, our being sacramentally prepared for a deeper following of Jesus. All the Sacraments in the Church are for our going out into life, for this we jumped into the water, were fed, forgiven, had our ears cleaned for better listening.

4. Remember it!

“Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” (John 21:15)

5. Live it! (Excellence)

Excellence is the fact or state of excelling; superiority; eminence:

“Love is shown more in deeds than in words.” - Ignatius of Loyola

This week, show your love to Jesus by helping others in His Name. Continue your conversation with Jesus during the week and write in your spiritual journal.

Reference: http://www.scborromeo.org/biblestu/c_east_3.pdf
<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=1206>

3. Reflect It!



Imagine you are sitting with Jesus, having a conversation about what you have read.

What will you talk about with Him? Write out your conversation below.

ME: _____

JESUS: _____

6. Pray it!

Prayer to Love God above all Things

God, my Father. May I love You in all things and above all things. May I reach the joy, which You have prepared for me in Heaven. Nothing is good that is against Your Will, and all that is good comes from Your Hand. Place in my heart a desire to please You and fill my mind with thoughts of Your Love, so that I may grow in Your Wisdom and enjoy Your Peace. Amen.



JESUS

Knows His Sheep

WEEK C-E4

JOHN 10: 27-30

Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

1

EXPLORE IT!

The words of Jesus in the reading were directed to Jewish leaders who wanted to trick Jesus. They were hoping He would call Himself the Messiah. Instead, Jesus refers to Himself as "the Good Shepherd."

Jesus describes the secure and lasting relationship He has with His sheep, those who truly hear Him and believe. Just as no one can separate Jesus and His Father, no one can take Jesus' disciples away from Him.

2

CONNECT IT!

Did you know that the brain capacity of the average dog is about the same as that of a three-years-old child? This means that dogs can understand quite a bit! It also means that there is still a lot that they cannot understand. They do not understand traffic lights, or what makes chicken bones or rat poison bad to eat.

This is why it is up to us to keep our dogs out of danger. We often use our voices to do this: "Come! Heel! Sit! Down!" This is what a good shepherd does for his sheep. Just as a dog recognizes its owner's voice, sheep recognize their shepherd's voice. We, as the flock of Jesus, hear and recognize Jesus' voice. When do we hear his voice? How do we recognize it?

What can you do this week to show that you have truly heard the Good Shepherd's voice?

REFLECT IT!

The theme of shepherds and sheep is a recurring one in the Bible. The Old Testament references God, David, and Jeremiah as examples. God promises to raise up new shepherds who will follow in David's legacy, so it is natural that Jesus compares Himself to one as well.

Being a shepherd is not easy. Sheep are pretty defenseless creatures, and shepherds have to protect them from predators. Sheep have a tendency to stray from the flock, making them vulnerable. Shepherds endure the hardships of being away from their homes and putting up with simple food and harsh weather while pasturing sheep. Their lives can be endangered when confronted by desperate predators. Are you able to relate to Jesus this way? Are you able to see that Jesus is watching out for you?

REMEMBER IT!

4

*"My sheep hear my voice.
I know them, and they follow
me. I give them eternal life."
(Jn 10:27)*

6

PRAY IT!

(From the prayers composed by Blessed James Alberione)

Lord, grant me the strength to fulfill my responsibilities in life. Grant me the blessings of patience to endure any adversities that come my way in fulfilling my missions to myself, my loved ones, and to You Lord.

5

LIVE IT! [RESPONSIBILITY]

Something that you should do because it is morally right, legally required, etc.

What are some of your responsibilities at home? At church? At school? Do you do your chores without complaining? Do you do your homework without someone nagging you? Do you go to Mass every Sunday with your family? Take some time to reflect on some of your responsibilities. Try to fulfill your responsibilities with a smile. Offer each task to Jesus, the Good Shepherd.



Jesus' New Commandment



WEEK C-E5 JOHN 13:31-33a, 34-35

When Judas had left them, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and God will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus spoke these words after He had finished washing the disciples' feet. First, Jesus made it clear that our loving one another was not a suggestion, but a "new commandment" to men from God. This love we are to have for one another is not an option, but a required mark of a Christian.

Second, this love is to be of the same quality as Christ's love. He implied that we would judge the quality of our love by His, "just as I have loved you". This sentiment should be deeply rooted in every Christian: I don't judge my spirituality by comparing myself with others, but with Christ. When we do this, there is only one possible response, repentance and humility.

2. CONNECT IT!

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks us to love one another as He loves us. Loving as Jesus loves means loving without holding anything back. Jesus loves us so much that He gave his life for us, dying on the cross, rising from the dead, and giving us eternal life. Loving others does not mean we are going to have warm, friendly feelings for everyone. Rather, it is about treating others as how we would like to be treated. It means praying for them and asking God to bless them. Jesus calls on us to love all people in this way, even those we dislike and those who dislike us.



3. REFLECT IT!¹

"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another". He is asking us for a change of heart, asking us to have a different outlook, to be motivated by love and to look to Him for inspiration and guidance. Jesus calls on us to walk in His path, to do to others as we would wish others to do to us and to serve His Father's people in a humble, sincere, and loving manner. Further more, Jesus is telling us to recognize when people need help, to be available to give comfort and support, to be able

to take the lowest place, to do the menial tasks, to be unashamed to be the servant, to go forth into the world as His messengers just as He had done in obedience to His Father.

The act of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples is of love, humility, and service. He is stressing that love enables them the power to serve. His Father's Kingdom is one that operates on love, a love that is tough, sacrificial, tender, humble, and reveals itself through servicing others.

4. REMEMBER IT!

"... Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another." (John 13:34)

Love is a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes that range from interpersonal affection to pleasure. It refers to an emotion of a strong attraction and personal attachment.

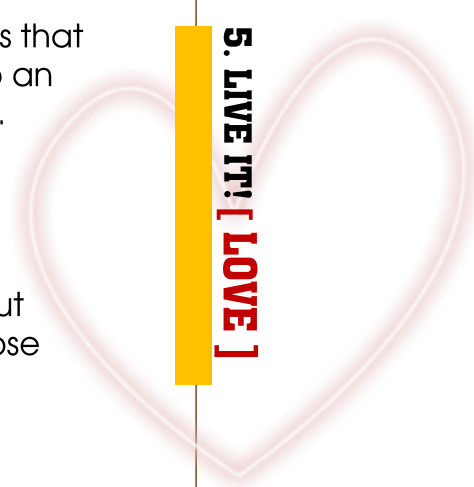
There may be classmates you are not fond of because of an argument or a fight. This week, take time to think about these individuals, find good qualities about them and pray for them. Make an effort to think positively about them so that you can love all of your neighbors, even those who may be difficult to love.

6. PRAY IT!²

(Act of Love)

O my God, I love You above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because You are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of You. I forgive all who have injured me and I ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

5. LIVE IT! [LOVE]



Reference:

¹ Reflection: Jesus washes his disciples' feet, the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy, <http://www.ourladyofmercy.org.uk/spirituality/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=312>

² Act of Love, Catholic Online, <http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=102>



The Peace of Jesus

WEEK C-E6

JOHN 14:23-29

JESUS SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES:

“WHOEVER LOVES ME WILL KEEP MY WORD,
AND MY FATHER WILL LOVE HIM,
AND WE WILL COME TO HIM AND MAKE OUR DWELLING WITH HIM.
WHOEVER DOES NOT LOVE ME DOES NOT KEEP MY WORDS;
YET THE WORD YOU HEAR IS NOT MINE
BUT THAT OF THE FATHER WHO SENT ME.

“I HAVE TOLD YOU THIS WHILE I AM WITH YOU. THE ADVOCATE,
THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHOM THE FATHER WILL SEND IN MY NAME, WILL
TEACH YOU EVERYTHING AND REMIND YOU OF ALL THAT I TOLD YOU.
PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU; MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU.
NOT AS THE WORLD GIVES DO I GIVE IT TO YOU.
DO NOT LET YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED OR AFRAID.
YOU HEARD ME TELL YOU, ‘I AM GOING AWAY AND I WILL COME BACK TO YOU.’

IF YOU LOVED ME, YOU WOULD REJOICE THAT I AM GOING TO THE FATHER;
FOR THE FATHER IS GREATER THAN I. AND NOW I HAVE TOLD YOU THIS BEFORE IT HAPPENS, SO THAT WHEN IT
HAPPENS YOU MAY BELIEVE.”



1. EXPLORE IT!

- ◇ IN LAST WEEK’S GOSPEL, JESUS ASKS HIS DISCIPLES TO “LOVE ONE ANOTHER”, JESUS’S NEW COMMANDMENT. IN TODAY’S GOSPEL, JESUS CONTINUES AND SAYS THAT WHOEVER LOVES HIM WILL FOLLOW HIS COMMANDMENT, AND GOD THE FATHER WILL LOVE THAT PERSON, AND BOTH JESUS AND THE FATHER WILL COME AND LIVE WITH HIM.
- ◇ JESUS IS GOING BACK TO HIS FATHER IN HEAVEN AND GIVE HIS PEACE TO HIS DISCIPLES.
- ◇ JESUS PROMISES THE DISCIPLES THAT HIS FATHER WILL SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO WILL TEACH AND GUIDE THE DISCIPLES AND BE WITH THEM WHILE JESUS IS NOT AROUND.

2. CONNECT IT!

“WHOEVER LOVES ME WILL KEEP MY WORD” – WHEN WE SAY THAT WE LOVE SOMEONE, IS THAT GOOD ENOUGH? PERHAPS, IT IS NOT. TODAY, JESUS ASKS US TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS (GOD’S COMMANDMENTS) IF WE TRULY LOVE HIM. “AND WE (JESUS AND HIS FATHER) WILL COME AND MAKE OUR HOME WITH HIM” – KEEPING GOD’S 10 COMMANDMENTS AND “LOVE ONE ANOTHER”, IS HOW WE CAN PREPARE OUR BODY TO BECOME GOD’S HOME.

“MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU” – THE PEACE OF CHRIST IS TO LIVE IN HARMONY AND COMMUNION WITH GOD. JESUS ASKS US TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER AND TO UNITE WITH HIM THROUGH THE EUCHARIST.

3. REFLECT IT!

"PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU; MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU; NOT AS THE WORLD GIVES DO I GIVE TO YOU". LET NOT YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED, NEITHER LET THEM BE AFRAID. THE PEACE OF CHRIST FOR US IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF CONFLICTS, THE SERENITY OF LIFE, HEALTH...RATHER, THE PLENITUDE OF EVERY GOOD, THE ABSENCE OF ANXIETY IN THE FACE OF WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN. THE LORD DOES NOT ASSURE US WELL-BEING, BUT THE FULLNESS OF A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IN A LOVING ADHERENCE TO HIS PROJECTS WHICH ARE GOOD FOR US. WE WILL POSSESS PEACE, WHEN WE FINALLY LEARN TO TRUST IN THAT WHICH THE FATHER CHOOSES FOR US.

4. REMEMBER IT!

*"Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives
do I give it to you."
(John 14:27)*

5. LIVE IT!

TRUTHFULNESS

TRUTHFULNESS - TELLING OR BEING IN THE HABIT OF TELLING THE TRUTH.

DON'T LIE TO OURSELVES. WE OFTEN TRY TO INTERPRET TRUTH IN OUR OWN WAY, AND SO TRUTH APPEARS TO CHANGE IN DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN IT ACTUALLY REMAINS THE SAME.

**INSTEAD, BE COURAGEOUS AND TELL THE TRUTH
EVEN IF IT CAUSES PAIN.**

DON'T GO WITH THE CROWD. SEVERAL PEOPLE OR A GROUP OF PEOPLE AGREEING ON AN IDEA DOES NOT NECESSARILY MAKE THAT IDEA TRUE. ONE MIGHT DECEIVE HIMSELF TO ACCEPT A LIE AS THE TRUTH TO SHOW AN AGREEMENT WITH OTHERS.

**INSTEAD, BE COURAGEOUS TO ACCEPT THE TRUTH
EVEN IT FEELS EMBARRASSING TO STAND FIRM.**

6. PRAY IT!

Father, I choose the way of truth, for it is also the way of light, for Jesus Himself said, "I am the Light." The Word declares that You hate "a lying tongue". Darkness lurks where deception and falsehood exists and becomes the breeding ground for all sorts of evil. Father, I ask You to shine Your searchlight on the contents of my heart and reveal the motive for my actions. Help me to purge all that dishonors Your name. I invite Your light to dispel the darkness of my soul. Amen.

*A Prayer for Being a Person of Truthfulness,
<https://adailyprayer.wordpress.com/2011/09/14/a-prayer-for-being-a-person-of-truthfulness/>*

BE ONE WITH JESUS



Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed, saying:

"Holy Father, I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you,

and they know that you sent me. I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them."

1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus is praying to the Father. It is the night of the last supper. Jesus has shared a meal with His disciples, washed their feet, given them a new commandment to love as He loves, and told them of His leaving. Now He prays. We overhear a portion of his prayer to His Father and our Father. He prays for us. Three times He asks our Father that we would all become one as He and the Father are one.

2. CONNECT IT!

How do people come to know about Jesus? They hear about Jesus from His followers and they see the results of the Good News in the lives of believers. In other words, evangelization is based upon word and example. Example, however, is not only a sense of ethical behaviour and charitable outreach, it is a sense of communal sharing. The community shares a sense of purpose and a unity of faith; both are a result of God's peace. So, word and example are invitations to the Kingdom.

Who introduced you to Christ? Who have you helped to know to get to know Christ? What example showed you His love? This week, be an example and invite communal sharing.

3. REFLECT IT!

Jesus does not pray for tolerance, our getting along, or just being nice to each other. He does not even pray that our differences would be eliminated. Instead, He prays for our oneness. He prays that we would be one as He and the Father are one so that our oneness would be the revelation of God's presence to the world. That does not mean, however, that we lose our identity or individuality. Oneness is quality of life - God's life. Jesus' prayer for oneness is ultimately that we would be and live like God.

How can you make this your prayer to the Father? How can you join with Christ in His prayer?

4. REMEMBER IT!



**"I wish that where
I am they also
may be with me..."
(John 17:24)**

5. LIVE IT!

[UNITY]

Unity - being together, joined as a whole. Pride is a two-edged sword. We need the quality of pride to realize we are unique. Pride has limits, however. When we use pride as a weapon against someone, when our pride belittles someone else, pride becomes a vice.

God made us special. Following Jesus makes us special. These were the points Jesus made in John's gospel. These qualities do not make us different, however. We cannot nor should not use our place before God to put down others. Have a family discussion over the reading from John's gospel with this point in mind. God loves us and makes us special, the same way He loves everyone and makes them special. Being a follower of Jesus means we realize this point and promote it. That insight makes the words of Jesus "Good News." Believing in this Good News is something to be proud of.



6. PRAY IT!

APOSTLES CREED

Let us be united.
Let us speak in harmony.
Let our minds apprehend alike
common be our prayer,
common be our resolution.
Alike be our feelings,
unified be our hearts and perfect in our unity.
Amen.

Jesus' Disciples Received the Holy Spirit



WEEK C-PENTECOST JOHN 20:19-23

Appearance to the Disciples.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

1

EXPLORE IT!

Following Jesus' crucifixion, the disciples lived in fear of the Jews coming for them. Yet, as we see in today's Gospel, the disciples are comforted with Jesus' presence. Not only that, Jesus even goes farther than simply comforting them. The Holy Spirit remains with them, "Receive the Holy Spirit," and gives them a mandate, "Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

2

CONNECT IT!

"Receive the Holy Spirit."

Who is the Holy Spirit?
The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Blessed Trinity. He is a Person, like Jesus and like God the Father. He is God Himself.

When do we receive the Holy Spirit? We receive the Holy Spirit at our Baptism and we receive Him again at our Confirmation. Our bodies are temples to the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19); however, our sins chase the Holy Spirit away from our bodies.

Confession along with a firm purpose of amendment to never sin again restores that relationship. Furthermore, like we receive Jesus over and over again in Holy Communion, we can personally invite the Holy Spirit to our bodies over and over again. It is a good and holy thing to have the Holy Spirit come into our lives as often as we can. If we have the Holy Spirit living in us, many bad things that Satan has planned for our future now won't happen.

REFLECT IT!*“Receive the Holy Spirit”*

God accompanies us through our lives and lives inside each of us through the Holy Spirit. This is hard for many of us to believe since we have never “seen” or “heard” the Holy Spirit. However, if we use the eyes of faith, we can recognize many signs that the Holy Spirit is present inside of us. Have you ever been afraid but managed to find the courage to say and do the right thing? That is the work of the Holy Spirit. Have you ever felt sad but then felt as though there was someone comforting you? That too is the work of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus returned to His Father, He promised us that the Holy Spirit would always be with us. The Holy Spirit is already assisting us to share in the life of God by helping us to be faithful to God’s word and to grow in patience, joy, and gentleness. He makes us the children of God.

LIVE IT! [OPENNESS]

Openness means understanding, acceptance, observance, receptiveness, tolerance, broad-mindedness.

This week, we are learning and practicing two ways to open up to the Holy Spirit:

1. *Prayer.* Pray the short prayer every morning, “Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of Your faithful and enkindle within us the fire of Your divine love. Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of Your faith.” Or you can pray and talk to the Holy Spirit using your own words.
2. *Gifts of the Holy Spirit.* Get to know the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. You received the Gifts of the Holy Spirit the day of your Baptism. These Gifts were fortified the day of your Confirmation. However, these Gifts must be used and exercised. If these Gifts are not used then they become rusty, dormant, and inactive. Memorize them and study them. Here they are: Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord. These gifts, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, perfect our intellect and our will—so that we can know God more clearly and love Him more ardently.

REMEMBER IT!

“Receive the Holy Spirit.
Whose sins you forgive are
forgiven them, and whose sins
you retain are retained.”

(John 20:23)

PRAY IT!

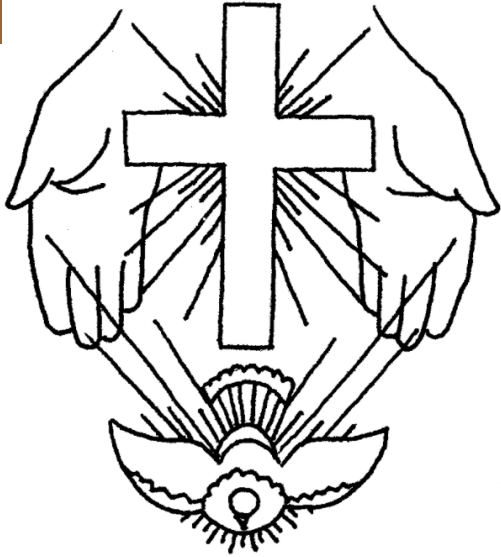
[Prayer to the Holy Spirit]

Holy Spirit, be with me today.
Be my teacher, my guide, my
counselor, my friend. Fill me with
Your gifts, especially the gifts of
wisdom, discernment, knowledge,
understanding, compassion, love,
and awe in God's presence. In all
That I think, say, and do, let it be in
accordance with Your most holy and
perfect will. I ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Reference:

1. The Holy Spirit, Catholic Bible 101
<http://www.catholicbible101.com/theholyspirit.htm>
2. Ten Ways to Open Up to the Holy Spirit, Catholic Exchange,
<http://catholicexchange.com/ten-ways-open-holy-spirit>
3. Prayer to the Holy Spirit, Spirit, Catholic Bible 101,
<http://www.catholicbible101.com/theholyspirit.htm>

JESUS REVEALS THE HOLY TRINITY



"I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.

1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus tells the Apostles of someone's coming; the "advocate," who is the Holy Spirit. Yet the Holy Spirit does not work alone. Rather, we see in today's Gospel of the Holy Trinity -- The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit -- in what Jesus says to the Apostles.

More specifically, it is by God the Father, who sends His Son, Jesus Christ to us, that it becomes possible for the Good News to be proclaimed. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles will courageously set out to speak of our Lord. We understand a simple unity between the Holy Trinity; We look up the Father, while we're with the Son and others around us, and the Holy Spirit is within us always. All aspects of our life revolve around God.

2. CONNECT IT!

God shows His believers and followers that Jesus is Love! God is not a selfish, lonely King, but a family of love. God is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three Persons of the Trinity are a family – and through our baptism, God makes us members of His family.

This week, meet up with one of your relatives or family members that you rarely see and do a small activity with them. If they live far, give them a call to check on their well-being. That simple activity or phone call shows how much you love them.

3. REFLECT IT!

One of the beauties of the Holy Spirit is the different forms and traits it represents in a variety of cultures. The Hispanic spiritual teachings emphasize the Holy Spirit with the gifts of love, freedom, truth, life, and hope. How can you accept and increase the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life?

- ◇ Love lets us find joy in the midst of suffering and pain. Christ did not end human suffering, instead He showed how suffering for those we love can bring new life to them.
- ◇ Freedom from material goods, false gratification, and additions nurture the lifestyle we adapt as disciples of Jesus.
- ◇ Truth about God, us, and history can be achieved only through God's Revelation. The Spirit gives us the light to discover this truth and the strength to direct our lives by it.
- ◇ God's life in us helps us to overcome prejudices, promote reconciliation, foster unity in diversity, and work for justice and peace.
- ◇ Hope in being forever with God and the people we love is continuously nourished by the Spirit, who gives us a glimpse of the glory to come despite our earthly limitations.

4. REMEMBER IT!

"BUT WHEN HE COMES,
THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH,
HE WILL GUIDE YOU
TO ALL TRUTH."
(JOHN 16:13)

5. LIVE IT!

[UNDERSTANDING]

An individual's perception or judgment of a situation, sympathetic awareness or tolerance, to have comprehension and the power of abstract thought.

Do you fully understand the variety of issues surrounding you? Each night, talk to your parents or someone who can help you gain greater understanding and ask them about something you've always wanted to know or wondered about. At the end of the week, be prepared to share what you asked and learned!

6. PRAY IT!

God, give me the gift of understanding, to appreciate the love my parents give me, the freedom to worship You, the truth You reveal through the scriptures, the life Jesus lived and sacrificed for us, and the hope that we're doing all we can to be in Your good graces Lord.

Jesus' miracle with five loaves of bread and two fish

Week C - Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
Luke 9:11b-17

Jesus spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of God, and he healed those who needed to be cured. As the day was drawing to a close, the Twelve approached him and said, "Dismiss the crowd so that they can go to the surrounding villages and farms and find lodging and provisions; for we are in a deserted place here." He said to them, "Give them some food yourselves." They replied, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have, unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these people." Now the men there numbered about five thousand.



Then he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty." They did so and made them all sit down. Then taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. They all ate and were satisfied. And when the leftover fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets.

1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus feels for the crowd as they follow Him. Instead of turning them away, He wants to take care of them, and so is it revealed the miracle of feeding so many with so little. We see a bit of the institution of the Eucharist in this setting, where He calms the crowd and sits to break bread with them.

2. CONNECT IT! In the reading, one of Jesus' role is a chef. Why? Jesus took the five loaves of bread and two fishes, and blessed it to make enough food for over five thousand people. If Jesus was not the chef that day, it would not be possible to feed all those people with only five loaves of bread and two fishes. These hungry people are certainly thankful for the food.

It is good to enjoy great food, but remember the person that cooks the food as well. In your home, who cooks dinner? In the week, make sure to thank whoever cooks for you. Let them know that you enjoy the food.

3. REFLECT IT!

Many people miss the point of this story because Jesus is very subtle about it. It also goes by different names, different numbers of fish and bread, and who is present to provide those items. However, the recurring “lesson” is still the same; as long as you depend fully on Jesus, He will provide for you. This total reliance on God is hard for many people; some take it extremely literally, others very spiritually. In the course of history, we have had many great examples from St. Francis of Assisi to St. Mother Teresa.

Are you able to recognize what God provides for you if you open your heart, mind, and soul to relying on God? Do you appreciate how Jesus is able to provide for those that are able to follow Him?

4. REMEMBER IT!

**“They all ate and
were satisfied”
(Luke 9:17)**

6. PRAY IT!

Lord, allow me to share my talents, my love, my belongings, my heart to all those I love, those around me, and those who I meet randomly in life. Grant me the wisdom and understanding to share my time for the Your sake in all that I do.

5. LIVE IT [SHARING]

- ◇ Sharing is the process of dividing, distributing, even alternating the use of something.
- ◇ Often we forget that sometimes sharing our time with others is the most valuable thing we can do. It doesn't always have to be a physical object; doing something together for others could be much more thoughtful. What are ways you can share your time with your family, friends, or for God?

The Would-be Followers of Jesus

WEEK C - 013

LUKE 9:51-62



When the days for Jesus' being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem, and he sent messengers ahead of him. On the way they entered a Samaritan village to prepare for his reception there, but they would not welcome him because the destination of his journey was Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this they asked, "Lord, do you

want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?" Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they journeyed to another village.

As they were proceeding on their journey someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head." And to another he said, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, let me go first and bury my father." But he answered him, "Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

And another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to my family at home." To him Jesus said, "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God."

1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus sets His face towards Jerusalem. He sends James and John ahead to prepare the way, but Samaritan village refuses to receive Him. His disciples ask Him if they should command fire to come down to destroy the village, but He rebukes them.

Jesus calls people to follow Him, but they have excuses. He makes it clear that following Him must come first.

2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus emphasized the uncertainty, the priority, and the resolute nature of the Christian discipleship. The ministry of Jesus and His early followers was a mobile one. They trusted God to provide. Someone who worried too much about their own needs, (i.e. shelter) could not focus upon the changing nature of ministry on the road.

Not only was the Christian life uncertain. It required a Commitment higher than that of family. For, many

times, loyalty to extended family could curtail or suppress a commitment to Christ. Hence, one might need to reject family in order to accept the Savior.

Discipleship required a clear understanding of role and commitment. The disciples served. And the disciples made their trust in the Lord the highest priority. No matter who. No matter what.

Write down a simple job description of a Christian. How do you measure up? How can you improve this week?

3. REFLECT IT!

James and John wanted to punish a town that rejected Jesus. Then, people wanted to follow Jesus, with strings attached. Jesus rebuked all these people for being selfish. They didn't want to put Him and His message first in their lives.

Jesus is clear - He must come first. This might seem harsh and "unloving." Jesus gave everything for us. He laid down His life to rescue us from sin. Should He not expect the same from us? Everything for Jesus, all surrendered to Him. This is the only reasonable response.

4. REMEMBER IT

*"No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God."
(Luke 9:62)*

6. PRAY IT!

Jesus, You gave up everything for us. Please help us to receive You in our hearts and give ourselves entirely to You. Amen.

5. LIVE IT! [LOYALTY]

faithfulness to commitments or obligations.

People have all sorts of excuses for refusing to follow Jesus. It might be family commitments or ties of friendships. For some, following Jesus conflicts with their career aspirations.

How can we, as families, put Jesus first in our lives? Create a calendar for the coming week to help your family focus on this question. Brainstorm no more than 2 different activities each day for the week. Make sure everyone in the family can successfully finish the activities. Place the calendar in prominent place to measure the progress of your family.

THE MISSION OF JESUS' 72 DISCIPLES



At that time the Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace

will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.' Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, 'The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.' Yet know this: the kingdom of God is at hand. I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom on that day than for that town."

The seventy-two returned rejoicing, and said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name." Jesus said, "I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky. Behold, I have given you the power to 'tread upon serpents' and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus appointed seventy - two disciples for the purpose of helping people both hear and accept His teachings. Their assistance was needed, not for some future date after Jesus had ascended into Heaven, but during the time He was there in flesh. They worked in pairs to give support and companionship to each other. The thirty-six pairs of disciples could comfort the dying with the message that in other world they will have another opportunity to live. The public, in general, could find encouragement in the wonderful messages from Psalms.

2. CONNECT IT!

Imagine what tremendous results could be achieved if our churches, each day would send out seventy-two Christian believers to work in the community. These teams of disciples could show the poor how they can be spiritually rich and convey to those in the inner city that there is hope.

How happy some would be to hear modern - day disciples speak of God's law refreshing the soul? The world could be led to understand that God's wisdom comes to those with open minds and that lasting joy can be found in right living where millions of Christian people out in society each day, but the world does not seem to be improving. Could you speak something of Jesus to your friends at school or work? Jesus sends us today to bring a message of peace and goodwill to others.

3. REFLECT IT!

Any travel, including vacation, should have a purpose. For some, travel provides an escape and a diversion. For others, travel provides a way to reconnect with family and friends. Other travel for business. Luke's gospel about the seventy-two missionaries challenges us, modern Christian travelers. No matter where we go, no matter what reason we have for travel, how can we bring the Good News to others we visit? When we travel this summer, how can we bring along the Good News and proclaim it to others?

6. PRAY IT!

Loving God, we come to You as a people who know Your love. For that we give thanks and praise. But Lord, we know there are many men and women in our world who don't know You. We bring before You those who are lost, who feel alone, abandoned, and hopeless. Some live in our own neighborhoods, our own city. We pray that we may be able to reach them with the message that through Your grace they might know a different life, in which restored and renewed, loved and fulfilled, they might in turn go on to reach others. Amen.

4. REMEMBER IT!

***"The harvest is abundant
but the laborers are few; so
ask the master of the harvest to
send out laborers for his harvest."
(Luke 10:2)***

5. LIVE IT! [PURPOSEFULNESS]

Purposefulness - having vision, clear focus, and concentration on goals.

The Gospel for this Sunday can be summed up in the phrase: Travel light and let people take care of you, and bring the Good News to the people you meet.

When you plan your vacation travels this summer, don't forget to take the Good News along. Meet with your family to discuss travel plans. Weave prayer and spiritual growth into your plans. That way, you can take instruction of Jesus to heart.

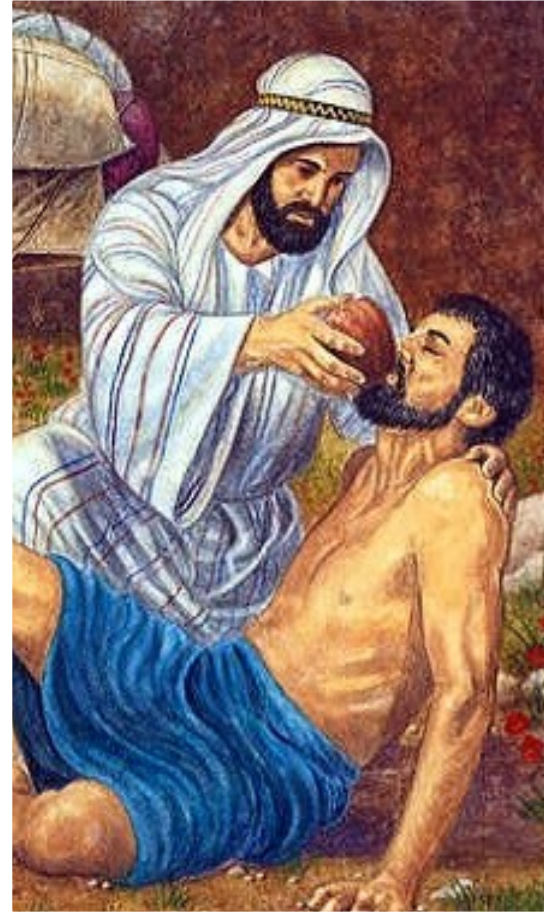
JESUS' PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

WEEK C - O15

LUKE 23:35-43

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply, "*You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.*" He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn, and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."



1. EXPLORE IT!

The parable of the Good Samaritan built upon Jesus' commissioning monologue from last week. Jesus sent seventy two missionaries before Him with travel instructions. On their return, they glowed about the power of Jesus' name. And he praised God for His revelation to the disciples. Suddenly, the scene shifted. A lawyer stood up in

the midst of the followers to challenge Jesus. He wanted to know about duties necessary for salvation. "Love God" was the easy part. "Love neighbor" was more controversial. After all, who was "neighbor", a fellow Jew or a complete stranger? Jesus answered with a parable of dangers on the road and changed the identity of the neighbor.

2. CONNECT It!

Today, we call someone who helps another that they are a Good Samaritan. This is because they are helping someone even at their own expense. This may be helping someone pay their bill, driving a cancer patient to chemotherapy, or even calling a friend or sending them a card to encourage them through tough times. Actually being a Good Samaritan is helping someone that might hate you and praying for someone that dislikes you at the max. The truth is that we can all be good Samaritans or we can be someone that doesn't care for anyone but themselves. Which are you? How can you see God in others this week, and how will others be able to see God in you?

3. REFLECT It!

The lawyer defined and detest the Samaritan so much, he could not call him by his ethnic background. he defined the helpful man by his character: merciful.

Notice how Jesus defined the neighbor, not as the victim but as the caregiver. The neighbor was the hospitable evangelist. The image, then, became the standard by which love of others was measured. To truly love others as self meant to act as the Samaritan, the hated man who went out of his way to care for the needy.

- ♦ Who in your life needs a neighbor?
- ♦ Who can you thank for being a neighbor to you?



4. REMEMBER It!

But because he wished
to justify himself,
he said to Jesus,
"And who is my neighbor?"
(Luke 10:29)

5. LIVE It! [KINDNESS]

Kindness - being friendly, generous, and considerate.

You don't need to help a needy stranger to do something more than what was expected. Take a list of chores, for instance. As your family members do their chores, encourage them to go beyond the list. Have them write down what they did that was not expected. Post their lists under the phrase "Above and Beyond." Celebrate their achievements with a special dessert or a prayer of thanks.

6. PRAY It!

God of mercy and love, thank You for the people in our lives that stoop down to help us in our times of need. Help us to respond by caring for others that we encounter. May we be bold and reckless in sharing the love of God with our neighbor. Amen.

JESUS WITH MARTHA AND MARY

WEEK C-O16
LUKE 10:38-42

Jesus entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed Him. She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at His feet listening to Him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to Him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."



1. EXPLORE IT!

Today's Gospel reading teaches prioritization. Jesus shows Martha that it is much more worthwhile to spend time with Him than to spend it worrying over small matters. Martha, who is weary and burdened, does not take Jesus' yoke upon her (Mt 11:28-30) and fails to find rest in the Lord. Mary knows that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6) and wisely spends her time listening to the Lord rather than labouring over things that can wait. Unlike Martha, Mary shows us that the Lord has the words of eternal life (Jn 6:68) and it is better to spend time with spiritual things than worldly affairs.

2. CONNECT IT!

How often do you hear of the successful businessman that can close a multi-million dollar deal in a moment's time, but cannot find the time to spend with his children? Sometimes we get so lost in what we do, we forget why we do it. Other times, we use our commitments as excuses to prevent us from performing our duty. Can you distinguish between the two? We can use our intellect to learn many things, but it takes much prudence to discern between what we can do and what we ought.

3. REFLECT IT!

God is telling us to spend our time with Him and to re-examine our trivial pursuits. He is not telling us to neglect our duties or give up our chores; rather, He wants us to consecrate these things to Him and to center all we do towards Him. Work will always be with us and there can be much dignity found in it. But if we forget the reason why we do the things we do, we become more desensitized to our purpose. God does not want for us to get lost in worry, or in the mundane. He wants us to align everything we do with His Sacred Heart. There, we can find solace, joy, and wisdom.

5. LIVE IT! {FATH}

Wisdom is both the knowledge of and judgment about "divine things" and the ability to judge and direct human affairs according to divine truth.

Take a moment and reflect on all the things that consume your time. Which of these things are necessary? Which of these things can wait? We often get caught up in the details of our pursuits that we forget the more important things in life. Go spend time with our Lord in the blessed sacrament of the Eucharist for an hour and take the time to reflect on this.

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"MARTHA, MARTHA,
YOU ARE ANXIOUS
AND WORRIED ABOUT
MANY THINGS."
(LUKE 10:41)**

6. PRAY IT!

Sing Hail Mary, Gentle Woman

Gentle woman, quiet light,
morning star, so strong and bright.
Gentle Mother, peaceful dove,
teach us wisdom, teach us love.

You were chosen by the Father,
You were chosen for the Son.
You were chosen from all women,
and for woman, shining one.

Gentle woman, quiet light,
morning star, so strong and bright,
Gentle Mother, peaceful dove
teach us wisdom, teach us love.

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test.”

And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey and I have nothing to offer him,’ and he says in reply from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.’ I tell you, if he does not get up to give the visitor the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence.

“And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”



1. EXPLORE IT!

In the First Reading (*Genesis 18:20–32*), we witness Abraham imploring God to spare the lives of those in Sodom and Gomorrah. Even though God’s will is to destroy those cities, He listens to the pleas of His faithful servant and agrees that “for the sake of those ten, I will not destroy it.” Abraham asks and he receives – this is the lesson of today’s Gospel. **“Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”** Abraham risks the wrath of the Lord, but does so out of love for his fellow man. He does not let the fear of God’s impatience, wrath, or punishment deter him from defending mankind. But let’s not overlook how Abraham speaks to

the Lord – with humility. He says he is but “dust and ashes,” he asks that God not be impatient with him. He makes this demand respectfully and with the knowledge that he is dust, and to dust he shall return (*Genesis 3:19*). The Psalm repeats this idea of supplication to the Lord in its response: “Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.” The Second Reading (*Colossians 2:12–14*) nails this idea into the Cross – that we have transgressions, and if we ask, we will receive forgiveness. The tragedy of Abraham’s story here, unfortunately, is that even though he was humble enough to ask for forgiveness, the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah were not. Let this be a message to us all that no sin is too great to bring to Jesus Christ, for He bores all of our sins on the Cross.

2. CONNECT IT!

Today's readings carry with it the message from God that if we need something from Him, we must ask. God is calling for us to not be like those in Sodom and Gomorrah. He asks us to repent for what we have done wrong, and forgiveness will be given to us. It's a simple formula that many refuse to follow, and oftentimes those are the ones that need it the most.

In our daily lives, we can't assume to be given things without asking for it. If we need extra time on an assignment for school, we should ask. If we need help doing our chores, we should ask. If we need help in our spiritual lives, we should ask, and we shall receive.

3. REFLECT IT!

"... ask and you will receive"

How can we respond to this call? With humility, strength, and trust. With humility we recognize that we are sinners and will always be sinners unless we accept the grace of God. With strength we are able to bring our heavy burdens to the foot of the Cross. With trust we can do so without fear or anxiety, because God will always forgive those who ask for it.

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"... ask and you will receive;
seek and you will find;
knock and the door will
be opened to you."
(Luke 11:9)**

5. LIVE IT! [SINCERITY]

Sincerity - the quality of being truthful and without deceit.

Looking at the verse above, it is easy to understand how the virtue of sincerity is related. If we ask for something but we are insincere about it or have bad intentions, we don't deserve what we seek. Let's say I ask my parents for money to buy textbooks for school. They love me and want me to succeed, so they give me \$10. But if I use that money for something else, like dinner with my friends, that's not being sincere. If we ask God for forgiveness but we have no intention of changing our lives, we don't deserve the forgiveness he will give. If we ask God for things that we don't need or things that are bad for us, we don't deserve that either. Sincerity is something that must be practiced. Practicing in our daily lives will prepare us to be sincere with God.

6. PRAY IT!

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You. I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of hell. But most of all because they offend You, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Noteworthy are the contributions of Sinai XXI, XXIII, Tiberia IX, X & XI training camp participants who prepared the lessons within this booklet. Their work along with other Youth-Leaders provided the content, which made it possible to move this booklet to completion.

Special recognition is extended to the dedicated core members of various committees and teams who work tirelessly to ensure this booklet receives the highest possible level of quality. Team Leads are designated with the asterisk symbol.

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PUBLISHER

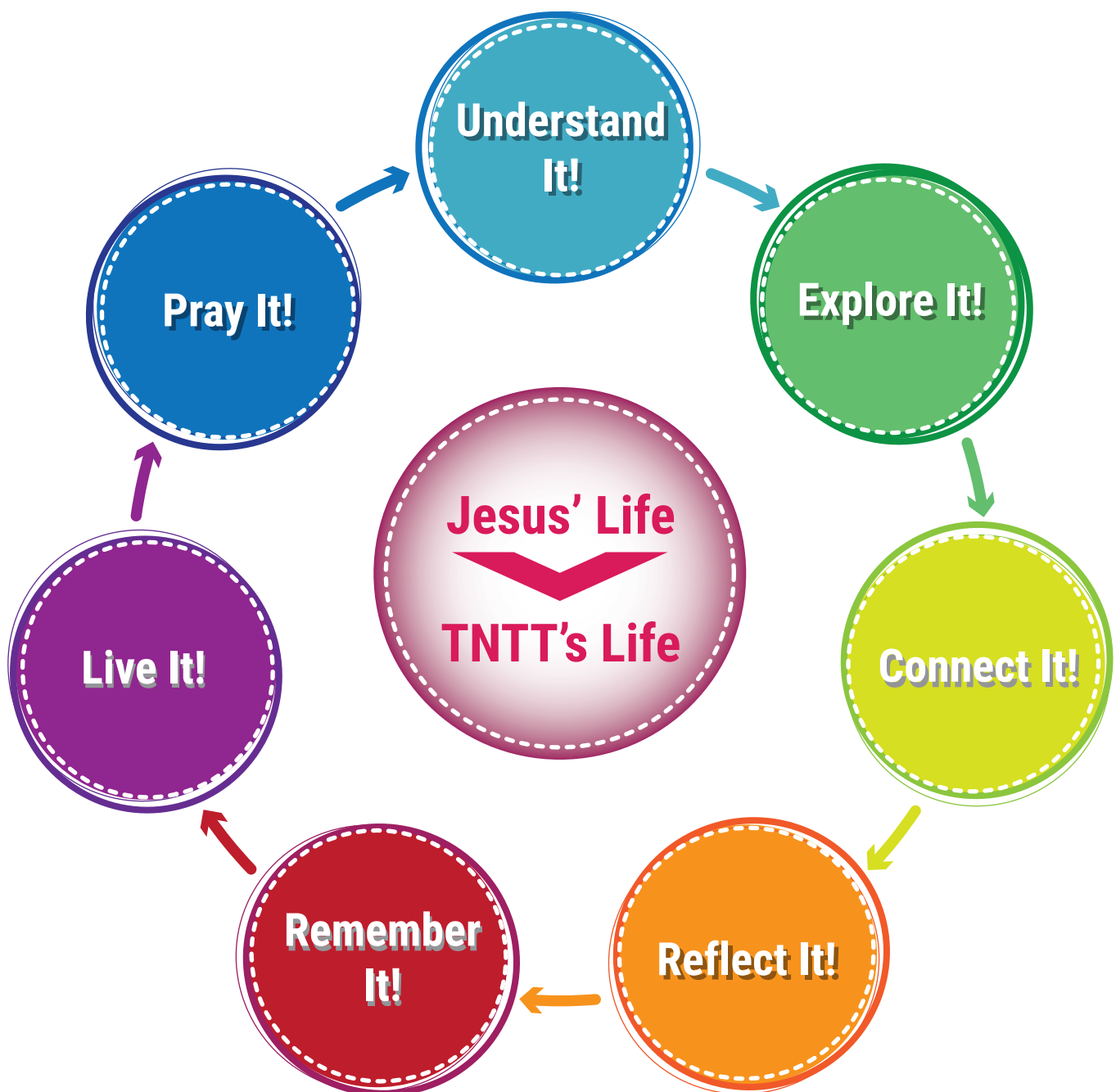
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WEEKLY SCRIPTURE LESSON MOTTO

Imitate Jesus' life through Scripture by learning, practicing, and living the Catholic virtues



“Go and Make
Disciples
of All Nations,”

Mt 28:19

