



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

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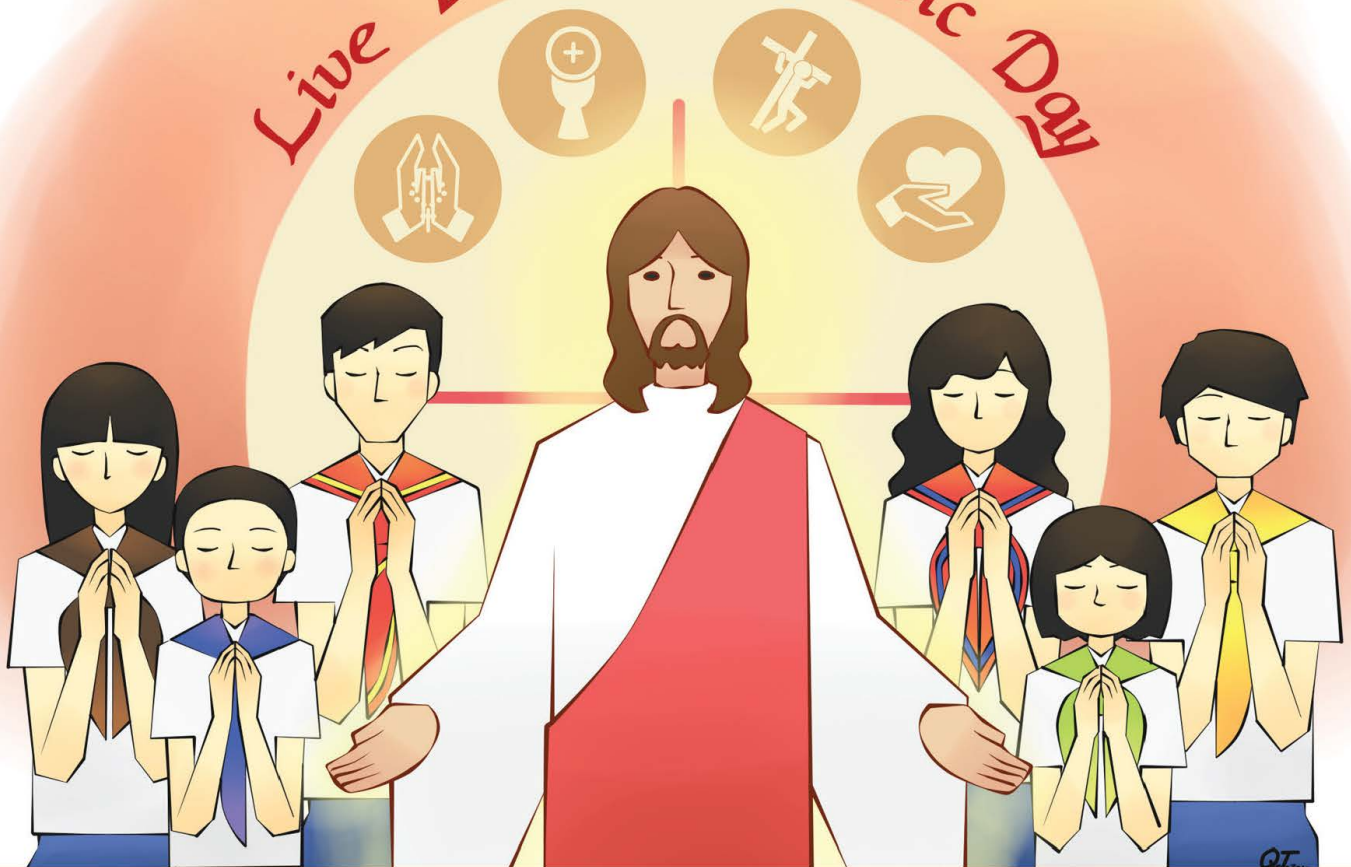


# Weekly Gospel Lessons

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

TEAM \_\_\_\_\_

Live The Eucharistic Day



# 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

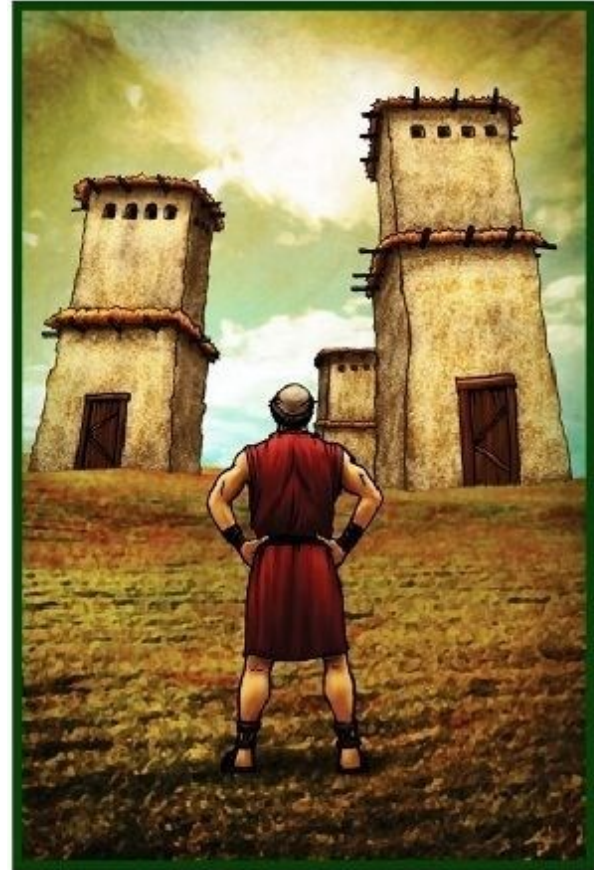
Date	Week/Page	Lesson	Virtue to Practice	Assignments
	<b>18th Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 2	<b>Jesus'</b> Teaching on Greed	<b>Detachment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>19th Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 4	<b>Jesus'</b> Warning of being Vigilant and Faithful Servants	<b>Reliability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>20th Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 6	<b>Jesus:</b> A Cause of Division	<b>Harmonious</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>21st Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 8	<b>Jesus'</b> Teaching on Entering Through the Narrow Door	<b>Tolerance</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>22nd Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 10	<b>Jesus'</b> Teaching on Conduct of Invited Guests and Hosts	<b>Honor</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>23rd Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 12	Being <b>Jesus'</b> Disciple	<b>Authenticity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>24th Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 14	<b>Jesus'</b> Teaching on Repentance	<b>Joyfulness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>25th Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 16	<b>Jesus'</b> Parable of the Dishonest Steward	<b>Honesty</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>26th Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 18	<b>Jesus'</b> Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus	<b>Thoughtfulness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>27th Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 20	<b>Jesus'</b> Teaching on Faith	<b>Faith</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>28th Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 22	<b>Jesus</b> Healed the Ten Lepers	<b>Gratitude</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>29th Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 24	<b>Jesus'</b> Parable of the Persistent Widow	<b>Perseverance</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>30th Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 26	<b>Jesus'</b> Parable of Two Men Praying in the Temple	<b>Humility</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>31st Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 28	<b>Jesus</b> and Zacchaeus the Tax Collector	<b>Encouragement</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>32nd Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 30	<b>Jesus'</b> Teaching on Resurrection	<b>Open to Truth</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>33rd Sunday in Ord. — C</b> Page 32	Persecution Because of <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Peace</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>Christ the King — C</b> Page 34	<b>Jesus</b> , the King of Mercy	<b>Accountability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>1st Sunday of Advent — A</b> Page 36	The Coming of <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Preparedness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>2nd Sunday of Advent — A</b> Page 38	Prepare the Way for <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Repentance</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>3rd Sunday of Advent — A</b> Page 40	<b>Jesus'</b> Testimony to John	<b>Evangelical</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>4th Sunday of Advent — A</b> Page 42	The Birth of <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Righteousness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>Nativity of the Lord — A</b> Page 44	<b>Jesus</b> , the Word, Became Flesh	<b>Love</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>The Holy Family — A</b> Page 46	The Holy Family of <b>Jesus</b> , Mary and Joseph	<b>Obedience</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>Mary, Mother of God — A</b> Page 48	Mary, Mother of <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Peacefulness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>Epiphany of the Lord — A</b> Page 50	Follow <b>Jesus'</b> Star	<b>Joyfulness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>Baptism of the Lord — A</b> Page 52	The Baptism of <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Duty</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>2nd Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 54	John's Testimony to <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Witness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>3rd Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 56	<b>Jesus'</b> Ministry	<b>Commitment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>4th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 58	<b>Jesus</b> Proclaims God's Blessings	<b>Suffering</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue

# Lesson Journal

Date	Week/Page	Lesson	Virtue to Practice	Assignments
	<b>5th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 60	Become Salt and Light for <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Role Model</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>6th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 62	<b>Jesus'</b> Teaching About The Law	<b>Truthfulness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>7th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 64	<b>Jesus'</b> Teaching About Loving Enemies	<b>Perfection</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>8th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 66	<b>Jesus'</b> Teaching About Loyalty to God	<b>Loyalty</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>9th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 68	Listening and Acting on <b>Jesus'</b> Teaching	<b>Prudence</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>1st Sunday of Lent — A</b> Page 70	The Temptation of <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Perseverance</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>2nd Sunday of Lent — A</b> Page 72	The Transfiguration of <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Obedience</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>3rd Sunday of Lent — A</b> Page 74	<b>Jesus</b> is the source of living water	<b>Enthusiasm</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>4th Sunday of Lent — A</b> Page 76	<b>Jesus</b> cured the blind	<b>Trust</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>5th Sunday of Lent — A</b> Page 78	<b>Jesus</b> raised Lazarus	<b>Caring</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>Palm/Passion Sunday — A</b> Page 80	The Passion of <b>Christ</b>	<b>Loyalty</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>Easter Sunday — A</b> Page 82	<b>Jesus</b> Rises from the Death	<b>Belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>2nd Sunday of Easter—A</b> Page 84	<b>Jesus</b> Strengthened the Faith of Thomas	<b>Faith</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>3rd Sunday of Easter—A</b> Page 86	<b>Jesus</b> on the Road to Emmaus	<b>Understanding</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>4th Sunday of Easter—A</b> Page 88	<b>Jesus</b> is the Good Shepherd	<b>Recognition</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>5th Sunday of Easter—A</b> Page 90	Who is <b>Jesus</b> ?	<b>Authenticity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>6th Sunday of Easter—A</b> Page 92	If you love <b>Jesus</b> ...	<b>Responsibility</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>Ascension of the Lord — A</b> Page 94	The Ascension of <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Discipleship</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>Pentecost Sunday — A</b> Page 96	<b>Jesus'</b> Disciples Received the Holy Spirit	<b>Openness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>Most Holy Trinity — A</b> Page 98	Believe in the name of <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Purposefulness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>Most Holy Body &amp; Blood—A</b> Page 100	<b>Jesus</b> is the Living Bread	<b>Thankfulness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>10th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 102	With Hope, Matthew Follows <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Hope</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>11th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 104	The compassion of <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Sharing</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>12th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 106	Acknowledge <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Courage</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>13th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 108	Conditions and Rewards for <b>Jesus'</b> Disciples	<b>Detachment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>14th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 110	The Gentle Mastery of <b>Jesus</b>	<b>Gentleness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>15th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 112	<b>Jesus'</b> Parable of the Sower	<b>Enthusiasm</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>16th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 114	<b>Jesus'</b> Parable of the Weeds	<b>Fairness</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
	<b>17th Sunday in Ord. — A</b> Page 116	<b>Jesus'</b> Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven	<b>Wisdom</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me." He replied to him, "Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?" Then he said to the crowd, "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions."

Then he told them a parable. "There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, 'What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?' And he said, 'This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, "Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!" But God said to him, 'You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?' Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

The point of the parable is twofold. First, we are not to devote our lives to the gathering and accumulation of wealth. This is an interesting point made in the parable. God says to the man in the story, "And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" You see it all the time in people who are singularly devoted to the accumulation of wealth. What happens to all that wealth when they die? It gets left behind to others who didn't earn it and may not appreciate it.

Secondly, everything we have been given (e.g. talents, abilities, materials, or positions) is a gift from God. It is not a permanent possession of ours, but it belongs to Him. We must use our possessions to serve God and His glory. Unfortunately the rich man's focus was on himself, not on God. And so God chose that night to take back what belonged to Him in the first place. How can we become rich for God? Jesus gives several suggestions and advice: "Sell all you have and distribute it to the poor and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come follow me" (Lk 18:22); it is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20, 35); he/she who loses his/her life will save it (Mt 10, 39; 16, 25; Mk 8, 35; Lk 9, 24).

## 2. CONNECT IT!

St. Ignatius mentioned three obstacles to our faith: wealth, honor, and pride. He saw from his own experience that people wanted wealth so that they would be highly thought of. It can be the right school, the right address, the right shoes. And pride in what we have. And we know things can change very quickly. You get very ill, you didn't the grade, you didn't get into the right school, and what then?

The opposite of the obstacles according to St. Ignatius are: simplicity, integrity, and humility. Humility is pride in who we are - children of God, brothers and sister, and us just as ourselves. We need nothing outside of ourselves to make us feel good about ourselves. This too is simplicity but not necessarily simple. What we have is gift; given to us for the good of the world, the community, the neighborhood, not just for the good of ourselves. What are we, in fact, living for? The demands of our way of life can make it difficult to put things first.

## 4. LIVE IT!

### [ DETACHMENT ]

Detachment means freedom from whatever interferes with our spiritual growth.

We do not know the hour or the day in which our journey on earth will end. Start thinking and write down what matters most in your life. Focus more on God, family and friends, and less on what matters the least: ourselves and being popular. This week, do at least one deed that shows your richness in God - in mercy, love, forgiveness, and justice.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**“Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions.”  
(Luke 12:15)**

## 6. PRAY IT!

Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to Yours and serve Your majesty in sincerity of our hearts. Teach us to lay up riches in heaven and may the prayers of St. John Paul assist us in our daily struggles against the idols of the world. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

Success in our society is measured mainly in terms of quantity -- bank accounts, degrees, salary, possessions, consumer products. We are conditioned by our material world to want more, to strive for more.

Examine your life, possessions, and actions. Are you motivated by money? Are you wealthy, immersed in luxury and oblivious to the needs of the poor? Do you act as if the treasures you can store up will guarantee happiness?

The man asked Jesus to help Him in the distribution of his inheritance. And you, what do you ask Jesus in your prayer? How can you become richer towards God?

# JESUS' WARNING OF BEING VIGILANT AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS

WEEK C - O19

LUKE 12:32-48



Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your belongings and give alms. Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven that no thief can reach nor moth destroy. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. Vigilant and Faithful Servants. "Gird your loins and light your lamps and be like servants who await their master's return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them. And should he come in the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed

are those servants. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." Then Peter said, "Lord, is this parable meant for us or for everyone?" And the Lord replied, "Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute the food allowance at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so. Truly, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property. But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming, and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, to eat and drink and get drunk, then that servant's master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour and will punish him severely and assign him a place with the unfaithful. That servant who knew his master's will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely and the servant who was ignorant of his master's will but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating shall be beaten only lightly. Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Matthew Chapter 3 tells us that the "kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus, through His passion, has given us the opportunity to join Him in the heavenly wedding banquet. However, it is our responsibility to secure this opportunity. Although Jesus explains that the "Father is pleased to give (us) the kingdom," He proceeds to explain that this gift is not freely given.

When Peter inquires what this means, Jesus tells him that all of us, according to our understanding of our responsibilities to the Creator, must earn our keep. God has certain expectations in all of us, but He knows that we all respond in our own unique ways. We all have

different levels of understanding, but the more we know, the more He expects from us.

We try to know and discern the Father's will each and every day. A healthy prayer life helps us to discern this better. The more we let go of our worldly attachments, the more receptive we will be to the "inexhaustible treasure in heaven that no thief can reach nor moth destroy." We must always be on guard, though, because we may never know when the Master returns from the wedding banquet. In other words, although the opportunity for Heaven exists, we may never know when it will present itself to us, and so, we always need to be prepared.



## 2. CONNECT IT!

We all have opportunities for great things. They may range from job opportunities, to scholarships, to music or athletic competitions. However, we can't receive these opportunities unless we put in the work. Job opportunities require polishing our interview skills; scholarships require writing competitive applications; music or athletic competitions require a lot of practice.

Sometimes, we put in the work only to be denied. But, the sadness that comes with rejection shouldn't prevent us from trying harder or finding other great opportunities. Today's Gospel shows us that Jesus always wants us to try because the more we try, the more we come to know His will. And if we come to do His will, the more He will entrust us. "Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so. Truly, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property."

## 3. REFLECT IT!

The Baltimore Catechism teaches us that God made us "to know Him, to love him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven." Are we doing our part to serve Him and discern His will for us? The Gospel is telling us that those who reliably do the Father's will be given the kingdom, but how do we know what God wants from us if we don't spend time talking with Him? If you haven't sat down and had a conversation with God in a while, try spending a Holy Hour with Him. You may be amazed at what He has to tell you.

## 4. LIVE IT!

### [RELIABILITY]

Reliability means able to be trusted to do or provide what is needed.

God relies on us to choose Him over all else. When we honor our mother and father, we choose Him. When we give alms to the needy, we choose Him.

Demonstrate your reliability to God by serving His people with joy. Next time someone asks you to do something reasonable, no matter how big or small, try to show your reliability by doing it with great love.



## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"Blessed are those servants  
whom the master finds  
vigilant on his arrival."  
(Luke 12:43)**

## 6. Pray It!

Heavenly Father, please give us a willing spirit to trust that You want what's best for us. Please give us the wisdom to discern Your will and the strength to be reliable stewards of Your kingdom on earth. We pray that we take care of Your creation and do Your will on earth, so that one day, we may be able to be happy with You forever in Heaven. Amen.

# JESUS: A CAUSE OF DIVISION



Jesus said to his disciples: “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

“I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished!”

The Greek word for baptism means to submerge completely underwater. John the Baptist baptized with water, but Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. The baptism Jesus is referring to here is the terrible suffering of His crucifixion. Despite the pain involved, Jesus accepted it because of His love for us. The fire of Holy Spirit lit the disciples on the day of the Pentecost and sent them into the world to proclaim Jesus’ Resurrection.

Jesus always speaks of peace, so how can we understand the phrase that seems contradictory to His teaching: “Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.” Luke wrote this Gospel towards the end of the 1st century AD, when Christians were under attack and persecuted by Jews and Romans. Those who followed Jesus accepted the

challenges facing them. In the early Christian Church and today, whole families can become Christian one after another as they encounter Jesus. In some cases, a new Christian can be persecuted by the rest of the family, who see this new faith as a betrayal of the family and its traditions. Standing up as a Christian may cost a person everything - they may be completely disowned, thrown out, or even killed.

The Bible can be viewed as divine fire, because the Gospel, the Word of God, is what lights up the world, and sets our hearts on fire. The main point of Jesus wanting to cause division is that our message, which echos the Word of God, may turn people against us, even our families. What Jesus wants us to understand is that even if our families turn on us, it is worth it. Fire changes things. Physically, when fire touches something, it is chemically and physically changed, and irreversible. The same is true of the Gospel, it changes people, and when we spread this type of “fire”, our world is better because of it, even if there is opposition.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Every day we may be presented with situations that conflict with our faith. A commitment to Jesus forces us to change the way we live our lives. In doing so, the relationships with our friends and family members are changed, and may be strained. The decision to do the right thing is not always easy and without conflict. Through these situations, our faith in Christ must remain strong, steadfast, and must not waver. Ask God to deepen your trust in Him. If you have suffered unkind words, rejection, or worse from anyone because of your faith, ask God to help you forgive, love and pray for them.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

- ◆ Am I confident enough in my faith to fight for it? Am I knowledgeable and strong enough to argue for it?
- ◆ How can I stand up for my faith but at the same time resolve conflict with other people without the expense of our faith?

## 5. REMEMBER IT!



"I HAVE COME  
TO SET THE EARTH ON FIRE,  
AND HOW I WISH IT WERE  
ALREADY BLAZING!"  
(LUKE 12:49)

## 4. LIVE IT!

# [HARMONIOUS]

Harmonious means to live in unity while embracing diversity.

- ◆ While we must be steadfast in our faith, we must also realize and respect the opinions of others. While our opinions may be different, we are all God's children.
- ◆ Read about the Early Christian Martyrs at <http://www.loyolapress.com/early-christian-martyrs.htm> to learn about how they were able to defend their faith in Jesus.
- ◆ Each day during this week pray for peace with St. Francis of Assisi.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy;  
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much  
seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

## 6. PRAY IT!

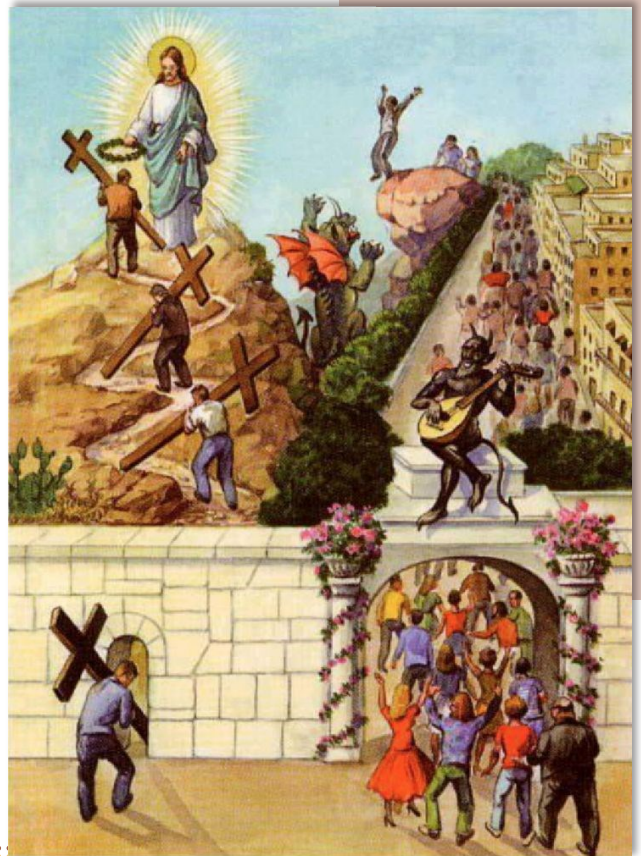
Lord, I thank you for always supporting me through my trials, and I pray for steadfast faith for the trials that have yet to come. Give me strength to always look to You on the cross, and never let my gaze stray from You until the day I see you again face to face in heaven. Amen.

# JESUS' TEACHING ON ENTERING THROUGH THE NARROW DOOR

WEEK C - 021

LUKE 13:22-30

Jesus passed through towns and villages, teaching as he went and making his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few people be saved?" He answered them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough. After the master of the house has arisen and locked the door, then will you stand outside knocking and saying, 'Lord, open the door for us.' He will say to you in reply, 'I do not know where you are from.' And you will say, 'We ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets.' Then he will say to you, 'I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers!' And there will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out. And people will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at table in the kingdom of God. For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

When someone asked Jesus, "Lord, will only a few people be saved?", He was on His way to Jerusalem, where Jesus would suffer His Passion, die, and resurrect. Jesus said in order to be saved, we must enter through the "narrow door". What does this "narrow door" signify? It means we must sacrifice, repent, and convert in order to enter the kingdom. The answer to the question if only a few will be saved is no. In the end, many will be saved, but many who thought they would be saved will not be saved because they are not strong enough.

God responds to the one who knocks at the door: "I do not know where you are from". But they insist and argue: "We ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets." It is not sufficient to have eaten with Jesus and to have listened to his teachings on the streets of the cities and of the villages. God will answer: "I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers!" Jesus considers unjust what others consider something to be just and pleasing to God. It is a totally new way of seeing our salvation. The door is truly narrow. Great effort is required for entrance into the kingdom and that there is an urgency to accept the present opportunity to enter because the narrow door will not remain open indefinitely.



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## 2. CONNECT IT!

We must realize that when we want something, we have to work for it. This is also true if we want to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. We face many temptations to find a wider and easier way. We may be tempted to look for happiness in money, or to escape from the pressures of life by drinking to excess or by taking drugs. It takes huge effort for us to go through the narrow door to a worthwhile life according to our deepest values. God gives us access to the narrow door through Jesus to eternal life, but it is up to us to discipline ourselves to pass through the door. It is not sufficient to be in Church and to participated in the instruction of the Catechism. Jesus expects those of us who hear His words to respond fruitfully and apply His teaching in our lives.

## 4. LIVE IT! [TOLERANCE]

- ✘ Tolerance is the act or capacity of enduring.
- ✘ There are many temptations and obstacles that may cause us to not be strong enough to enter through the narrow gate. Identify one temptation that you often fall for. Think of a productive way to overcome that temptation. Pray that all those called to salvation may have the grace to respond to the paschal discipline that leads to the banquet of God's kingdom.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"Strive to enter through the narrow door..." (Luke 13:24)**

- ## 6. PRAY IT!
- Dear Lord, You know that many will not be strong enough to enter through the narrow door and join You in the kingdom of God. Grant us the strength and endurance to strive for Your kingdom, overcoming temptations and obstacles that may discourage us. Amen.
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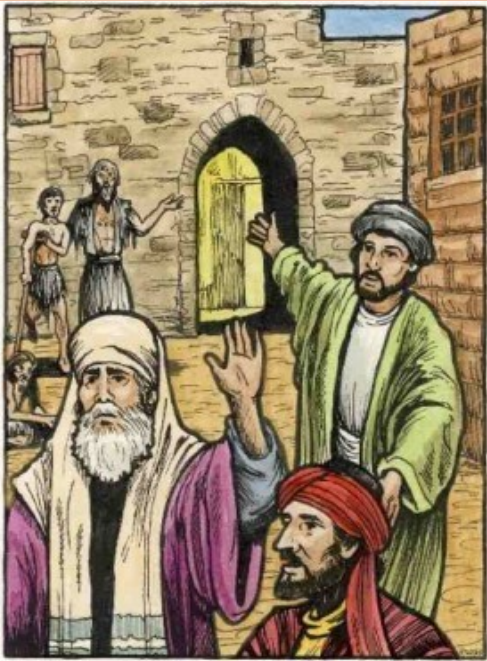


## 3. REFLECT IT!

- ✘ Do I submit to the discipline of the narrow door that leads to the feast of God's kingdom?
- ✘ Do I acknowledge the opportunity, call, and challenge that come my way in accordance with God's saving plan?
- ✘ How do I respond to the grace that comes from His mercy and love?



# JESUS' TEACHING ON CONDUCT OF INVITED GUESTS AND HOSTS



On a Sabbath Jesus went to dine at the home of one of the leading Pharisees, and the people there were observing him carefully. He told a parable to those who had been invited, noticing how they were choosing the places of honor at the table. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table in the place of honor. A more distinguished guest than you may have been invited by him, and the host who invited both of you may approach you and say, 'Give your place to this man,' and then you would proceed with embarrassment to take the lowest place. Rather, when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that when the host comes to you he may say, 'My friend, move up to a higher position.' Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table. For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." Then he said to the host who invited him, "When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the

poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

## 1. Explore It!

Meals play a very important role in most societies and in most times. Meals are not only a time to share nourishment but also a time to socialize and share ideas. In Jesus' time, the places that a person ate, the people with whom a person ate, whether a person washed before eating, and where a person sat while eating were very important indicators of the social rank of that person. The most important seats were close to the host. In the Gospel, Jesus warned the guests to wait before taking their places at the dining table so that they would not have to be removed from their seats if someone more important

arrived. He also advised the host to invite only people (the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind) that would not be able to return the favor. Jesus was actually not concerned about social etiquette, but rather, He was advising them on how find their true places in His heavenly banquet in the end times and how to live happily according to His plan. The Kingdom of God belongs to the lowly and humble, who demonstrate total dependence on God, and those who love and embrace all people, especially the poorest in society.

## 2. Connect It!

The Pharisees tend to find fault with everyone. Sometimes we tend to see other people's mistakes and fail to see our own deficiencies. Jesus teaches us to be humble and care for others. He will reward our generosity by offering us a place in His kingdom. Living in humility is difficult because of our natural tendency to be self-centered. God does not reward self-love. If we are only looking out for ourselves and seeking the highest "places of honor," we are bound to be disappointed. Moreover, because of our limitations, we do not always know what is good for us, nor are we able to achieve it without God's grace. The rewards that we expect to get from other human beings – honor, power, pleasure – are limited in time and quantity and cannot satisfy our soul, which yearns for God.

## 3. Reflect It!

- ✘ Why do you think it is so important for us to keep a humble attitude towards others?
- ✘ How often has our pride been the cause of conflict and unhappiness?
- ✘ Think about whom you invite to your home. Does Jesus' teaching challenge your choice of guests?



## 4. Live It! [HONOR]

Honor - the evaluation of a person's trustworthiness and social status based on that individual's integrity and character.

At school or another place, make an effort to help a peer who is often excluded or ignored. For example, smile and say something nice to that person, sit with the person at a lunch table, etc.

## 5. Remember It!

*"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted"*  
(Luke 14:11)

## 6. Pray It!

Lord, help me to trust in You completely, not seeking myself, but doing my best to serve You with humility and letting You take care of the rest. Help me to empty myself and fill me with Your love. Give me strength to overcome my own pride and to be humble like You.  
Amen.



WEEK C - 023  
LUKE 14:25-33

# BEING JESUS' DISCIPLE

Great crowds were traveling with Jesus, and he turned and addressed them, “If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work the onlookers should laugh at him and say, ‘This one began to build but did not have the resources to finish.’ Or what king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops? But if not, while he is still far away, he will send a delegation to ask for peace terms. In the same way, anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

In today’s Gospel, the crowds followed Jesus because He was a popular teacher. However, the disciples also knew that trouble followed close behind Jesus because they were already experiencing some persecution from the religious authorities. In the context of His paschal journey to Jerusalem, Jesus addressed the crowds to enlighten them about 2 important requirements of discipleship, a deliberate and total commitment to follow Him on His journey. First, discipleship is a total commitment. Jesus’ disciples must detach themselves from everything. When Jesus

describes “hating” one’s father and mother, He is not talking about feelings. Rather, He is emphasizing very strongly that choosing to be a disciple means that everything else—family, money, our own life—must come second. Jesus makes it very clear that being a disciple is not easy. It means to bear one’s own cross. When it comes to making a choice for the Kingdom of God, nothing can get in the way. Second, discipleship is a deliberate commitment. Through the two brief parables (a person constructing a tower and a king marching into battle), Jesus asks

us to plan thoughtfully and to weigh the costs carefully before making this commitment. In any relationship, there comes a time when we must decide whether or not to be serious about it. Discipleship is a life to be lived, a vocation that must be accepted with mature deliberation. Jesus’ life is a perfect example of the unconditional love and total submission to His Father. To follow Jesus through the end of the journey, we must pledge allegiance to Him and prepare to put the Kingdom of God before everything else.



## 2. CONNECT IT!

In Jesus' day, a cross was a symbol of suffering and death. Our crosses are the responsibilities, challenges, and conflicts that we face in society, family, schools, and all other areas of our lives.

To be a witness for Christ today, it is not enough to just believe that He exists or that He can save us. We need to give up our own plans and desires and turn our lives over to God. This is not easy because we are all human and weak. There are many times when we think our crosses are too heavy, become discouraged, and want to quit carrying them. God never gives us challenges that go beyond our capabilities. We should learn from our saints, especially the Holy Martyrs, who gave up their lives for Christ, as perfect examples and sources of inspiration. We should actively seek assistance from our guardian angels and community members to help us sustain our commitment. God will repay us abundantly for the sacrifices we make in His name.

## 4. LIVE IT!

### AUTHENTICITY

True to one's own personality, spirit, or character.

- ✘ Identify one bad habit you have that prevents you from living a true disciple. Write down several strategies and resources that you need to eliminate that habit. Practice the strategies to quit the bad habit.
- ✘ Pray for people who are preparing for their religious vocation. If possible, participate in events that help you learn about or experience God's call to religious life.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

- ✘ Am I ready to renounce anyone and/or anything that stands in the way of a thorough commitment to Jesus: closest relations, precious possessions, and my very life?
- ✘ How do I wisely and realistically consider the cost of Christian discipleship?
- ✘ Some of us are called to become disciples of the Lord through religious life as priests or nuns. Have I considered this as my calling?

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**“WHOEVER DOES NOT CARRY HIS OWN CROSS AND COME AFTER ME CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE.”**  
(LUKE 14:27)

## 6. PRAY IT!

Lord Jesus, thank You for calling us to be Your disciples. Please help us to surrender our lives to You totally. Send forth Your Spirit to give us the strength and grace to follow You in spite of obstacles and difficulties. Help us keep our eyes fixed on You. We pray, through the intercession of Mary, Your first disciple. Amen.

# JESUS' TEACHING ON REPENTANCE



**T**ax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them he addressed this parable. "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.

"Or what woman having ten coins and losing one would not light a lamp and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it? And when she does find it, she calls together her friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost.' In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

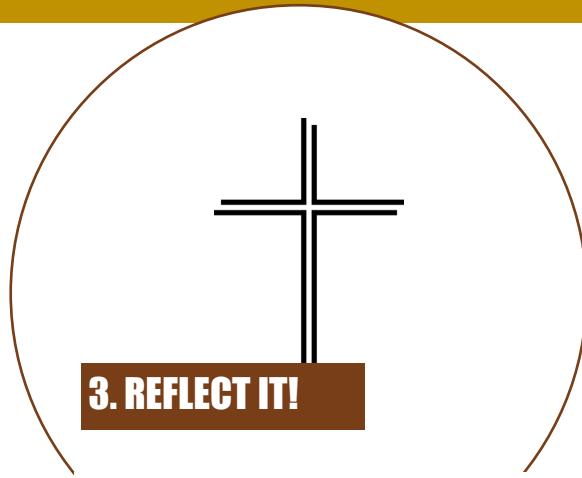
Then he said, "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered 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!

In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches us the importance of repentance through a multitude of parables. Each parable highlights the joy felt when even a single lost person/object is found. The same joy is felt in heaven when even one sinner repents.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Forgiveness must first begin with the person who commits the wrongful act. This person should be truly sorry for what wrongs they have done in order to be forgiven. It is difficult to forgive friends who have committed wrongs against us when they are not truly sorry for what they have done. It is even more difficult to not forgive them if they do choose to repent. These are the same feelings shared by Christ when we commit sins and choose to repent.



## 3. REFLECT IT!

How often do we forget the true power of forgiveness? God teaches us that He is always ready and willing to accept us back even when we have committed sins, great and small. There is no hesitation in His forgiveness but can we say the same about our actions?

Are you able to forgive your friends and even your enemies for any wrongs that they may have committed so long as they are truly sorry for committing them?

Can you recognize God's model of unrelenting love through His acts of forgiveness through repentance?

## 4. LIVE IT! **JOYFULNESS!**

- being full of joy, as a person or one's heart; glad, delighted

The sense of joy can come from many different facets of life that include material things, people, events and so forth. Joy can also come from acts of kindness towards others. Through acts of repentance and forgiveness, joy can be shared among people instead of being a singular event for one person.

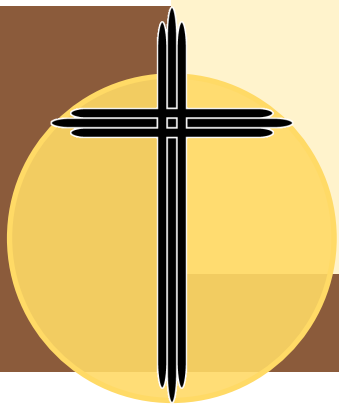
How can you share in joyfulness with others this week? Is there someone in particular who you feel would benefit most from you reaching out?

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"...there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance."  
(Luke 15:7)**

## 6. PRAY IT!

Dear Lord Jesus Christ, allow us to open our hearts to others as You have opened Your heart to us. Help us to repent for our wrongdoings and to accept the repentance of others. Grant us the ability to share the joy of forgiveness. Amen.



# JESUS' PARABLE OF THE DISHONEST STEWARD

**WEEK C - 025**  
**LUKE 16:1-13**



said, 'How much do you owe my master?' He replied, 'One hundred measures of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.' Then to another the steward said, 'And you, how much do you owe?' He replied, 'One hundred kors of wheat.' The steward said to him, 'Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.' And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently. "For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours? No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon."

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

In this parable, Jesus is talking to His disciples, as well as the Pharisees, who are known to be ruled by money and wealth. Jesus uses this parable to teach the disciples about the dangers of money, not specifically the wealth itself, but how wealth can lead men to commit sins. The rich man in the parable is about to relieve his manager of his duty because the manager is somehow caught with mismanagement. Fearing for his own life, the manager calls all his master's debtors and secretly makes deals with them, lowering their debts, as well as securing a place for him to stay after he is fired, all behind his master's back. Jesus does not approve of the dishonest means

Jesus said to his disciples, "A rich man had a steward who was reported to him for squandering his property. He summoned him and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be my steward.' The steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from the stewardship, they may welcome me into their homes.' He called in his master's debtors one by one. To the first he

by the manager. However, Jesus teaches us to be trustworthy and to use wisely all the talents and resources, especially money, that God gives us to prepare ourselves for eternal life. We should be as investing about our future in the Kingdom of God as was the manager about his future. If we are faithful in using our material and spiritual possessions with prudence, then we will be entrusted with the ultimate treasure of heaven. Jesus goes on to say that a "servant can't serve two masters," with the two masters being God and money. We have to make a choice to serve God over money. All of our wealth belongs to God, so Jesus wants us to use it generously to help others and prepare ourselves so that when we do return to His Kingdom, that our faith is continually strong, deserving of our place in heaven.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Have a discussion with your peers about scenarios in which money is involved. At this stage in your life as a Knight of the Eucharist, you probably have been exposed to many situations in which you've witnessed or experienced misusing money. For example, bring up what you've learned from history class about how money/wealth/power contributed to the World Wars. Many countries were ruled by wealth and power, and became servants to evil and controlling masters. Have a discussion about how much influence money and wealth have on our society today and that everything we do revolves around earning/spending money. In a sense, there is nothing wrong with that; however, it is how we use our money that determines if we are ruled by it. Using money for good (such as buying clothes for the poor) is what Jesus wants us to do.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

- † Think about a time when you have witnessed people with money abusing their wealth and using it for the wrong reasons. Would you do the same? What would you use that wealth for?
- † Are we willing to truly serve the Lord and only Him? If so, are we willing to let go of earthly possessions and use them to further the Kingdom of God?

## 4. LIVE IT! [HONESTY]

Displaying good and truthful characters

As Eucharistic Youth members, honesty is the 8th Vow of the Ten VEYM's Vows, meaning that it is very important in our lives. Jesus is our role model and He always reveals the truth to us; therefore, we should emulate Him and follow His examples by being truthful and displaying honest behavior to others.

As an assignment for the week, be consciously aware of what you say every day. Be conscious every time you speak a lie, reflect on the act, and ask yourself why you did it in the first place. Also, for this week, challenge yourself to be mindful of your spending and donate a portion of your money to a good cause.

## 5. REMEMBER IT

**"NO SERVANT  
CAN SERVE TWO  
MASTERS."  
(LUKE 16:13)**

## 6. PRAY IT!

Dear Lord, please live through us so that our words and actions reflect Your will for us.  
Let us be your servants and allow us to go out to spread Your Good News to others.  
Please grant us to have a gentle heart to use our possessions and wealth to help those in need.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

# JESUS' PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

WEEK C - O26

LUKE 16:19-31

Jesus said to the Pharisees: "There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.' Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.' He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.' But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.' He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

This Gospel reading is a story about the lack of compassion and what this can lead to. While living on earth, the rich man lived a comfortable life filled with riches, food, and clothing. The hardness of the rich man's heart deprived Lazarus, a poor man, the right to food. The name "Lazarus" in Hebrew means "God has helped". Dogs, who in Jesus' time, were the most unclean of animals, showed more compassion to the poor man by soothing his wounds and licking his sores. When both men died, the rich man went to the netherworld and the poor joined Abraham in heaven. The rich man complained of his torment. Abraham said to the rich

man to think about his lavish lifestyle while living on earth and whether or not he listened to the words of Moses and the prophets.

Jesus presents Himself in Lazarus, the poor man, sitting at our door. He is the servant Messiah, who was not accepted, but whose death changed all things radically. The place of torment that the rich man suffers is the situation of the person without God. Even if the rich man thinks that he has religion and faith, in fact, he is not with God because he does not open the door to the poor.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

In our life, we often get consumed with all of the materials and riches that we have on earth. We are so blessed on earth to live such a comfortable lifestyle that we often forget the words of Moses and the prophets. Sometimes when we don't have everything that we want, we become angered or jealous and start believing that life is "not fair". We need to remember that God is good all the time, even if the circumstances are not. Through sacrifices and hard work, we will be rewarded in Heaven. "Who needs my help today?" was a daily question of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Ask that question each day and allow the Lord to lead us to where we may help another in need.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

How do I treat the poor and those that are less fortunate? In the attitude that I have before them, am I like Lazarus or like the rich man?

When the poor come in contact with me, do they perceive something different? Do they perceive the Good News?



## 4. LIVE IT!

### [ THOUGHTFULNESS ]

Thoughtfulness is taking the time to do things that would make a positive difference to others.

Set 5 minutes aside each day to do something kind for your friends, family members, or community.

## 6. PRAY IT!

Lord, we pray that our actions here on earth help us become closer to You. You have given us so much for which we are thankful. Please give us the strength and courage to be thoughtful in our daily lives.

Amen.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

"IF THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, NEITHER WILL THEY BE PERSUADED IF SOMEONE SHOULD RISE FROM THE DEAD."  
(LUKE 16:32)

# JESUS' TEACHING ON FAITH

WEEK C - 027

LUKE 17: 5-10



The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

"Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here immediately and take your place at table'? Would he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat

and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished'? Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded? So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'"

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

In this Gospel reading, Jesus teaches us about faith and service to God. When the apostles cried out for an increase in faith, Jesus reminded them that faith, even just a little, will enable them to do wondrous things. However, it is not our faith that works these wonders, but it is God who stands behind our faith. As disciples of Jesus, we also need to understand ourselves as servants to God and His plans. Even when God works wonders through us, with our mustard seed-size faith, we must not seek praise, promotion, approval or anything in return. We must serve God and others with the greatest degree of gratitude, self-denial, and selflessness. Our participation in God's plan is God's grace to us. When we cooperate with God, the work we do is nothing more than our obligation to God as faithful stewards. Our faith enables us to believe that what we have offered in service to God, as His servants, can be made to produce a hundredfold.



## 2. CONNECT IT!

Faith is a gift from God. We can pray for God to increase our faith. Time spent in prayer is vital to building up our faith. Association with people of faith also helps us develop our faith, so participation in worship and the life of our church community is important. As we act in faith, we also grow in faith. However, we tend to have faith in something inferior to God that will ultimately disappoint us, such as money or a charismatic person. How do we develop the kind of powerful faith that Jesus speaks about? The Scriptures inform and correct our faith. Reading the Scriptures regularly draws us to God so that we can develop the kind of powerful faith that God blesses.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

- ✘ We face challenges in our daily lives as Christians. Do we humbly cry out to the Lord, "*Increase our faith*" (Lk 17:5)? How do our actions reflect our faith in God?
- ✘ In our Church ministry, are we always ready to avow: "*We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty*" (Lk 17:10)

## 6. PRAY IT!

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 are eternal truth and wisdom, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. In this faith I intend to live and die.  
Amen.

## 4. LIVE IT! { FAITH }

- complete trust or confidence in someone or something

- ✘ Identify and practice one action that would increase your faith in God.
- ✘ Carry out your Church ministry and your daily tasks with the dutiful attitude of God's faithful servant.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."  
(Luke 17:6)**

# JESUS HEALS THE TEN LEPERS

As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" Then he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Leprosy is a terrible disease where a person's skin rots and falls off. Many lepers lose all of their fingers and toes, and their body would be covered with sores. It is very painful and smelly. Leprosy is very contagious. A person could get the disease by touching a person who has leprosy or touching something that he/she touched. There are still people who have leprosy in some parts of the world today, such as India, China, Japan, Africa, the West Indies, and South America. In biblical times, whenever a person was infected with leprosy, he/she had to live outside the community. Lepers were excluded, marginalized, and despised. By law, they had to go around with torn clothes and uncombed hair, calling out: "Unclean! Unclean!" (Levi 13, 45-46). Lepers could not address themselves to God. In order to be accepted into the community again, the

lepers had to seek purity, which meant to feel accepted by God and be able to address Him to receive the blessings promised to Abraham. The ten lepers in the Gospel expressed their faith in Jesus who could cure them and give them back purity. However, of the ten who were healed, only one returned to glorify and give thanks to Jesus. The one who returned is was a Samaritan, a foreigner, who was looked down upon by the Jews at that time. The healing of the ten lepers shows us not only another example of Jesus' act of compassion, but also an example of a person's faith that is expressed in thanksgiving, glory, and praise. All ten lepers were given the gift of healing, but in his gratitude to God, the Samaritan received the gift of salvation. We find our salvation when we recognize the blessings God has given us and offer our thanks to Him.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

The word "Eucharist" means thanksgiving. As members of the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement, we should offer thanks to God everyday for all the blessings we receive from Him. Whether it is receiving a good grade on a test or having a good conversation with our mother, our lives are always full of God's graces. God constantly gives to us, and the least we can do is show our gratitude toward Him.

Let's say one Saturday evening you have to babysit your younger siblings. You sacrifice your time with your friends to take care of your siblings. You take them to dinner. You take them to a movie. You even buy them gifts. At the end of the night, your siblings say nothing to you. In fact, they ask you for a later bedtime. How would you feel?

## 4. LIVE IT!

[ GRATITUDE ]

Readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness

Don't forget to show your appreciation for others no matter the size of the act. This week, try to say "thank you" to your parents, friends, and siblings more often. For example, say "thank you" when your parents prepare dinner for you, thank your friends for taking time out of their day to hang out with you, or thank your siblings for helping you with your chores. Those two small words from you can make a huge positive impact on their day.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

We clearly see in this reading the healing power of Jesus as He cures the lepers of their disease. He saved not only one, but ten lepers, and of those ten, only one man returned to give thanks to Jesus.

Just like the nine lepers, we sometimes forget to give thanks to God for the blessings that we receive in our lives. How do you think Jesus feel when we do not return to acknowledge His sacrifice and work for us? How would you feel if you were Jesus?

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"Has none but this  
foreigner returned to  
give thanks to God?"  
(Luke 17:18)**

## 6. PRAY IT!

Heavenly Father, You provide us with constant blessings in our life. Thank You for all of the joys and sorrows in our life. You give us more than we asked for. May we never take these blessings for granted and continue to grow in our gratitude for You and our loved ones. Amen.

# JESUS' PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

**WEEK C - 029**  
**LUKE 18:1-8**



Jesus told his disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary. He said, "There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being. And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, 'Render a just decision for me against my adversary.' For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, 'While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being, because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her lest she finally come and strike

me.'" The Lord said, "Pay attention to what the dishonest judge says. Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

**1**

## **EXPLORE IT!**

In this parable, Jesus uses an example of an unjust, selfish judge as a contrast to God who is just. He also uses a poor widow as an example to contrast with us, His children. The widow, encountering troubles that could not be resolved on her own, relentlessly seeks justice from the judge who does not fear God or respect other people. The judge does not want to help the poor woman; however, he finally grants her request in order to get rid of her pestering and annoyance. The point of the parable is not that we have to pester God to have our prayers answered. Jesus is saying that if even an unjust judge responds to the persistence of the widow, our loving God will listen to our prayers even more, if we demonstrate persistence and faith in Him. The

widow seeks justice, not some frivolous request. We should not ask for things that are temporary in this materialistic world, but rather for values that will help us build eternal life. God truly wants to hear our needs and responds generously. He wants us to be like the persistent widow, staying in relationship with God, confident that God hears and answers prayers. When Jesus says, "But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?", He knows how easy it can be for us to lose faith. We lose faith because we do not understand God's timing or purpose. We often challenge the justice and goodness of God by asking God questions like "How can you let bad things happen?" To remain faithful to His Father, Jesus demonstrates persistence in prayers, especially when He suffers injustice and death. As we await Christ's return in glory, we must not lose hope, but persevere in prayers and remain faithful in

2

**CONNECT IT!**

Think of your paths in life: it can be receiving an educational degree, seeking an internship, building friendships, etc. Is any of them easy to obtain? How much time and effort do you spend on achieving those goals? Did it happen overnight? No. In fact, success comes with faith, hope, love, patience and endurance. Ultimately, hard work pays off.

Our God is a loving Father who wants His children to keep coming to Him, especially in time of trouble. We all, especially people who are parents, can certainly identify with this situation. The parable teaches us that we are to continue to pray and not falter if our prayers do not seem to be answered right away. We need to understand that if a request is not granted immediately, God may be testing us, teaching us patience, or working out a purpose we cannot see. Trust that God always works out what is best for us and for our particular situation. Sadly, most of us pray only when we experience trouble and forget to offer a prayer of thanksgiving when God provides us with blessings. We should be faithful to our regular times of prayer, in both good and bad times. Good habits of prayer show dedication to God and strengthen our relationship with Him.

3

**REFLECT IT!**

- ✦ How do you live a prayerful life? Do you believe in prayers? How often do you pray? Do you pray with sincerity?
- ✦ What are some effective ways of praying for faithfulness? What signs tell you that prayers are heard and answered?

4

**LIVE IT!**

**[ PERSEVERANCE ]**

**Perseverance** is steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success. In other words, perseverance means to never give up despite the troubles, and you will reach the finish line.

Praying is the first motto and vow of the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement (VEYM). As Knights of the Eucharist, we enrich our lives with prayers throughout the day from morning to night. This week, make an effort to live the Eucharistic Day fully everyday.

5

**REMEMBER IT!**

**“But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”  
(Luke 18:8)**

6

**PRAY IT!**

Almighty Father, we praise You for Your glory. Please forgive us for not fully trusting in You. We apologize for not being patient with You. Lord, help us to trust and be sincere in prayers. Do not let us give up on You. We pray for perseverance to endure all things bestowed upon us. Amen.

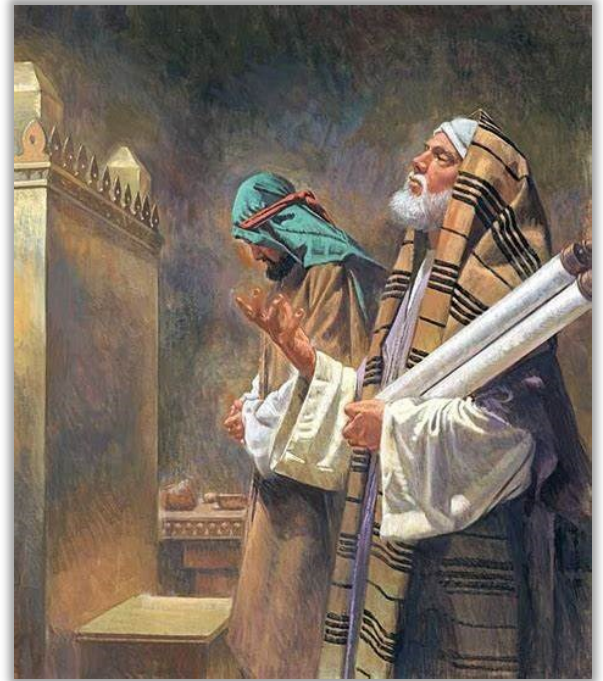


# JESUS' PARABLE OF TWO MEN PRAYING IN THE TEMPLE

WEEK C - 030

LUKE 18:9-14

Jesus addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. "Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity--greedy, dishonest, adulterous--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.' But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

In this parable, Jesus addresses attitude in prayer. In contrasting the prayer of the Pharisee with the prayer of the tax collector, Jesus teaches His disciples to pray in humility before God. In Jesus' time, the Pharisees were active members of a sect of Judaism. They taught an oral interpretation of the Law of Moses as the basis for Jewish piety. If anyone would be a model for prayer, a Pharisee was a likely candidate. In contrast, tax collectors were collaborators with the Roman authorities in a system that allowed the tax collectors to line their own pockets by charging in excess of the defined taxes. Tax collectors were not respected at all, and they could not address themselves to God because they were impure persons. In the parable, the Pharisee thanks God because he thinks he is

better than others. His prayer is nothing other than a praise of himself, an exaltation of his good qualities and contempt for others and for the tax collector. The tax collector submits himself before God. He does not even raise his eyes, but he beats his breast and says: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" Jesus offers the humility of the tax collector as a model for the prayer of a disciple. "I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former." To Jesus, the tax collector is "justified" because he is in a good relationship with God. He receives God's favor, not because he is already just, but because in his humility he believes that God can be merciful to him and forgive him his sins.

## 2.

## CONNECT IT!

Jesus is Himself the ultimate source of all goodness and talents. To be in union with His Father, Jesus prayed constantly and, insisted His disciples would do the same. In the Lord's Prayer, He teaches us to glorify and praise God and emphasizes forgiveness and dependence upon God, rather than self. The parable reminds us that when we pray, we should show our humility by recognizing our poverty, our need for His strength, our acceptance for His love, and sorrow for our offenses. We must always remember our need for God in our lives. If we are too proud and full of ourselves, there is too little room for God's grace to work in us. Even if we do what we are supposed to do, Jesus teaches us to say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty" (Luke 17, 10).

## 3.

## REFLECT IT!

I will do an examination of conscience based on my own self-righteousness.

- ✘ In my relationship with God, am I like the Pharisee or like the tax collector?
- ✘ Do I tend to excuse myself too easily of my failings?
- ✘ Do I think myself better than others?
- ✘ Do I refuse responsibility for the problems in my life, always blaming them on the other person who is not as intelligent as I am, as good as I am, as perceptive as I am, etc.?

## 5.

## REMEMBER IT!

***"...for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."  
(Luke 18:14)***

## 4.

## LIVE IT! [HUMILITY]

**Humility** - A quality by which a person, considering his/her own defects, has a lowly opinion of himself/herself and willingly submits himself/herself to God and to others for God's sake.

- Each night before your sleep, examine your conscience and humbly say the prayer "Act of Contrition".
- Pray for a person whom we have held in contempt. Ask for God's forgiveness for despising another person and for considering ourselves to be the better one.

## 6.

## PRAY IT!

In a spirit of repentance, pray slowly and meaningfully three times the ancient-Jesus prayer: *"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."*

# JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS THE TAX COLLECTOR



Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house.” And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, “He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner.” But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost.”

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

In today’s Gospel reading, Jesus invited Himself to a meal in Zacchaeus’ house. This sparked anger in the crowd because Zacchaeus was a tax collector who collected the public taxes on selling and buying of merchandise. Since Zacchaeus was the head of the tax collectors in the city, he was very rich and closely linked to the Romans. The "religious" Jews regarded anyone who collaborated with the Romans as being against God. Thus, the soldiers who served in the Roman army and the tax collectors, like Zacchaeus, were excluded and avoided because they were considered sinners and impure.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. But being short, he ran ahead and climbed on a tree and waited for Jesus to go by. He really had a great desire to see Jesus! Despite criticism from the crowd, Jesus chose to visit with Zacchaeus. However,

when approached by Jesus, Zacchaeus was overwhelmed by Jesus’ kindness and promised to give back abundantly to those he stole from. Because of this sincere attitude and true repentance, Jesus rewarded Zacchaeus with the gift of salvation. The message of this reading tells us that Jesus not only came for the Jews, but He came for all people, especially sinners. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost.” His mission is to save us *vs*o that we may join the Father in heaven. As sinners, we must seek the salvation Jesus has promised us, just as Zacchaeus did. We should welcome God in our lives so that He may lead us to eternal life. Zacchaeus is a model for us in our faith, not as a sinner, but as someone who turns his life around for God’s sake. No matter how small and inferior we are, God notices and comes to those who seek His will and salvation.



## 2. CONNECT IT!

Salvation is a gift from God; nevertheless, it requires action on our part. Zacchaeus overcame his short stature by climbing a tree to see Jesus, despite public shame. Like him, we should overcome our challenges and actively search for God's presence in the Scriptures, in the Eucharist, and through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In his encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus demonstrated his sincere repentance and repaired the damages he had done to others. In return, Jesus promised him a greater gift: Salvation. When we encounter God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God will forgive our sins if we are truly sorry, do penance, and make efforts not to repeat our sins. God, working through the priest, rejoices when we make a humble and sincere confession.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

- ✘ Compare our attitudes to those of the people in today's Gospel. Are we like Zacchaeus who opens his heart to accept God into his life, or are we like the crowd who shun and prevent others from seeing God?
- ✘ How much of our money, time, leisure or comfort would we be willing to "give up" if Jesus invited Himself to our house?
- ✘ How much effort would we be willing to exert to seek God and His will?

## 4. LIVE IT!

### [ ENCOURAGEMENT ]

**Encouragement:** Something that gives courage or imparts hope.

- ✘ Everyone needs a bit of encouragement from time to time. Identify a friend who is experiencing difficulty in life, offer some words of encouragement.
- ✘ This week, examine your conscience and go to confession. If you had stolen things or money from other people, find some ways to repay them. Encourage your fellow Eucharistic Youths to do the same.

## 5. REMEMe3BER

**"FOR THE SON  
OF MAN HAS  
COME TO SEEK  
AND TO SAVE  
WHAT WAS LOST."  
(LUKE 19:10)**

## 6. PRAY IT!

The Bible is our ultimate source of encouragement! Meditate on these encouraging messages:

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost." (Luke 19:10)

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27)

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging." (Psalm 46, 1-3)

"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." (2 Timothy 1:7)

# JESUS' TEACHING ON RESURRECTION



Some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, came forward and put this question to Jesus, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us, *If someone's brother dies leaving a wife but no child, his brother must take the wife and raise up descendants for his brother.* Now there were seven brothers; the first married a woman but died childless. Then the second and the third married her, and likewise all the seven died childless. Finally the woman also died. Now at the resurrection whose wife will that woman be? For all seven had been married to her." Jesus said to them, "The children of this age marry and remarry; but those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age and to the resurrection of the dead

neither marry nor are given in marriage. They can no longer die, for they are like angels; and they are the children of God because they are the ones who will rise. That the dead will rise even Moses made known in the passage about the bush, when he called out 'Lord,' the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

This Gospel reading tells us about an encounter between Jesus and some Sadducees. The Sadducees were a party of Judaism active in Jesus' time. They descended from the priestly family called Zadok. Sadducees were literal interpreters of the written Law of Moses. They accepted only the written Law of Moses as authoritative and rejected subsequent revelation. The Sadducees denied many of the doctrines held by the Pharisees who offered an oral interpretation of the Law of Moses. Both the Sadducees and the Pharisees were religious parties in Jesus' day. Both were critical of and were criticized by Jesus. The Sadducees denied many of the doctrines held by the Pharisees and by Jesus, including the resurrection of the dead, the existence of angels and spirits, and the meting out of rewards and punishment after death. They used the example of Levirate marriage, found in the Law of Moses, to challenge belief in the resurrection and to

trap Jesus. According to Deuteronomy 25:5-10, if a man died without producing an heir, the man's brother should marry his wife and the offspring of this union would inherit the property and carry on the name of the man who had died. However, Jesus countered them from the same written Law of Moses to show that there is resurrection. He used the texts from the Book of Exodus (Chapter 3) that describe Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush to show that God is the God of the living, not the dead.

Through the dialogue described in the Gospel, Jesus pointed out the limits of our imaginations when it comes to eternal life. The Sadducees argued against resurrection because of the

limits of their earthly existence. They could not imagine another possibility for existence and for having a relationship with God. Jesus proposed that the possibilities of resurrected life are beyond our human understanding. He wanted us to develop an eternal relationship with God while we are living now and not to worry about the resurrected life.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Whenever we recite the Apostles' Creed, we proclaim that we believe in "the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting;" or, if we use the Nicene Creed, we say that "we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to

come." Even though we may not fully understand, we believe that, at our resurrection our body joins with our spirit to continue our existence in eternal life. It is through the resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God, that we are brought to true and eternal life. We live for God here and now, and we look forward to the time when our entire selves will be transformed, body and soul.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

- ✠ What is our concept of death and dying? Is this concept illumined by faith in the living God, in whom all are alive?
- ✠ When we profess, "*We believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting*", what idea do we have about our own resurrection? How does this belief affect our daily living here and now?
- ✠ How do we respond personally to Jesus' declaration that God is not God of the dead, but of the living?

## 4. LIVE IT! [ OPEN TO TRUTH ]

**Open to Truth** - Be willing to learn and accept what is true.

Jesus says, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.'" (John 14:6). To be open to truth is to accept Jesus in our lives. Memorize and study the meanings of the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. These prayers summarize the truth about our Catholic beliefs.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"... AND HE IS NOT  
GOD OF THE DEAD,  
BUT OF THE  
LIVING..."  
(LUKE 20:38)**

## 6. PRAY IT!

Let us pray for those who have lost their loved ones: that the hope of rising again in Christ may help them find comfort in their grief.  
Let us pray for ourselves: that the gift of hope in the Risen Christ may help us overcome our fears and be witnesses of His resurrection.

Merciful Father, hear our prayer and console us.  
As we renew our faith in Your Son, whom You raised from the dead, strengthen our hope that all our departed brothers and sisters will share in His resurrection, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(From the Mass for the Dead)



# PERSECUTION BECAUSE OF JESUS

WEEK C - O33

LUKE 21:5-19

While some people were speaking about how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings, he said, “All that you see here—the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down.”

Then they asked him, “Teacher, when will this happen? And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?” He answered, “See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and ‘The time has come.’ Do not follow them! When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end.” Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky.



“Before all this happens, however, they will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name. It will lead to your giving testimony. Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute. You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance you will secure your lives.

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

In today’s Gospel, Jesus was teaching in Jerusalem prior to His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. He spoke publically the Temple and gave His disciples and listeners three messages.

- ✘ Jesus predicted that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed. Herod the Great started to refurbish the temple with beautiful granite stones, white marbles, and gold ornaments about forty-six years before Jesus. It was considered one of the wonders of the ancient world. In A.D. 70, the Romans sacked Jerusalem and burned the temple, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy. They took the walls apart, stone by stone, to get the gold that was melted down between the stone walls.
- ✘ The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple served as a revelation for the apocalypse. Jesus gave warning signs of cosmic and human destructions signaling the end of the world, such as earthquakes, famines, plagues, and wars.
- ✘ Jesus prepared His disciples spiritually for His Second Coming. He warned them about the coming persecution and encouraged them to persevere amid duress. He assured them that God would ultimately triumph over all the forces of evil. If they endured persecution for His sake and remained faithful to Him, He will protect them.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

There are times in our lives when we are afraid to be Christians. For example, when we go to eat at restaurants, do we pray with our friends, family, or even by ourselves? Do we make the sign of the cross proudly, or do we do it sheepishly, looking around to see if anyone saw what we did? In today's world, we experience many natural disasters, tumultuous events and social unrests. It takes a lot of courage to resist temptations and to maintain faith and hope in God. As Knights of the Eucharist, we must be strong, confident, and fearless. Following the footsteps of the Holy Martyrs, we take up our cross and follow Jesus. Despite all the evils in the world, it is comforting to know that God will not let even a hair on our head to be destroyed. He will secure our lives!

## 3. REFLECT IT!

- † How do you feel after reading today's Gospel (anguish, fear, hope, trust, doubt, ...)?
- † How do you connect the tumultuous events in the world today to God's messages in the Gospel?
- † How do you react to trials and challenges in your faith?

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"By your Perseverance,  
you will secure your lives."  
(Luke 21:19)**

## 6. PRAY IT!

Let us pray together the Prayer of St Francis.

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. Amen.

## 4. LIVE IT! (PEACE)

Peace is first of all the absence of conflict. But it is also the serenity experienced because there is no conflict. It is the calm that accompanies agreement of human wills, and is the foundation of every well-ordered society." (From CatholicCulture.org)

Our faith tells us the path to peace lies in the way of the Cross and the joy of the Resurrection. This week, do one thing everyday to make peace in your family, school, or community.

As Knights of the Eucharist, our ideologies are founded on The Eight Beatitudes that Jesus taught us. Memorize and, for each night this week, reflect on The Eight Beatitudes, especially the last two verses.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3-12)



The people stood by and watched; the rulers, meanwhile, sneered at him and said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Messiah of God." Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine they called out, "If you are King of the Jews, save yourself." Above him there was an inscription that read, "This is the King of the Jews."

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

While on the cross, Jesus was taunted and challenged as King of the Jews by the soldiers and one of the criminals sentenced to die with Him. "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!", they jeered at him. The second criminal, however, was humble and accountable for his actions. He acknowledged that he deserved his fate for the crimes he had committed, while Jesus was innocent. We as humans are all sinners and need much forgiveness just like the criminals in this passage. This story reminds us to follow the example of the second criminal. Though we may have committed sins, if we fully recognize our sins and seek Jesus' mercy, we are forgiven and will be invited to paradise like the remorseful criminal. Are we humble enough to be accountable for our wrongdoings and seek Jesus' mercy?

## 2. CONNECT IT!

It is easy for us to point out others' faults and sins while defending and relaxing on our own shortcomings. The story above challenges us to look closely on our own mistakes and become accountable instead of judging or comparing ourselves to others. For us, this means meeting Jesus through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. When we make a full and honest confession, we, too, can say to Jesus, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

### 3. REFLECT IT!

- ✘ Think about our relationship with Christ, our King. Have we truly accepted the kingship of Christ on the cross? Have we ever challenged the kingship of Christ and His compassionate rule over us?
- ✘ Have we taken full responsibility for our own actions and humbly appealed to God: "*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom*"?
- ✘ How do the words spoken by Jesus on the cross to the repentant thief impact our life of faith: "*Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise*"?

### 4. LIVE IT! (**ACCOUNTABILITY**)

**Accountability:** An obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions.

- ✘ To be accountable is to take time to reflect on our sins and seek forgiveness. This should be done nightly as we are called to reflect on our day and to learn and grow from our words, thoughts, and actions.
- ✘ When we offend God and those around us, we must go to confession and make right to our wrongdoings. Thus, we can receive God's mercy, just like the remorseful criminal on the cross.

### 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." (Luke 23:42)**

### 6. PRAY IT!

Dear Jesus, help us to have the courage to reflect on our words, actions, and thoughts each day and to do penance. Let us grow closer to You through our rejections of sin and loving those who have hurt us. Jesus, remember us when You come into Your kingdom. Amen.



# THE COMING OF JESUS

WEEK A - A1  
MATTHEW 24:37-44

Jesus said to his disciples: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be also at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of the night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

So many people live their lives focused on working to take care of their physical needs that they forget to take care of their spiritual needs. In this passage, we see Noah taking care of his spirituality by always being prepared and ready to listen to God's message. With his faith in God, he obediently built the ark in preparation of what is to come. For Noah's trust and obedience, God saved his family and all the animals of the earth.

The Second Coming of Christ is certain to come when we least expect it, so we should always be aware of and prepared to await the Son of Man. The Gospel describes this event with the images of people doing the same job, two men in

the field and two women with a hand mill. For each pair of people, one is good and pleasing to God while the other is not. As we continue our daily life, we must always prepare by doing all that is good to the best of our ability. That is what God wants us to do, for we do not know when He will return.

"If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into." As Christians, we know that our Lord is coming even if we cannot know the precise timing. Jesus calls us to be watchful and vigilant, like the homeowner. If we become lax in our Christian living, we may be caught unprepared.



## 2. CONNECT IT!

Have you ever been caught by surprise when a teacher gives a pop quiz? Were you consistently paying attention in class and prepared to take the pop quiz? Were you were busy doing everything else but studying?

We often think that we will live long lives with no need to repent immediately. Instead, we think we will have plenty of time to repent near death. But do we know when death will be upon us? To turn our back to God is the temptation of the

devil. The devil eagerly tempts us with the enjoyment of our current life in hopes of us forgetting God's mission.

As Eucharistic Youths, we can practice living the Eucharistic Day which helps us live in communion with God everyday and prepares us for His Second Coming. We look to God through the Scriptures, the Eucharist, participating in Mass and Holy Communion, praying persistently, reciting the Rosary, and doing good deeds. All the while, according to the Church's teachings, we are not to worry when He comes.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

- ✦ How do you react to Jesus' teaching that He might return at any time? How do you prepare for His return?
- ✦ Think about the comparison to the flood that came in Noah's day. What can we learn from this?
- ✦ God makes the final choice to take one person and not another – even if outwardly they appear the same. What differences might there be?

## 4. LIVE IT!

### [ *PREPAREDNESS* ]

**Preparedness** is putting oneself in proper conditions and readiness.

We know how to prepare for storms or earthquakes for when they come. Most of us have survival toolkits for when those natural disasters strike. Explore ways to spiritually prepare yourself. Write down at least one good thing that you can do and one bad habit you can change to get ready for God's return. Practice those strategies daily.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

"THEREFORE, STAY AWAKE FOR YOU DO NOT KNOW ON WHICH DAY YOUR LORD WILL COME." (MT 24:42)

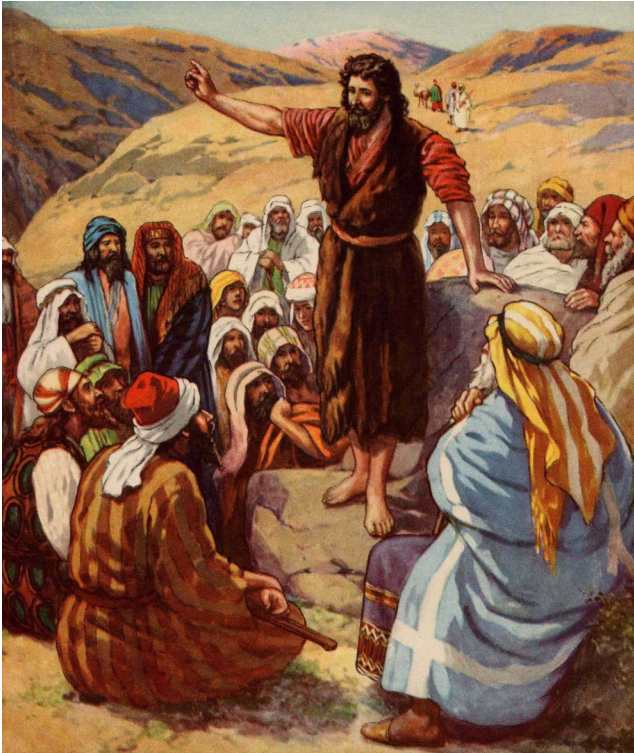
## 6. PRAY IT!

Lord, our God, help us to prepare for the coming of Christ Your Son. May He find us waiting, eager in joyful prayer. May we learn to live in faith and in communion with You through the Eucharist in each and every moment of our lives, so that we will be ready to receive Christ when He comes in glory and to share in the banquet of heaven where He lives and reigns with You. Amen.

# PREPARE THE WAY FOR JESUS

WEEK A - A2

MATTHEW  
3:1-12



In those days John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said: "A voice of one crying out in the desert, 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.'" John wore clothing made of camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the

one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

## 1. Explore It!

- For centuries, the Israelites lived with the expectation of the Messiah to come. John the Baptist preaching was a sign that God was coming for His people again. John appeared as a prophet preaching about the "Salvation of God". He invited people to prepare the ways for God to come, through baptism of repentance.
- People felt sorry for their past wrongs and came to John for confession. He baptized them in the Jordan River. People started a new life, turning away from sins, doing good works and with good intentions of repentance.
- John encouraged people to receive baptism as a way to help people realize that Christ is about to come.

## 2. Connect It!

Through this scripture, we are called to repent for the coming of the Lord. "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him". John was able to lead people to believe in Jesus. People confessed their sins and were baptized as a sign that they are turning away from sins. From this story, we learned that un-confessed sins will hinder us from seeing the Lord in our lives.

Recall the moments you have done something wrong, how did you repent for those wrong doings? Whether it is being friendlier to someone you dislike, being honest with your parents, doing charity work, or even helping your friend stay away from alcohol and drug abuse.

## 3. Reflect It!

John the Baptist was sent forth to prepare the way for the Lord to come. How are you preparing for the coming of the Lord?

Always be ready for the Lord, never think "I've got time" for He will come when least expected. Live your everyday life in God's Words. Have a good relationship with Him through prayers and doing good deeds. Prayers will bring you closer to God and anything you do in the name of God, He will take notice.

## 4. Live It!

### [REPENTANCE]

**Repentance** is the act of feeling or expressing sincere regret or remorse toward your wrongdoing/sin.

As a member of the Eucharistic Youth, living the Eucharistic Day means to live in close union with God, especially with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. A Eucharistic Day includes morning offering, attending Mass and receiving Communion or Spiritual Communion, and evening offering. The most important part in evening offering is to examine our conscience, offer our wrongdoings to ask for God's forgiveness and help. This week, demonstrate your repentance by making efforts to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and complete your evening offering daily.

## 5. Remember It!

**"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"**  
(Matthew 3:2)

## 6. Pray It!

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with Your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

# JESUS' TESTIMONY TO JOHN

WEEK A - A3

MATTHEW 11:2-11



When John the Baptist heard in prison of the works of the Christ, he sent his disciples to Jesus with this question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me."

As they were going off, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? Then what did you go out to see? Someone dressed in fine clothing? Those who wear fine clothing are in royal palaces. Then why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the

one about whom it is written: Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you. Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

John the Baptist was the person who set the stage up for Jesus. Before Jesus began his preaching, it was John who gathered the people of Israel, to prepare them for Jesus. In this passage, Jesus wants to confirm with those who heard the words of John that he was not wrong. They did not seek out John for no reason, it was for the people to listen to his words because he was the one who the prophets wrote about as the messenger for the one to come. In the Words of Jesus, John was "more than a prophet" he paved the way for Jesus to do His ministry, and for the people to have a smooth transition from John's words to Jesus'. But the most important thing was that John was a messenger for God.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus is calling each and every one of us, who have been baptized in His name, to be a messenger for Him, like John the Baptist. John was first ridiculed and judged for being a weird person, but Jesus comes later on to say that he is of importance to Jesus' ministry. YOU too, are an important factor of Jesus' ministry now in this time. People may question your faith, you have to stand firm in your actions and go out to those around you and be messengers for Jesus. You do not have to do it big, but start small to your family and friends, to the people you meet at school, to those less fortunate than you. Smaller meaningful acts go a long way. As a Knight of the Eucharist, your mission is to go unite in the Eucharist, spread the Eucharist and protect the Eucharist. Today's Gospel is reminding you start or continue to go spread the Eucharist, in your daily lives.

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Think about a time when you had to be a messenger for someone. Were you successful giving the correct message? How can you become better at it? How can you use that experience to spread the message of Jesus to others?

## 4. LIVE IT!

### [EVANGELICAL]

To be **EVANGELICAL** means to go out and share the Gospel message to everyone you meet. It is one of the toughest things to do in today's society because of the ridicule Catholics get from those who do not believe in what we do. Though it can be tough at times, start off slow in your comfort area and then expand out. Little by little you will get a hang of it because practice makes perfect.

This week try to be an **EVANGELICAL** person to at least one person. Tell them about this week's Gospel and ask them to spread the love to others.



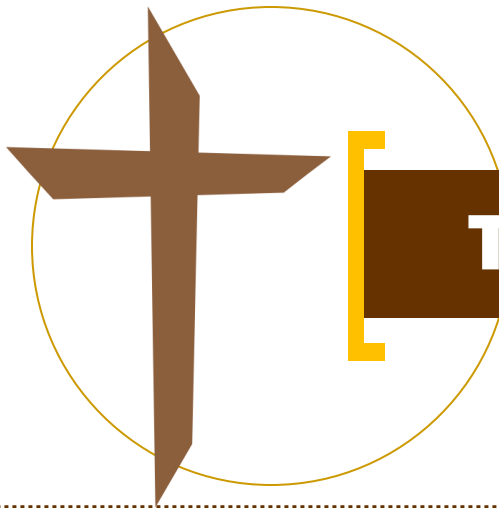
## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**“Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.”**

(Matthew 11:10)

## 6. PRAY IT!

Lord Father in Heaven, give me the strength and courage to go out and be a messenger for You. Let those we come to have an open mind and heart to accept the message You sent us with. Help us to stay steadfast in our faith when we are rejected. Be our guide and protection and lead us to those who may need Your love the most. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.



WEEK A - A4

MATTHEW 1:18-24

# THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:



"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

## [ 1. EXPLORE IT! ]

In today's gospel, we see Joseph struggling with the unexpected pregnancy of Mary. Joseph, a just and God-fearing man, did not wish to humiliate or punish Mary when he discovered that she was pregnant. It was frowned upon to have a child out of wedlock. He was not hasty to judge, or react with hurt and anger; instead he took this troubling matter to God in prayer. God rewarded him not only with guidance and consolidation, but with the divine assurance that He had indeed called Joseph to be the husband of Mary and assume a mission that would require utmost faith, confidence, and trust in God.

## [ 2. CONNECT IT! ]

Betrothal was an important social institution in the ancient world. Grand-parents or Parents arranged marriages for their children from birth. Since social order in the ancient world was built upon relationships between extended families, marriage was a primary means to strengthen political alliances and economic ties between these families.

Any sexual relations the bride might

have during the betrothal was considered adultery. Once publicly declared, the betrothal could only be broken with a divorce.

Mary was betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter in the small Galilean hamlet of Nazareth, and was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph was caught in a dilemma; if he divorces her with charges of adultery, he would put Mary's life in danger. Through God's guidance, he accepted his fate as being Mary's husband and the father of Jesus.

Just like Joseph, you will encounter many difficult decisions and setbacks in your life, such as school and your family, but just know that God is always with you. Are you ready to believe in the promises of God? Even when faced with perplexing circumstances and what seems like insurmountable problems? God has not left us alone, but has brought us His only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to save us.

### [ 3. REFLECT IT! ]

Joseph believed in the divine message to take Mary as his wife and to accept the child in her womb as the promised Messiah. Like Mary, Joseph is a model of faith for us. He is a faithful witness and servant of God's unfolding plan of redemption.

In today's society, professing our faith openly is an issue that we all encounter in our daily lives. Simple gestures such as doing the sign of the cross before we eat makes us feel embarrassed and the temptation of society draws us further away from God. We should look to Joseph as a model of faith and talk to God daily to strengthen our bond.

## 4. LIVE IT! [ RIGHTEOUSNESS ]

**Righteousness** is the intention to be and to do right.

Righteousness contains both permanent and changing elements. The fixed element is the will to do right. The changing factor is the conception of what may be right at different times and under different circumstances.

"We are accountable for our actions as we exercise our moral agency. If we understand this principle and make righteous choices, our lives will be blessed." -Lionel Kendrick

This week, challenge yourself to be righteous by standing up for what you believe in and avoid the temptations in your life.

### [ 5. REMEMBER IT! ]

**"SHE WILL BEAR A SON AND YOU ARE TO NAME HIM JESUS, BECAUSE HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS."**

(MATTHEW 1:21)

### [ 6. PRAY IT! ]

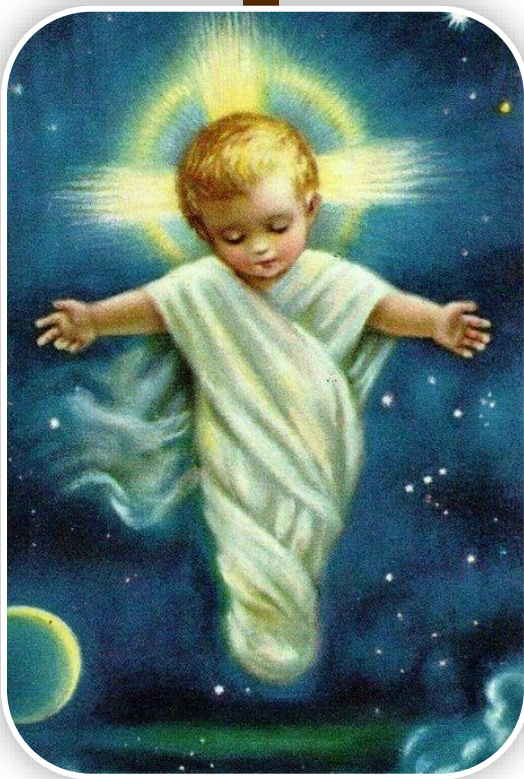
Lord Jesus, You came to save us from sin and the power of death. You taught us to be righteous in all that we do in Your name. May we always rejoice in Your salvation and trust in Your plan for our lives. Amen.

# JESUS, THE WORD, BECAME FLESH



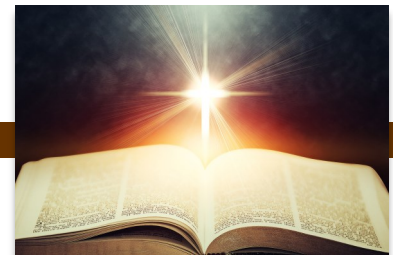
WEEK A - NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

JOHN 1:1-5, 9-14



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him.

But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

On Christmas we celebrate the Incarnation of Jesus, "the Word became flesh," which means God became human. The mystery of the Incarnation is the foundation of our Christian faith and "the most sacred moment in all of human history." According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (or the "GIRM"), which is the Church document that outlines the Mass, we are to make a profound bow, a bow at the waist, during the declaration of the Incarnation in the Nicene Creed: "by the power of the

Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man." As all postures have meaning throughout the Mass, the profound bow during this part of the Nicene Creed is an outward sign of reverence and honor to express how pivotal the Incarnation is in our faith. Our God, Creator of universe who formed the heavens and the earth out of nothing, loved us so much that He became one of us, humbling Himself to be made lower than the angels, to live among us.



## 2. CONNECT IT!

The world is not a perfect place. We see the brokenness of the world we live in every day on the news: political division, war, poverty, violence, injustice. In Jesus' days, the world was not any better. Jesus lived during the time where the oppressive and brutal Romans were occupying Israel, strong divisions existed among the various religious sects and social classes, and a majority of the Jewish people were poor and overburdened by taxes. Yet, in the midst of this unrest and poverty, with full knowledge that He would not be accepted by His own people, Jesus still came into the world out of His great love for us, willing to be the perfect sacrifice in atonement for our sins so that we may be with Him forever in heaven.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

As John says in the Gospel today, Jesus is the light. In the northern hemisphere where we live, Christmas comes after the darkest time of the year when the days begin to grow longer. How appropriate that we celebrate the coming of the Light of the world during this time! Jesus entered this dark world broken from to heal us with His Light. As Knights of the Eucharist, our motto is *Dấn Thân*: "plunging headlong into the world," we are called to be the light for the world. In His great love, Jesus reached out to everyone, especially the marginalized of society. Who are the marginalized that you can reach out to? How can you imitate Jesus and be a light to your family, friends, and peers?

## 4. LIVE IT! [ LOVE ]

There are different types of love, the highest form of love being agape or unconditional, selfless, sacrificial love. This love is used by Jesus to describe the love among the persons of the Holy Trinity and is also the love He commanded us to have for one another.

As Knights of the Eucharist, our spirit is Self-abandonment. We are called to live a noble life by serving others with charity and humility just as Jesus did. God's love is a gift meant to be shared with everyone around us. This time of year can be lonely and difficult for some of our brothers and sisters, whether be from the loss of a loved one or from struggling to make ends meet. Consider the ways you can offer your time in service to them.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

*"And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory"*  
(John 1:14)



## 6. PRAY IT!

Dear Baby Jesus,  
thank you for the greatest gift of love which is Yourself. Let Your light shine through us and bring Your warm love to everyone we encounter.  
Amen.

# THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

When the magi had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you.

Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, Out of Egypt I called my son.

When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the Land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, He shall be called a Nazorean.



## 1 | EXPLORE IT!

The Gospel of Matthew gives two main portraits of Jesus: "Son of David-King of the Nations" and "New Moses-New Lawgiver" This passage gives us a striking comparison between Moses and Jesus: both were sought to be killed at birth, taken to Egypt for protection, and when safe to return, Moses led the God's people to the Promised Land while Jesus establish the New Promised Land. The decree of the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus required that Mary and Joseph (originally from Nazareth) to register for the census in Bethlehem. After the visit of the three wise men, Joseph heard the warning from the angel of the Lord and took his family to Egypt where they remained until Herod the Great's death.

## 2 | CONNECT IT!

No family is perfect, even for the Holy Family. We are bound to encounter challenges in our lives. Like the Holy Family, we may experience unexpected and sudden events in our life, requiring us to be flexible and make the best of the situation like the Holy Family. Like St. Joseph, we are entrusted with "beloveds"-to protect, safeguard, care and nurture. Our "beloveds" may be our family, close friends, acquaintances and personal gifts or talents.

## 4 | LIVE IT! [ OBEDIENCE ]

Obedience is to listen and follow the directions of those who has the right to command, such as God and His commandments. We are called to obey God and His commandments.

- ◇ We are all called to holiness; to be a saint and in union with God is our ultimate destination in life. Obedience, being an evangelical counsel, is not a destination in itself, but rather as a bridge that helps us to become holy.
- ◇ Take some time to assess how you are able to obey God and live a holy life through the Ten Commandments and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.



## 3 | REFLECT IT!

In order to fulfill God's plan in our life, in particularly difficult moments, we must first listen to Him in our hearts and prayers. His Will for us is what will give us inner peace and joy, regardless of how challenging it is. He has a Will for each and every one of us, and always will the best for us because He loves us.

We listen to Him in our hearts by praying, having more time in silence to discern the many options and to choose the option that will bring out the goodness in us and others around us.

## 5 | REMEMBER IT!

*"He (Joseph) rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel."*

(Matthew 2:21)

## 6 | PRAY IT!

O God, You are our Heavenly Father who always will the best for us. Help us to always listen to Your promptings in our life, so that we may always bear witness of You to our brothers and sisters. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.



## Mary, Mother of JESUS

The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them. When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.



### I. EXPLORE IT!

The Gospel today was referring to the day the shepherds worshipped baby Jesus in the manger, who was gift of God to save all of mankind. Because the shepherds believed in the Good News that were giving to

them by the angel, the Gospel mention that “the shepherds went in hastes” to witness the birth of Jesus to glorify Him. On the hand, Mary kept all those things and reflected on them in her heart.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Our daily lives are very noisy, distracted and full of self-centered worries and preoccupations with desires, ideas, materialism that we are distracted to hear and receive God's Words and let God's work through our life.

Mary was different. Although she had an active life, she always kept her mind clear and focused so she could hear many gentle messages that God gave her and was able to allow God's work through her.

With all the noises, how can we learn to hear God's words and allow Him to work through us? How do we spread the Good News to others?

## 4. LIVE IT! [ PEACEFULNESS ]

*Peacefulness is the state of being quiet and calm; the state of not being worried or disturbed in any way.*

As we enter the New Year with expectation, worries and uncertainty of what's ahead, let's remind ourselves that Mary was once in that stage when the angel first appeared to her, but yet Mary didn't let her worries scare her, she offered her whole life in God's hands without hesitation. May we also live our life with unwavering faith and offer our worries, our life, our soul up to Jesus so that we can find peace in all that we do through this year.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

Many times, in our life, we go to church, we hear God's Word speak to us, yet how much of His Words do we actually receive and let God's work through us as we walk out of the church? Our lives are so busy with all the things around us that we only think of God when something goes wrong and ask "Why did God let it happen to us". Yet, if we were to sit down and reflect on it like Mary did, we might learn and understand that God's plans for us in those situations could change our life for the better.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

"And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart."  
(Luke 2:19)

## 6. PRAY IT!

O my Jesus, may we follow the example of the Blessed Mother in our lives. May we accept our crosses with great love for You always. Amen.

# FOLLOW JESUS' STAR

WEEK A  
EPIPHANY OF THE LORD  
MATTHEW 2:1-12

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 Messiah 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!

Happy Feast of the Epiphany! In today's reading, the three magi make their first appearance. Sometimes known as the three kings, they are in search of the Christ child and find Him underneath the star. King Herod tries to trick the magi into revealing the location of Jesus so that he can find and kill Baby Jesus, but the magi are warned in a dream to avoid Herod on their way home. When the magi find Jesus, they offer Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Traditionally, these gifts symbolize very special things in the life of Jesus - gold for His Kingship, frankincense for His Divinity, and myrrh for His Passion and Death. We are reminded that even in the joy of Christmas, Jesus will give His life on the cross for our salvation.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

In this passage, Jesus is just a baby. His mother Mary has just given birth and the Holy Family are resting in the manger while they receive the three magi. There is much we can learn from Jesus even when He is just a child. First, babies are passive in that they receive anything they are given. Jesus receives gifts that represent different parts of His ministry on earth - even His death. We can learn from Him that even when life gives us struggles and hardships, we should accept them along with the blessings. Second, Jesus as a child represents humility. He is the Second Person of the Trinity, the

Son of God, and the Messiah, and yet He comes to us first in the form of an infant. In His majesty and infinite power, we see Him first as a helpless baby. Author G.K. Chesterton says it best in *The Everlasting Man*: "It has been often said, very truly, that religion is the thing that makes the ordinary man feel extraordinary; it is an equally important truth that religion is the thing that makes the extraordinary man feel ordinary." God makes us feel both extraordinary and ordinary at the same time - extraordinary in His unconditional love for us, and ordinary in comparison to His greatness.

### 3. REFLECT IT!

The Feast of the Epiphany occurs during the liturgical season of Christmas. The word "epiphany" means a sudden flash of knowledge or insight, but its more original meaning is "revelation from God." What could God be revealing to us on this day through this Bible passage? Let's look back at the gifts of the magi, especially the gift of myrrh. Why is Scripture reminding us at this particular moment of the death of Christ? Historically, the Church would use this feast to announce the holy days of obligation for the rest of the year - especially Easter. Maybe God is telling us to always keep in mind the beautiful message we find in John 3:16 - "for God so loved the world He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life."

### 4. LIVE IT! [JOYFULNESS]

**Joyfulness** is a feeling or expression of pleasure and happiness; condition of supreme well-being and good spirits

Joyfulness is supernatural and is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Because of sins, we will always have sorrow and sadness in our lives here on earth. The magi were overjoyed when they saw Baby Jesus. God is our joy, and the more we know Him, the greater our joy becomes. This week, praise God for the fruit of the Holy Spirit, the joy we are able to have because He lives within us. Experience true joy by reading God's word. Bring joy to others by doing an anonymous act of kindness, for example, leave a nice note for someone who has experienced sadness, do the chores around your house without being asked to, or donate your time or money to a charity.

### 5. REMEMBER IT!

"They were overjoyed at seeing the star."  
(Matthew 2:10)

### 6. PRAY IT!

O Heavenly Father, teach us to be humble like Your Son, Jesus Christ. In His infancy and in His death, He shows the world how much You love us. May the world see through our humility as well, how much You continue to love them. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

# THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

WEEK A - BAPTISM OF THE LORD

MATTHEW 3:13-17

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

"All the Old Covenant prefiguration find their fulfillment in Christ Jesus. He begins His public life after having Himself baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan...Our Lord voluntarily submitted Himself to the baptism of St. John, intended for sinners, in order to 'fulfill all righteousness.' Jesus' gesture is a manifestation of His self-emptying" (CCC 1223-1224). This act signifies Jesus' submission to the Father's will. In the Old Testament, David, like all Israel kings, was

anointed by a Levite (Samuel) and "the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David" (1 Samuel 16:13). Similarly, to begin His office and ministry, Jesus, a descendant of David, was anointed by John, a Levite, as the King of the coming Kingdom and the Spirit descended and came upon Him. Additionally, at this scene, the Trinity was revealed to us: the voice of the Father, the baptism of the Son, and the descent of the Holy Spirit.



## 2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus being baptized by St. John the Baptist signifies Jesus' submission to the Father's will. He transformed the Jewish purification ritual into the Sacrament of Baptism. The Catechism teaches that the baptism (or immersion) into the water symbolizes our burial into Christ's death, from which we rise up by resurrection as a new creature; Baptism brings about death to sin and entry into the life of the Most Holy Trinity (CCC 1214, 1237). When we are baptized, we are reborn as children of God. We are also anointed into the three-fold ministry of Christ: Priest, prophet, and king.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

Jesus showed great humility when He submitted Himself to God's will and allowed St. John the Baptist to baptize Him. When we are assigned a task, do we put our pride aside so that we can accomplish what we set out to do? How may pride get in the way of us fulfilling our responsibility? Do we allow our laziness to get in the way? Ultimately, do our actions reflect God's will or only our will?

## 4. LIVE IT! [ DUTY ]

*responsibility; respectful and obedient conduct*

Jesus fulfilled His duty by obeying the Father's will. Let us imitate Jesus in fulfilling our responsibilities:

- ♦ As a son/daughter - help with household chores, help take care of younger siblings;
- ♦ As a friend - help out your friends with homework or perhaps be a listening ear;
- ♦ As a student - study and do your homework;
- ♦ As a child of God - love God and love others.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

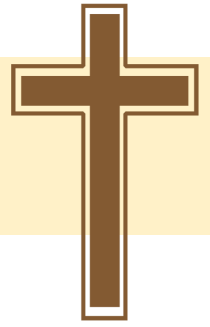
"Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."  
(Matthew 3:15)

## 6. PRAY IT!

Father, I abandon myself into Your hands; do with me what You will. Whatever You may do, I thank You: I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only Your will be done in me, and in all Your creatures - I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into Your hands I commend my soul: I offer it to You with all the love of my heart, for I love You, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into Your hands without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for You are my Father.

(Prayer of Abandonment by Charles de Foucauld)

# John's Testimony to JESUS



WEEK A - 02

JOHN 1:29-34



John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove

from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God."

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

John the Baptist proclaims the coming of Jesus and is not afraid to testify the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. John the Baptist does not recognize the Messiah only when He baptized Jesus and saw the dove, Holy Spirit from the sky remain upon Jesus.

Jesus is called "the Lamb of God" because He is the final sacrifice, the

complete sacrifice for sins. Jesus being the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world does not mean that everyone will be saved. It means that salvation is available to everyone worldwide, regardless of race, class, or ethnicity. Salvation isn't only for the Jews; it's for all who believe in Jesus Christ.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Following John the Baptist's example, you must not be afraid to tell the truth and to be a witness of your own beliefs. Always be proud to spiritually engrave the Sign of the Cross upon yourself in public. Know that the act satisfies your duties of being a religious missionary, God's messenger here on Earth. How many times have you felt ashamed and inconvenient to make the Sign of the Cross before you eat in front of a diverse group of friends?

Remember, "For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." (James 2:26) It is not enough to just believe in God. You must also act upon it!

## 4. LIVE IT! [ WITNESS ]

**Witness:** A person, being present, personally sees or perceives a thing, gives testimony or affords evidence.

Become a witness of God's grace in life by living the Eucharistic Day.

Becoming a witness of Truth is not always easy. When we uphold truths, we might be unpopular, disagreed, and harshly judged. When this happens, do not be discouraged because Truth will always prevail.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

One often hears the phrase, "everything is relative" as a closing remark in a disagreeable conversation, as to avoid conflict when different opinions or perceptions arrive. While it is true that something is dictated by individual perceptions such as one's own experiences, likes or dislikes, however, some truths are absolute and cannot be changed by individual preferences, such as good and evil, and the Mystery of our Triune God – the Three natures in One.

The Principle of Absolute helps us to form our moral values – kindness is good, killing is bad. Like Love, Truth is absolute. You cannot "kind of" love someone because love is the ultimate act of giving yourself to others. In truth, you can never find something is partially true, because that partiality is false, or untrue. By including things that are untrue in truth, it is a contradiction.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"NOW I HAVE SEEN AND TESTIFIED THAT HE IS THE SON OF GOD."**

(JOHN 1:34)



## 6. PRAY IT!

Lord, give us the courage to be Your witness here on Earth. Let the Holy Spirit shine upon us and be our moral compass to navigate through the chaos of life. We ask that this prayer be granted, through the intercession of Mother Mary, Your Most Holy Mother. Amen.

## JESUS' MINISTRY

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled: *Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen.* From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of



Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him. He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.

### I. EXPLORE IT!

Today's Gospel tells us about the beginning of Jesus' ministry and how He called His first four disciples: Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

Jesus' urging message is to "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." With the arrest of John the Baptist foreshadowing His own arrest, He has to choose His disciples who will continue the ministry. So He chooses four ordinary fishermen as His first disciples with the promise that they will be fishers of men. One by one, leaving their nets and boat, they follow Jesus.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

The Greek word for “repent” is “metanoia” – a spiritual conversion or change of heart toward God reflected in the actual goodness of one’s own life. Throughout the Old Testament, God has spoken through the prophets, urging Israel to reorient their lives back to God. “In this, the final age, He has spoken to us through his Son”. (Hebrews 1:2). That is the message that Jesus is preaching today. It is also the challenge He gave to the four fishermen when He called them. It was not temporary task that the four fishermen

accepted, it was a lifetime ordeal since repentance requires continual conversion of heart. Knowing this, individually and without any hesitation, the four fishermen – Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John – dropped everything and took on the challenge. To be good at something, such as a pianist, you must be committed to it with your time and effort. Likewise, to be God’s fisherman, you must commit your entire life to spiritual conversions each day and change every vice into a virtue.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

Everyone can and needs to repent – to convert themselves to God continuously. Jesus did not call the talented and extraordinary people to be His disciples. Instead, He called the ordinary fishermen, not for who they were, but for what they would be. Jesus knew that if they lived out the challenge and have a true conversion, then they will be compelled to challenge others as well and really be the fishers of men.

That very challenge echoed throughout time to each and every one of us. How will you respond to the call? Will you commit to the challenge and convert yourself to God on a daily basis?

## 6. PRAY IT!

O loving Jesus! Your call of repentance is a call for us to return to Your loving heart. Grant us the courage and perseverance to keep our commitment to Your call. Through the intercession of Mary with her resounding “fiat”, we ask this of You, Lord Jesus, who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

## 4. LIVE IT! [ COMMITMENT ]

**Commitment** – a pledge or promise

Jesus’ call for repentance is a call for a lifelong conversion of your heart to God’s own heart, reflecting in the actual goodness of your own life.

On a daily basis, reflect back on your day and ask yourself these questions: When and where were you able to feel God’s presence? How have you lived the Gospel message of peace, charity, and love? Have you met the challenge of repentance today? What can you do better tomorrow?

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."**

**(Matthew 4:17)**

# JESUS PROCLAIMS GOD'S BLESSINGS

WEEK A - O4

MATTHEW 5:1-12a

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:



"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

## 1. Explore It!

Moses fasted on Mount Sinai for Forty Days and Forty Nights and returned with the Ten Commandments. Jesus who fasted in the desert for Forty Days and Forty Nights, returned to preach the new law, the Beatitudes. Jesus came, not to abolish the old law, but to fulfill it.

Beatitudes – happiness or blessedness – reflect the life of Jesus and the life Jesus wants us to have:

- The poor in spirit 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.
- They who mourn are those who recognize the sufferings of others as their own. The sins and indifference of others towards God that fills them with sorrow – a blessed sorrow that comes with joy of having been invited into Christ's sorrow.
- The meek are those who are gentle towards those who are suffering. They are not quick to take offense but are very patient with others for they

know that God has always been patient with them.

- They who hunger and thirst for righteousness are those who love 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 the more intense their hunger and thirst.
- The merciful are those who have been touched by God's mercy and committed to follow Christ to become a channel of His mercy.
- The clean of heart are those who have undivided love for God with no other competing love.
- The peacemakers are those who strive to unite and maintain a genuine harmony among people. They are instruments of peace in the hands of Christ.
- The persecuted for the sake of righteousness are those who found everything that the human heart is looking for but cannot find outside of Christ. They have chosen to live the seven previous Beatitudes and are to suffer this eighth Beatitude. They have received the gift of being drawn into the very heart of His silence which is more joyful than the greatest joys the world can offer.



## 2. Connect It!

The Ten Commandments are the guidelines given to us from God through Moses. They were given to us because God knew we could sin and wanted us to live a fruitful life leading to everlasting life. We follow them because we love our God and acknowledge our imperfections. We can fall into hypocrisy, much like the Pharisees, and believe we are better than others.

“Blessed are those...” The 8 Beatitudes list the ways we may become more like God. They were given to us because Jesus, who could not sin, lived the Beatitudes, the ultimate means of salvation. Necessary graces are given to us through the Sacraments by the merits of Jesus that enable us to choose to live the Beatitudes, to imitate Christ.



## 3. Reflect It!

- People training for a marathon have to endure much pain as they prepare for the day of the marathon. Why would anybody put themselves through the vigorous training?
- It is the same with living the Beatitudes. Do you see the heavenly goal? Will you choose to accept the Beatitudes? How will this change your way of life?

## 5. Remember It!

**"Rejoice and be glad,  
for your reward will be  
great in heaven."  
(Matthew 5:12)**

## 5. Pray It!

Loving Jesus! We thank you for giving us the new blessings, the loving commandments. Please continue to grant us Your graces so we can live the Beatitudes to imitate You. We pray this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## 4. Live It! [ SUFFERING ]

▶ to undergo or feel pain or distress;  
to endure patiently or willingly.

When we hear the word “suffering,” we usually think about the first definition of pain and distress. The suffering that the Beatitudes call for is to endure patiently or willingly. This suffering is transformative:

- Poor in spirit – Act humble and ask for God’s help in everything that you do.
- Mourning – Pray for others, especially those who are far from God.
- Meek – Be slow to anger and be patient to those who offend you.
- Hunger and thirst for righteousness – Help those who experience injustice.
- Merciful – Forgive those who have wronged you.
- Clean of heart – Go to confession so your heart can be free to fill it with love for God.
- Peacemakers – Try not to pick a fight but prevent them instead.
- And if by doing so that you are ridiculed or persecuted, offer it up to God and ask for courage and strength to endure it all.

# BECOME SALT & LIGHT FOR JESUS

## JESUS SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES:

"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.

Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."



## 1. Explore It!

In last week's Gospel, Jesus begins His famous Sermon on the Mount to the thousands of people gathered on the hilltop with the eight Beatitudes. Jesus continues on with several teachings and parables concerning morality and ways in which to live a good life, starting with a simile of salt and light.

Salt has always been an extremely important resource throughout since ancient times. In almost every culture throughout the world salt is used as a universal ingredient for flavoring. Everything from simple dishes to fancy and exotic delicacies rely on at least a pinch of salt for its flavoring. Salt, however, has no use on its own. Salt is used to bring out the flavor of other foods; it is the base on which other things rely. What would happen then, if salt was no longer salty? What would happen to recipes that require salt? How would usual meals taste differently?

Likewise, light is a common everyday phenomenon with an abundance of practical uses, something we cannot live without. However, light has no use on its own; its purpose is to shine brightly to light up other

things and bring them forward out of the darkness. A light has no use and cannot do its job if it is covered up or hidden. Rather, lights should be placed up high on a stand or on top a hill like a lighthouse.

## 2. Connect It!

Jesus tells His followers: "You are the salt of the earth." In the same way that a pinch of salt might make a meal taste better, Jesus calls on us to help and strengthen those around us. Salt by itself has no use on its own; we must go forward and enhance the flavour of the whole world around us.

Jesus calls upon us: "You are the light of the world." Like a light in the dark that all can follow, Jesus calls on us to light the way forward for others through our actions and deeds.



### 3. Reflect It!

Take a moment and reflect upon how you are living your life at this moment. If you were raised high upon a stand and revealed for who you truly are, what type of person would people see? Are you living in a way that other people would want to follow? Are you proud of your moral character and the actions you take each day?

List 3 unique qualities you possess that others might admire about you. In what ways are you the Salt of the Earth?

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_

List 3 ways that which you can use your talents to help others. In what ways are you the Light of the World?

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
3) \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Live It!

[ Role Model ]

A **role model** is person whose behaviour, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially by younger people. Just as Jesus is an inspiration for others to follow, how can you live each day to be a role model to everyone around you?



### 5. Remember It!

**"Your light must shine before others,  
that they may see your good deeds and  
glorify your Father in heaven."**

(Matthew 5:16)

### 6. Pray It!

Dear Lord, please give us the strength, wisdom, and courage to become the best person we can. Help us to become the Salt of the Earth with virtues that will never fade. Help us to become the Light of the World, continuing to shine bright for others to follow through our words, actions, and deeds. Amen.

# JESUS' TEACHING ABOUT THE LAW

WEEK A - 06

MATTHEW 5: 17-37



come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny. “You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman

Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets: I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

“You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, You shall not kill, and whoever kills will be liable to judgment. But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; and whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ will be answerable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then

with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.

“It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce. But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife – unless the marriage is unlawful – causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

“Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow, But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one.”

## 1. Explore It!

The Pharisees were influential to the people during the time of Jesus. They believed in strictly living by the Laws of Moses, and only through this, may one be worthy in the eyes of God and his peers. However, Jesus pointed out that many lived the law in an external fashion for others to see, but their intentions did not come from their hearts. Jesus indicated that He came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. He stressed that external actions of holiness should be a reflection of the holiness from the heart. As an example from the Ten Commandments, what good is not

## 2. Connect It!

One of our greatest blessings and also one of our biggest challenges is the fact that we have the ability to choose from among many things. In some cases there are so many options that it can almost be overwhelming. Our society teaches us that a choice that makes you feel good cannot possibly be the wrong choice. There are many choices which may make one feel good in the present moment, but long term are not good for them at all. Contrary to what we see in the media, we truly do have the ability to delay gratification. We do not have to have everything right now. What are our real criteria to evaluate a moral option or action? Jesus urges us to delve deeper into our personal response to the rules and norms of a number of important moral laws we have received in our Christian teaching. He challenges us to go beyond mere observance of those laws and find a deeper commitment to God's will.

## 5. Remember It!

**“Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’  
and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’  
Anything more is from the  
evil one.”  
(Matthew 5:37)**

committing the action of adultery if you have already had these thoughts in your mind? Likewise, what good is not committing the action of murder, but you curse that person and destroy their image with rumors and profanity? It was evident, that the teachings of Jesus came to “complete” the existing laws from the Old Testament. Jesus invites us to live our faith internally, which will reflect our actions. How we live our lives according to God's laws should not draw attention onto ourselves for people to look at and admire, but instead, lead us to a deeper relationship with our God.

## 3. Reflect It!

- How do I see and live God's Law?
- Do I show signs of a personal, profound commitment to Jesus' calling to holiness? Or am I just following routines without any significance to my life?
- Am I seeing God's Law as an imposition which limits my freedom?
- Do I understand my sins as a breaking of the law or as a sign of infidelity to God, to our neighbors or to ourselves?

## 4. Live It! [ TRUTHFULNESS ]

- telling or expressing the truth, honest or candid.

It is really important to be truthful to others but more so to yourself. Being truthful lets you be completely yourself and there is a lot of joy and happiness in being genuine. Honesty and truth can take a great deal of confidence, but it is worth it for the freedom that comes from being up front. It's also important to remember that lies add up. The more you lie about things the higher that tower of lies grows. They build on one another and build till it consumes you and you forget what the truth is. Most importantly, God knows when we are being truthful or not. Each night, reflect on how truthful you have been throughout the day. Find the cause of the problem and make a promise to yourself and to God to improve.

## 6. Pray It!

Dear God, thank you for everything You have done for us. Please give us strength and courage to follow Your Laws based on love and guide us to build up our faith. Amen.



# JESUS' TEACHING ABOUT LOVING ENEMIES

Week A - 07

MATTHEW 5:38-48

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evildoer. On the contrary, whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other to him as well. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go two with him. Give to the person who asks you for something, and do not turn away from the person who wants to borrow something from you."

"You have heard that it was said, 'You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you will become children of your Father in heaven, because he makes his sun rise on both evil and good people, and he lets rain fall on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Even the tax collectors do the same, don't they? And if you greet only your relatives, that's no great thing you're doing, is it? Even the unbelievers do the same, don't they? So be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

"An eye for an eye" and a "tooth for a tooth" would have been relevant to the people that listened to Jesus, because it was part of the Laws of Moses from the Old Testament. These laws limited the amount of vengeance one can carry out to whom committed the wrongdoing. Meaning, if someone punched you and you lost a tooth, then as a form of justice, you are only allowed to take a tooth from that person and no more. As these laws limited vengeance, Jesus on the contrary challenged His listeners to seek a higher justice by not limiting their "love." Jesus demands His followers to imitate God the Father who bestows His love and graces to

both those that are righteous and evildoers. Therefore, to turn one's left cheek after being slapped on the right side does not mean to be satisfied with being a victim and doing nothing. It means to put God above all else and by extending love through mercy, we have imitated God, who is perfect in every way, sharing our love to those who love us and also, to those who may hate us. Jesus came to fulfill the laws of the Old Testament by challenging us to live more radically and by doing more than required. By living our lives in accordance with His demands, we ourselves become more wholesome, and more like God.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Everyone has heard of the golden rule, "Treat others as you would like to be treated". What Jesus is trying to tell us is that, treat others with kindness and love even if they are not kind and loving. If we don't follow the golden rule fully, then there will be a cycle of those who mistreat each other. Jesus wants us to break that cycle and show compassion so we can be the best that we can be. Jesus loved everyone regardless of sins and flaws. He wants us to do the same in loving our enemies just as we love our friends. There are those who will wrong us and hurt us, but we must be strong and resist lashing out on others. Jesus wants us to be more like Him and our heavenly Father.



### 3. REFLECT IT!

- How can you reach out to your enemies in a way that shows them love?
- If someone insults you or tries to take advantage of you, how do you respond? Do you repay in kind?
- Are willing to go the extra mile in your work and giving? Can you do so with a godly attitude?

### [ 5. REMEMBER IT! ]

"SO BE PERFECT, JUST AS YOUR  
HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT."

(MATTHEW 5:48)

### 4. LIVE IT!

## PERFECTION

**being free or as free as possible from flaws or defects.**

To be perfect means being the best version of you possible; the best Catholic you can be. This week, meditate and think of a personal flaw, improve upon your flaw and turn it into a virtue. Think of a person that you dislike the most, pray for him/her. Reach out and make peace with that person.



### 6. PRAY IT!

Dear Heavenly Father, we pray for Your guidance and teachings to help us keep along the path You set for us. Help us become selfless so we can serve You better and do Your will. Let us be Your hands and feet here on earth. Guide us to be a perfect as You are. Amen.

# JESUS' Teaching About Loyalty to God

WEEK A - 08

MATTHEW 6:24-34

Jesus said to his disciples: "No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven



tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil."

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Through the passage, Jesus told us to always love and devote our lives to His blessings and teachings. Instead of worrying about materialistic matters such as clothing, food, and shelters, we should really focus on the Kingdom of God. It is easy for someone to say, "Don't worry!" However, putting this into practice is not easy to do. Our lives are vulnerable, uncertain, and sometimes chaotic; however, we can live without great anxiety if we let God take control of our lives. To do that, we need make God a priority and look at life from His point of view.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

There are so many things that make us stressed out every day: school, exams, family, relationships. Where are we going to school for college? What are the acceptance rates? How hard do I need to work to meet the requirements? What do I really want to do for college? Thousands and thousands of things that make us stress out and torn us apart. Today, Jesus tells us to follow Him instead of worrying about other temporary materials that only happened on earth. Let's find something

higher and better. Does stressing out about your exam really help you? Or just do you harm? In order to do well, you need to understand yourself. Know your strengths and weaknesses through Jesus. Find Him, seek Him and pray to Him. No matter how high you score on the SAT, if you don't know where you want to go to school or what really you want to do, you won't find your happiness. Embrace yourself with the love of Jesus and seek His Words so that He can guide you.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

Create a journal or a list and write down all of your stress, worries, and concerns and offer them up to God during Eucharistic Adoration. Think about the decisions that you need to make but don't know which one to pick. Choose the one that makes you closer to Him and makes Him happy. In doing so, you have chosen to follow His ways.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**“Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness.”**  
(Matthew 6:33)

## 4. LIVE IT! [ LOYALTY ]

**LOYALTY**- a strong feeling of support or allegiance.

Show your loyalty to God by living a prayerful life. For the next couple days, let's practice an exercise. Every time you find yourself worrying about something and at the split road of decisions, make one prayer and offer it to Jesus. Realize that you are not alone and your concerns and worries will be heard and taken care of through His Love.

## 6. PRAY IT!

Dear God, sometimes our mind are full with worries, stress and negative thoughts. They suppress our intelligences and brightness. We can't reach our potentials until You come and open our mind up. Please open our eyes for us to see Your way and follow it. Please give us strength to seek Your love, Your way and to choose to follow You. As many souls around us are thirsty for a happy place, please lighten them up with Your gloriousness and love. We are thankful for having Your love leading us the way so that we can lean on. We don't have to worry about temporary things on earth but let's us seek or Your Kingdom. God please lead the way! Amen.



# LISTENING AND ACTING ON JESUS' TEACHING

"Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?" Then I will declare to them solemnly, "I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers."

"Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined."



## 1. EXPLORE IT:

Today's Gospel is the conclusion of Matthew's first discourse which started with the Sermon on the Mount in chapter 5. After teaching the crowds about the Beatitudes, the Law, and various different subjects (e.g., anger, divorce, retaliation, love of enemies, almsgiving, prayer), Jesus spoke about being a true disciple - "the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" and the one "who listens to these words of mine and acts on them".

## 2. CONNECT IT:

Going to church every day, participating in ministries, or praying the rosary all the time does not mean that the person is a true disciple. Even prophesying, driving out demons, and doing mighty deeds do not equate to being a true disciple. Jesus is asking that His words be the foundation of our being, not just what we say and do, but what we are. As true disciples, we must first listen to Jesus' words by reading the Scriptures. We must understand His words by studying or asking someone for help, like a priest or a teacher. Through understanding, we come to accept Jesus as "the way, the truth, and the life". Only then can we act according to the will of God and seeing everything through His eyes.



### 3. RELECT IT!

The Scriptures is one of the foundations of the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement, do we place the Scriptures as the foundation of our lives?

In the four-step approach described in the Connect It! section (listening, understanding, accepting, and acting), which step are we on? Which step is the hardest and how can we accomplish it?

### 4. LIVE IT! {PRUDENCE}

Prudence is the quality or fact of being wise in practical affairs, as by providing for the future.

“Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it” (CCC 1806). On a daily basis, spend time listening to God’s word in Scriptures to discern each choice you make and ask yourself if your choice and action bring you closer to God. Apply the four-step approach to train yourself into a disciple of Christ.

### 5. REMEMBER IT!

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.”  
(Matthew 7:24)

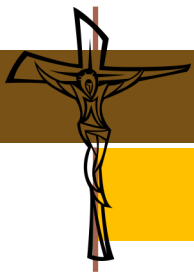


GIÁO LÝ SKETCHING

### 6. PRAY IT!

O Lord Jesus Christ, in every step of Your life You were guided by the Holy Spirit and truth, which filled Your human and divine soul. I ask You to send Your Holy Spirit on me that I may judge things wisely in this world. It would be helpful if I had natural prudence, and I appreciate this gift. Most of all I want to have the prudence that You give, the prudence that seeks first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and knows that all other things necessary will be given to me. Help me to give an example of true prudence seeking the Kingdom of God in all that I do, and help me avoid the false wisdom of the world and of things that pass away. Amen.

- The Virtue Driven Life (Father Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R.)



# The Temptation of JESUS

WEEK A - L1

MATTHEW 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." He said in reply, "It is written. 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you' and 'with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the



world in their magnificence, and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me." At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written: 'The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him and,

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

In this Scripture, Jesus was tempted by the devil, not once, but three times. The first time, He was asked to turn stones into loaves of bread. The second time, He was asked to throw Himself off of the parapet of the temple. And the third time, He was tempted with possessions such as kingdoms and wealth. But each time, Jesus rebuked the devil by placing His trust in God the Father, and finally the devil went away because it knows it cannot tempt Jesus.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

In the world today, there are temptations all around us. Things posted on social media and the internet, and messages relayed through TV shows are some examples. The trends in fashion and technology constantly change and we are often tempted to follow the trends to obtain the newest phone or the nicest shoes. But instead of chasing after materialistic things, we should seek God for His help to not fall into the trap of the devil.

### 3. REFLECT IT!

This Scripture reminds us that we are all prone to temptations; even Jesus was tempted by the devil. We are all weak and imperfect, we can be easily swayed by fame and possessions; it is as these moments of weakness that we should ask God for His help and guidance. These temptations are everywhere, but it is up to us whether we fall into the temptations or we steer away from them with God's help. When we follow God's teachings, we can steer ourselves out of the temptations.

### 4. LIVE IT!

#### [ PERSEVERANCE ]

**Perseverance** is the continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition.

Throughout this week when you encounter difficulties, conflict, or confusion, try to remember all of the temptations that Jesus went through and be determined to reach your goal. Pray to Jesus asking for the strength to push on and carry out God's will.

### 5. REMEMBER IT!

**“The Lord, your God,  
shall you worship and  
Him alone shall you  
serve.”  
(Matthew 4:10)**

### 6. PRAY IT!

Dear Father, give us the strength to defeat the temptations constantly surrounding us and help us seek You when we are at our weakest. Please guide us along the way so that we can make the right choices according to Your will. Please help us remember that the only thing we should be chasing for is You and become closer to You so we can worship You wholeheartedly. Amen.

# The Transfiguration of Jesus



Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud

came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Today's Gospel account of Jesus' Transfiguration illumines our Lenten spiritual journey toward the Easter glory. The word "transfigured" in Greek is "metamorpho" which means to transform the outside to match the inside. Jesus's Transfiguration on the mountain was meant to strengthen the faith of three disciples, Peter, James, and John, who were about to witness the events that would lead Jesus to His Passion and Death. Their own faith would be shaken, tested and tried. The Transfiguration of Jesus revealed to the disciples His divine nature veiled in human form and also a glimpse of His Glory, giving them hope and encouragement. At the Transfiguration event, "the whole Trinity appeared: the Father in the voice, the Son in the man, and the Spirit in the shining clouds." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 555) The clothes of Jesus became white as light. The brilliant garments of the transfigured Christ give us a glimpse of the radiance of the

Easter morning where the two angels at the tomb proclaim Jesus' Resurrection. "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him." This is the second time God's voice was heard attesting to the truth that Jesus is the "Son of God"; the first time was at Jesus' baptism into His public ministry by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:7). "From now on, we share in the Resurrection of through the Holy Spirit who acts in the sacraments of the Body of Christ. The Transfiguration gives us a foretaste of Christ's glorious coming, when He will change our lowly to be like His glorious body. But it also recalls that "it is through many persecutions that we must enter into the Kingdom of God." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 556) We will all be transfigured, as the Jesus was transfigured, when our redemption is complete in the Resurrection of the Body.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

In each of our daily lives, we often experience things that causes us to feel confused. We often wonder why God allows things to happen a certain way. Questions like “Why is there so much hurt in the world?” or “Why do all these bad things happen?” or “I go to church and do

good all the time, but why does my family keep getting sick?” are the kinds of questions that we often wonder when we don’t understand and it is completely natural to feel this kind of confusion. We are unable to fully comprehend God’s plan and so He finds

## 3. REFLECT IT!

- What does the Lord’s Transfiguration mean for me? Does it enable me to see the His Passion and the world’s sufferings in the context of the Easter glory?
- Who are the important voices in my life? Do I allow other noises in my life to drown out God’s voice? When and how do I listen for God’s voice?



## 4. LIVE IT! [ LISTENING ]

Listening - to pay attention; heed; obey.

When we pray to God we often do a lot of talking and asking for favors from God. Listening is another form of prayer. This week when you pray, spend a quiet moment to reflect on your life in order to listen to what Jesus is saying to you. Make an effort to spend some time in Eucharistic Adoration contemplating the mystery of the Lord’s Transfiguration.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

*“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”*

*(Matthew 17:5)*

## 6. PRAY IT!

Heavenly Father, we thank You for all the gifts You give us. Grant that we may have open hearts this week to hear Your voice in times of chaos and confusion. Help us to listen intently that we may understand the plan that You have laid out for us. Amen.

## JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF LIVING WATER



Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" — For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.—Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this

cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go call your husband and come back." The woman answered and said to him, "I do not have a husband." Jesus answered her, "You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.' For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true." The woman said to him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem."

Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him

must worship in Spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one speaking with you."

At that moment his disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are you talking with her?" The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, "Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Christ?" They went out of the town and came to him. Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." So the disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'In four months the harvest will be here'? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest. The reaper is already receiving payment and gathering crops for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For here the saying is verified that 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work."

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus, in the Gospel of John, encountered a Samaritan woman. The encounter occurs, significantly, at a watering hole, at Jacob's Well. Jesus asked her for a drink. Her disbelief caused her to hesitate when a Jewish man would ask her, a Samaritan, a female, for a drink - Jews typically despised and shunned Samaritans. Jesus assured her that He would give her "Living Water": "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman was touched by Jesus' word; she spreads the word to her fellow Samaritans. In addition, the Gospel tells us that many Samaritans came to believe in Him.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

God comes to the Samaritans, unexpected and unmerited.

We are all -- like the Jews wandering in the desert and like the Samaritan woman -- in desperate need for God! We are needy human beings wandering in the desert of our often secular and materialistic culture. But we have been invited into a new relationship with God. We pray and acknowledge our thirst for God's love through the gift of the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts. So, we will have an eternal life with God through Jesus, the source of Living Water.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

Jesus is the "Living Water" which humanity needs and God desires to offer. This Water, Jesus will bring us peace and soul satisfaction. We will continue our natural thirst, but a desire and longing for Jesus' Living Water will save us eternally. What are you thirsting for most in life right now?

- Acceptance of who I am?
- Forgiveness
- Meaning and purpose in life
- Peace
- Close relationships
- Closeness with God
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Then think about what do you need to do to relieve your thirst?

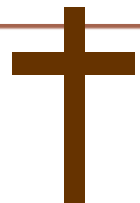
## 5. REMEMBER IT!

*"My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work."*

## 4. LIVE IT! [ ENTHUSIASM ]

**Enthusiasm** - strong excitement about something; a strong feeling of active interest in something that you like or enjoy.

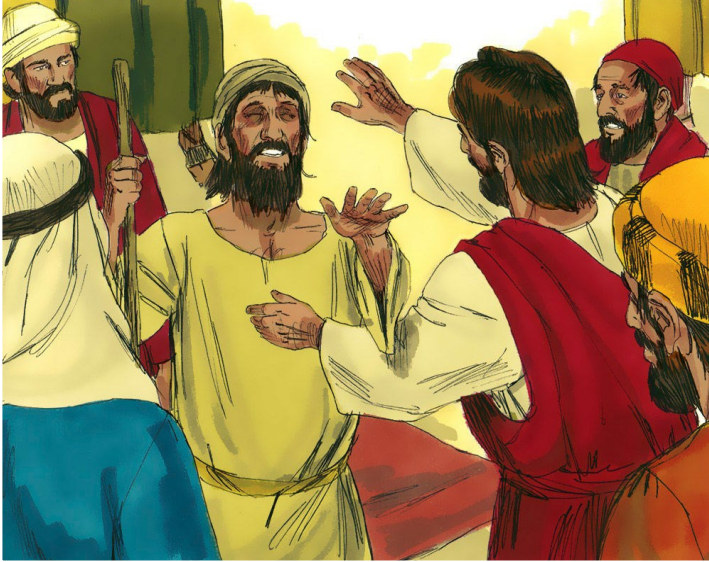
Our enthusiasm leads us to do great things and through these great things we are able to find the goodness that God wants for us to discover. Throughout this week, be enthusiastic in helping people and doing good works because God wants all of us to help one another with a smile and to spread His love.



## 6. PRAY IT!

Dear God! We know that only God gives us the water so that we will never be thirsty again. We are thankful for the works of God. Please help us in the new life. Amen

# JESUS CURED THE BLIND



As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam”—which means Sent—. So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, “Isn’t this the one who used to sit and beg?” Some said, “It is,” but others said, “No, he just looks like him.” He said, “I am.” So they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?” He replied, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went there and washed and was able to see.” And they said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I don’t know.”

They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see.” So some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a sinful man do such signs?” And there was a division among them. So they said to the blind man again, “What

do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. They asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?” His parents answered and said, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Christ, he would be expelled from the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; question him.”

So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner.” He replied, “If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see.” So they said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?” They ridiculed him and said, “You are that man’s disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from.” The man answered and said to them, “This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything.” They answered and said to him, “You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?” Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered and said, “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “I do believe, Lord,” and he worshiped him. Then Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind.” Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not also blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains.”



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

During Jesus' time, people who had strange diseases or disabilities were considered sinners being punished by God and so the society shunned them and pushed them away from the community so as they wouldn't be associated with a "sinner". However, Jesus states it is through people like this blind man that God's work will be made visible. If everyone in the world were perfect – with no disability or incurable illnesses – then they would think everything is fine and there wouldn't be a need or yearning for God's help in anything. However, since that isn't the case, we are able to know and believe in the merciful work of God.


## 2. CONNECT IT!

Throughout our lives, we encounter many different kinds of people. Some people we may consider normal while others are strange or "weird". However, through this Gospel, we see that though a blind man is considered among the lowest in society, Jesus came to be with this man and cured him. Likewise, we each have our own gifts and talents as well as our own set of flaws. Since each one of us is created individually special in the eyes of God, wouldn't it be unfair to judge others as worse off than we are? Rather than ridiculing or putting others down, let's extend a helping hand to be friends and spread the love of God. We can be bearers of the light of Christ to those who can't "see".

## 3. REFLECT IT!

We are all created uniquely. You have your own set of talents and flaws and everyone around you does too. The media nowadays portrays an image of people who are considered "perfect" or that they are the kind of people everyone should be like, but if you think about it, it's quite impossible for everyone to be exactly the same. The media paints an image that would appear to be acceptable, but how often do these facades bring us closer to God? We are so quick to shun other people who we think are strange or different and so we think we're better than them when in reality, we're all just as sinful and just as imperfect. So the next time you find yourself thinking negatively about others, ask yourself: Are these thoughts bringing me closer to Jesus? How would I feel if other people thought and said these things about me?

## 4. LIVE IT! [ TRUST ]



**Trust:** firm belief on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.

The blind man spent most of his sightless life being treated as the lowest person in society and cast out as a sinner. However, he didn't lose faith that God would one day save him.

This week when you feel challenged, lost, or weak in spirit, remember to trust in the love of God and that His plan for you is greater than you can imagine.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"**

(John 9:35)

## 6. PRAY IT!

Jesus, You granted a blind man the gift of sight. Grant that in Your loving embrace we may live our lives trusting in Your plan for us that in moments of despair we may find peace and in moments of desolation we may find understanding. Strengthen our spirit that we may not be blinded by the temptations each day, but that we may keep our eyes ever focused on You. Amen.

# JESUS RAISED LAZARUS

WEEK A - L5

JOHN 11:1-45



Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill. So the sisters sent word to him, saying, "Master, the one you love is ill." When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was. Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." He said this, and then told them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him." So the disciples said to him, "Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved." But Jesus was talking about his death, while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep. So then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him." So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go to die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the

Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. [But] even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The teacher is here and is asking for you." As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and went to him. For Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still where Martha had met him. So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see." And Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?"

So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me." And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go." Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him.

## 1. EXPLORE IT

In today's Gospel, Jesus brings Lazarus back to life. This is just to foreshadow the Passion, Death and Resurrection that Jesus will undergo. Throughout the Gospel, people around Jesus had been making comments about Lazarus being asleep or how Lazarus might not have died had Jesus come to them sooner. However, Jesus, being all knowing, decides to come late, 4 days

late to show what God is capable of. Had He come sooner, people wouldn't believe He is the resurrection and life after death. People would have just seen Him as a doctor, someone who cures the blind and the sick, but to make sure they believe, Jesus came four days after Lazarus had died.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

A lot of times we do things without question, especially when we are acting based on emotions. We oftentimes jump to conclusions and choose not to believe in the greater plan of God, but to dwell on the hurt. We see Jesus also feeling the same hurt we feel as humans, but He takes His time with His mourning.

- ◆ How can we learn from Jesus' example in times of hurt and loss?
- ◆ How can we cherish our family members now while they are still with us?
- ◆ Does our belief in God and Jesus' sacrifice bring comfort in knowing that we will one day be reunited with God in heaven?

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"I am the resurrection and the life;  
whoever believes in me, even if he dies,  
will live."  
(John 11: 25)**

## 6. PRAY IT!

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for another week that has passed. Please grant us the grace to be strong in faith and to trust in Your work. Allow us to have an open heart in forgiving those around us whenever we experience hurt and confusion that we may be closer to our brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask this through Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

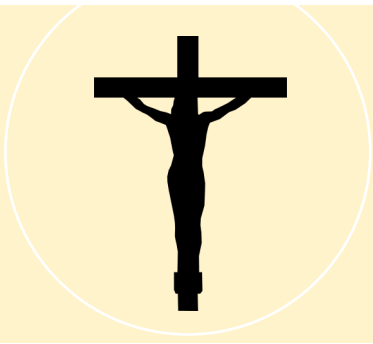
Throughout our lives, we witnessed the passing of family members, relatives, and friends. We felt sad and hurt, but in today's Gospel, we see Jesus, who is fully divine and human, feel the same sadness and hurt that we feel for our loved ones who pass away. However, Jesus did not use His grief as a reason to rush over to Lazarus and the family. Instead, He understood that everyone has his or her time and that everything happens in a certain way according to His Father's will. We are all afraid of death, but it is a natural part of life and a step we must all take in coming home to our Father in heaven.

## 4. LIVE IT! [ CARING ]

**Caring** - feeling or showing concern for other people.

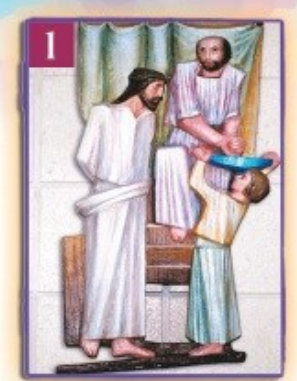
"...he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled."  
(John 11:33)

This week, when you see a family member or a friend who is feeling down or sad, remember how Jesus too felt sad for those around Him who were hurt. Try to find ways to be caring and compassionate towards those who are hurt and offer up a prayer to Jesus for them.

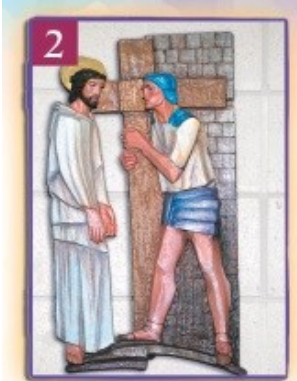


WEEK A - PALM/PASSION SUNDAY  
MATTHEW 26:14-27:66

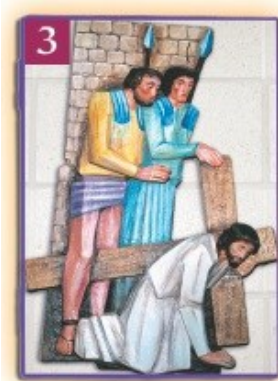
# THE PASSION OF CHRIST



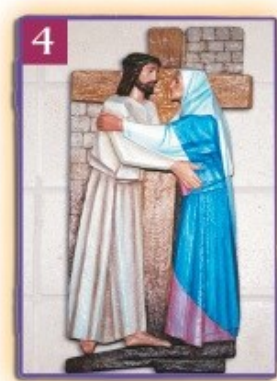
1 Jesus is condemned to death.



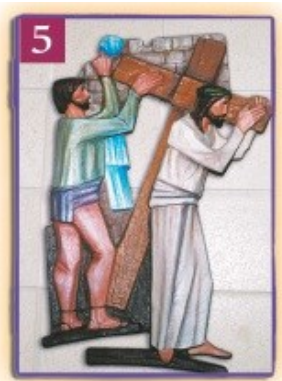
2 Jesus takes up His cross.



3 Jesus falls the first time



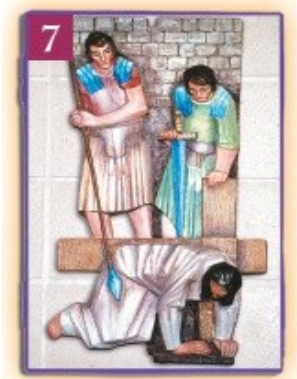
4 Jesus meets His mother



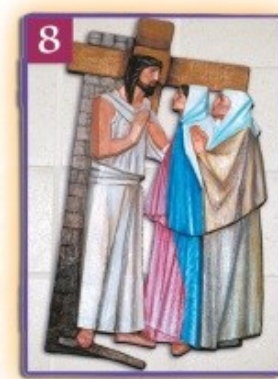
5 Simon helps Jesus carry the cross.



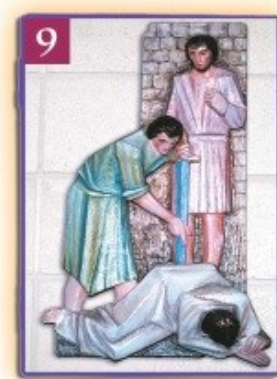
6 Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.



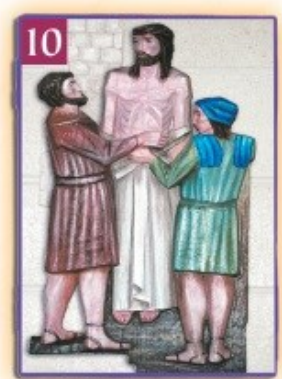
7 Jesus falls the second time.



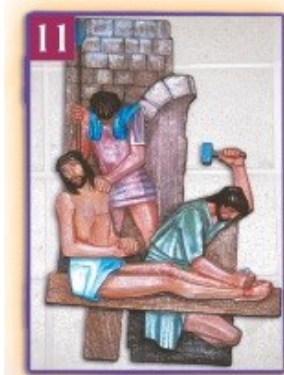
8 Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem.



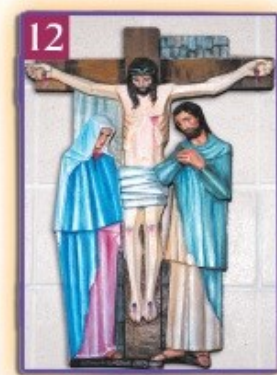
9 Jesus falls the third time.



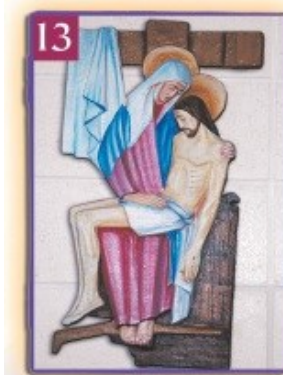
10 Jesus is stripped of His clothing.



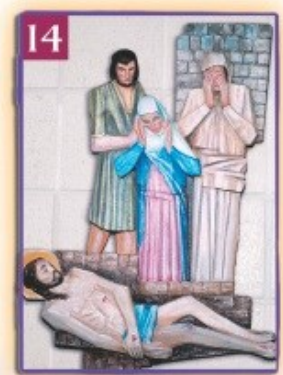
11 Jesus is nailed to the cross.



12 Jesus dies on the cross.



13 Jesus is taken down from the cross.



14 Jesus is buried in the tomb.

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Today's Gospel retells the Passion of Christ: 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 crowning with thorns, the way of the cross, the crucifixion, the death and burial.

It is quite fitting that the Passion of Christ coincides with the Passover celebration. The Passover or the Feast of the Unleavened Bread is celebrated annually to commemorate Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. It includes sacrificing an unblemished lamb and drinking four cups of blessing which representing the four promises of sanctification, deliverance, redemption, and restoration. The fourth cup is to be drunk

after singing the Hallel hymn. Jesus comes to fulfill the promises of the old covenant by using the Passover celebration. Instead of sacrificing a lamb, Jesus instituted the Eucharist, thereby sacrificing Himself as the most perfect Lamb. "Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." This means that the Passover feast was not over yet — they have not drunk the fourth cup of blessing. This was the cup Jesus prayed to the Father in Gethsemane — which He finally drank when one of the bystanders got a sponge and soaked it in wine, right before Jesus gave up His spirit. It was then that Jesus has transformed the Passover — which deliver Israel out of slavery in Egypt — into His Salvation — which deliver the world out of slavery in sins and deaths.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus is faithful in carrying out the Father's will, even when facing His own agony in the garden. He was faithful to the Jewish custom of celebrating the Passover — but He used that custom and transformed it into His work of redemption. Jesus was also loyal to His friends, His disciples, and wanted to stay close with them forever to continually pour graces upon them by instituting the Eucharist.

On the opposite hand, Judas, who placed his loyalty in Jesus as the one who will deliver Israel from under Roman rule, betrayed Him for money when it was clear the Jesus is not that type of messiah. Peter, who pledged his life for Jesus, denied Him three times out of fear. The chief priests, scholars, and elders were pretentiously loyal to God but, in actuality, they were loyal to the laws which gave them powerful positions over the rest of the people.

To accept Jesus as King and Savior requires that you are loyal to Him. Loyalty that has its roots deep in fervent love — the same love that Jesus has for each one of us — not in temporal things like money, power, and even earthly lives.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

There are many ways to betray God, explicitly like Judas and Peter or implicitly like the chief priests, scholars, and elders who hide behind the laws. But there is a simple way to be loyal and faithful to Him — love.

Why do you go to church every week? Why do you join the Eucharistic Youth? In every choice you make and every action you take, ask yourself: Am I doing this only for my own good or am I doing this out of love of God and others?

## 4. LIVE IT!

### [ LOYALTY ]

**Loyalty**— faithfulness to commitments or obligations; faithful adherence to a sovereign, leader, etc.

Jesus is the Heavenly King and wants each of us to pledge our loyalty to Him by devoting our lives to Him and be faithful to our commitments and obligations. This asks us to carry out the mission of VEYM: to be well-rounded individuals and ideal Christians to spread the Good News and contribute to building society.

At least once a week, encounter Jesus by means of Eucharistic Adoration or Visitation and receive spiritual communion with Him then. Fulfill any commitments or promises you made to Jesus, to yourself, and to others.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me."**

(Matthew 26:21)

## 6. PRAY IT!

Precious Jesus! There are no words that can describe the incredible love You have for us. And all You want from us is our love for You. Please forgive us for not placing You first in our lives, especially when we betray Your love. Help us to stay loyal to You and exude Your love in all our actions. We ask this of You, Lord Jesus, who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

# JESUS RISES FROM THE DEAD



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!

The apostles were overwhelmed by Jesus' death; they were desolated, discouraged and very confused. Their faith was weakened, although Jesus had told them many times that He would rise from the dead. They did not really understand or believe Him. Imagine the feelings of the women at the moment as they saw the tomb was open and empty; Jesus' body was no longer there! Their feelings of sadness and dismay at the death of their

Lord became feelings of disbelief and amazement. In St. John's account of the Resurrection, the symbol of being 'still dark' suggests the beginning of a new life. He also compares two important figures: Peter as symbol of our church leader and 'the other disciple' (John himself) is described as being specially loved by Jesus. When the apostles ran to see the empty tomb, their faith in Jesus was renewed. Jesus is risen!

## 2. CONNECT IT!

During baptism, we receive a new spiritual life. Easter season gives us the opportunity to appreciate Jesus' risen presence in our lives. During Easter, we renew our baptismal promises to remind ourselves to believe in Him and put into practice His teachings as an example of selflessness, compassion, and forgiveness. Each time we participate in the Holy Mass, we are celebrating Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection. At the Eucharistic table, our spiritual life is nourished by His flesh and blood. If we truly believe in Jesus' Resurrection and stay in communion with Him, we will be raised from our death of sins. As disciples of Jesus, we ought to become great witnesses to the world for the risen Lord Jesus and set our minds on spiritual things, not on worldly things.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

- Do we truly believe that Jesus has risen and is present in our lives?
- Do we believe that by the paschal event of His Passion, Death and Resurrection, we die to sin and rise to new life with Him and in Him?
- Do we believe that at the Eucharistic table, we continue to eat and drink with Jesus – He who rose from the dead – and that He lives on in the Church and in creation by the power of the Holy Spirit?
- How do we embrace fully our grace and responsibility as witnesses of Christ's Death and Resurrection?

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed."**

(John 20:8)

## 4. LIVE IT! [ BELIEF ]

**Belief** - trust, faith, or confidence in someone or something

Each night, pray and reflect on the Apostle's Creed, a prayer that describes what we believe. Through this prayer, meditate on the tremendous joy and transforming effect that the Easter event brings to us.

To help us experience more deeply the transforming gift of the Easter event, make an effort to commit to the missionary work of the Church by completing one act of charity and service in your community.

## 6. PRAY IT!

### APOSTLES CREED



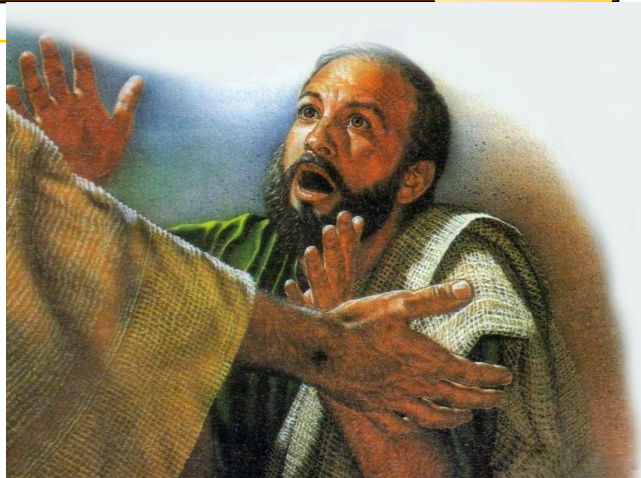
I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I 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. Amen.

# JESUS STRENGTHENS THE FAITH OF THOMAS

WEEK A - 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 nail marks 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!

In today's Gospel, the disciples were hiding in fear of being caught and persecuted by the Jews after the death of Jesus. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to them, showed them the wounds in His hands and side, and blessed them with the Holy Spirit, so that they will go forth to spread the Words of God. Jesus specifically said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained," He emphasized that as servants of God, the Apostles will have the power to forgive sins. However, Thomas, one of the Apostles was not there when Jesus had come. Thomas did not believe the other disciples when they told him they had seen the Risen Lord. Jesus appeared to Thomas, who doubted His power, and showed Thomas His wounds so that Thomas would believe. Thomas only believed because he had seen physical proof. Jesus wanted to teach us that those who are able to believe in God's power without seeing are truly blessed and will be rewarded in the Kingdom of Heaven.



## 2. Connect It!

Who is the Thomas among us? As humans, our natural tendency is to seek hard evidence to believe in Jesus when we can't see Him with our own eyes. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are among those who are blessed to believe in Him even though we don't see. As the Body of Christ, our challenge is to open our eyes to see the presence of the risen Lord. Jesus is in our lives, in others, and especially live our lives so that others see Jesus' presence in us.

## 4. Live It! ( FAITH )

**FAITH** - complete trust and belief in God based on spiritual apprehension rather than physical proof.

As Christians we live to proclaim our faith in Jesus. It is not important to have seen Him, but to know that He is alive. This week, express your faith by making peace with someone you have hurt or may have hurt you. This is a practical and effective way of believing in the Resurrection of Jesus.

## 6. Pray It!

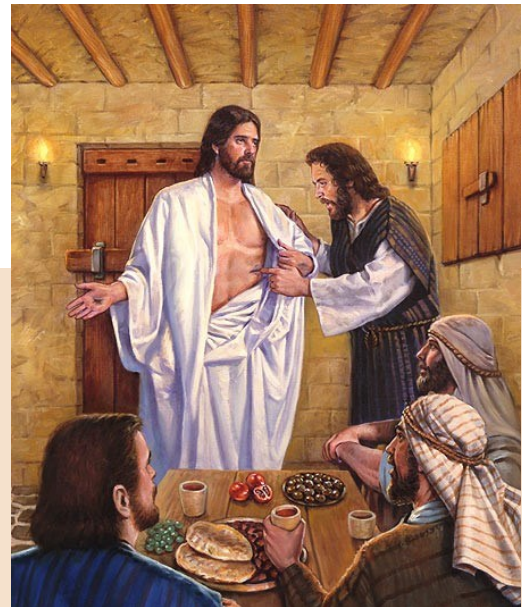
Come to us again, Lord Jesus, for we are closed in our fears and in our silence. Like Thomas, we want to touch to be able to trust You, to see You alive and to know that You are risen. Allow us to cling to You so that we may not fall under the weight of our doubts. Fill us with Your Spirit and send us again to bring pardon to the world. Amen.

## 3. Reflect It!

- What are my doubts concerning my faith in God? How do I overcome them ?
- How are people encountering the risen Jesus in me? What in my life would cause people to say in joy and amazement, "The Lord is risen!"?
- What does the gift of the Holy Spirit mean to me?

## 5. Remember It!

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





That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were

conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day

since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

## 1. *Explore It!*

The restoration of the Davidic Kingdom by the Messiah was God's promise to Israel. Many prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah. Many people believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah, who will redeem (deliver) them from Roman rule. However, hopes and dreams were shattered when Jesus was crucified. Although some women in their group reported the angelic vision announcing Jesus' Resurrection, the two disciples did not understand the women's message. Since they did not experience the vision, they left for Emmaus, filled with disappointment and despair.

Jesus appeared to them but they did not recognize Him. He knew the confusion the disciples had and He patiently explained the redemptive works of the Messiah, which is to deliver of the world from sins and death. He did so by opening the Scriptures and explaining the messages from Moses and all the prophets. The disciples were so drawn to Jesus that they invited Him to stay with them and eat. It was at the breaking of the bread that they came to recognize Jesus. At once, they set out and returned to Jerusalem to deliver the phenomenon that just occurred.

## 2. *Connect It!*

When you learn a new concept, you might find it boring and useless especially if you do not understand it. It is only when you fully understand and grasp its importance, you can truly appreciate the beauty and necessity of its application. It is the same with Jesus – the Word Incarnate is presented in the Scripture, the Eucharist, and in everyone. Do you see the beauty and necessity of Mass? How can each Mass be your “Road to Emmaus”?



## 3. *Reflect It!*

The Road to Emmaus depicts the Holy Mass we have today: the gathering (when Jesus joined the two disciples), penitential rite (when He asks them to tell Him their troubles and sorrows), Liturgy of the Word (when He opened the Scriptures and interpreted it for them), Liturgy of the Eucharist (when He broke bread with them), and the dismissal rite (when they set out to tell others what had happened). This is the road offered to each of us at every Mass!

In Luke 24:45, Luke mentioned that Jesus “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” What started out in disbelief and despair, through the three openings, had ended in joy and hope. Which is why reading and understanding the Bible is vital for our lives. This is also why Understanding is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, in understanding and recognizing Jesus that enables each of us to go forth into the world and bring Jesus to whomever we encounter.

## 4. *Live It!*

### [Understanding]

**Understanding** - comprehension; one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that gives us a deeper insight and penetration of divine truths held by faith. It helps us to 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, while you meditate over the reading. If there is anything you do not understand, ask your priest, your parents, or a youth-leader.

## 5. *Remember*

**“WERE NOT OUR HEARTS BURNING [WITHIN US]  
WHILE HE SPOKE TO US ON THE WAY  
AND OPENED THE SCRIPTURES TO US?”  
(LUKE 24:29)**

## 6. *Pray It!*

Loving Jesus! We thank you for Your steadfast love and patience. You know our inadequacies and You have done and will continue to do all You can to help us obtain eternal happiness that is You. Please send Your Holy Spirit to flood our hearts and minds with love for You and the gift of understanding so that we come to recognize You. Amen.

# JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

WEEK A - E4

JOHN 10:1-10



Jesus said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens it for him,

and the sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers." Although Jesus used this figure of speech, they did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

The Gospel reading of this Sunday also called the "Good Shepherd Sunday" enables us to have a deeper understanding of the Easter event by helping us contemplate the pastoral ministry of Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord.

Today's reading takes place a few months before Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection, between the stories of Jesus' healing of the man born blind and the raising of Lazarus. Following the controversy that ensued when Jesus healed the man born blind, Jesus directs His parable about the sheep and the shepherd toward the Jewish religious leaders of his time, the Pharisees, who did not think they were blind.

Throughout John's Gospel, the Pharisees fail to accept Jesus' ministry and teaching. They show themselves to be "robbers and thieves" because they try to lead the sheep without entering through the gate, Jesus. Through these metaphors, Jesus is telling His listeners that those who follow Him and His way will find abundant life. He identifies Himself both as the shepherd and the gate. As a shepherd, Jesus cares for His flock and they in turn trust Him completely. The sheep have come to know and to trust in the shepherd. They recognize His voice and none other as He calls them to move forward towards more abundant food and water. As a sheep gate, Jesus is the door to life and means of salvation. Through Jesus, those who wish to be saved enter the fold of which He alone is the shepherd.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

As we listen attentively and recognize the voice of Jesus in our everyday lives, we will enjoy the trust and comfort our Good Shepherd provides for us. Today's Gospel also gives us the opportunity to reflect on Christian leadership. Those who will lead the Christian community will be known by their faithfulness to Jesus. The leaders will recognize that Jesus is the gate for all of the sheep and that having a good relationship with Jesus is the primary characteristic of a Christian leader. Faithful Christian leadership requires a good relationship with the community: the shepherd knows his sheep, and they know him. Christian leaders follow the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, by being faithful to Him and by being a good shepherd.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

"A good shepherd  
lays down his life  
for the sheep."  
(John 10:11)

## 3. REFLECT IT!

Jesus is the Good Shepherd because He always knows you, but do you recognize Him? He is a Shepherd who comes to your life as a gate to go out and to enter: do you allow Him to lead you when you relate with others?

In your community or in your family, are you also a gate, not to close, but to remain open to fraternal communication, to allow esteem and hope to go through?

## 4. LIVE IT! [ RECOGNITION ]

*the perception of something as existing or true; realization; the acknowledgment of something as valid or as entitled to consideration.*

Recognize that Jesus is our Good Shepherd by listening to His voice. Each day this week, read the Bible of the day and pray Psalm 23.

## 6. PRAY IT!

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely Your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

# WHO IS JESUS?

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way." Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words



that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father."

## 1. Explore It!

During the Last Supper, Jesus told His disciples that He would only be with them for a little while longer. The disciples were full of sorrow upon hearing this so Jesus comforted them. He asked them to have faith in Him as they have faith in God and that the following event was Him preparing their place in the Father's house. He knew that their hearts may be

troubled, or give into temptation. Jesus reassured them of the heavenly goal and told them that He is "the way and the truth and the life" to the Father. Jesus also told them, He and the Father are one and that every action He took and every word He spoke came from the Father. Now, He offered His disciples that very union so that they can also do great deeds.

**JESUS**  
the WAY  
the TRUTH  
the LIFE

## 2. Connect It!

Jesus knows the will of God for Him and He carries it out perfectly. He tells His disciples and us that He is “the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through [Him].” He is not “a” way but “the” way. He paved the way to the Father’s house by His own flesh and blood, so that we can enter through Him. He is the truth in which, He is the true manna and the true tabernacle, unlike the ones depicted in the Old Testament as substitutes; He is the true teaching as opposed to falsehood and error; He is true to all that trust in

Him as opposed to fallacy and deceit. He is the source of life given to us now and continues after death. While we wait for Pentecost, we are reminded that Jesus is our only way to heaven. Jesus has lived His earthly life according to God’s will and He showed us how to do so as well. As Jesus and the Father are one, He is inviting us to come into that union at every Mass when we celebrate the Eucharist, the source and summit of our lives.

## 3. Reflect It!

Jesus is truly Himself when He carries out God’s will for His life. He knows and does so accordingly because He and the Father are one. We know that Jesus has an intimate relationship with the Father by His prayerful life. We also realize what God’s will is for us so that we can truly be ourselves when we imitate Jesus and live prayerful lives.

Do you hear God’s loving instruction whenever you go to Mass? Whenever you read the Bible? Whenever you pray? What instructions are you hearing? Are you willing to carry them out?

## 5. Remember It!

“I am the way  
and the Truth  
and the life.”  
(John 14:6)

## 4. Live It! (AUTHENTICITY)

**Authenticity** – genuineness; being true to oneself

Being an authentic Catholic means understanding God's will and carrying it out in our lives, specifically living the Ten Commandments and the Eight Beatitudes. Demonstrate your authenticity and love to others by speaking the truth, being sincere, helping others with what you have, and avoiding pretense to yourself and others.

## 6. Pray It!

Loving Jesus, we thank you for showing us the way, teaching us the truth, and giving us the life. Please give us the courage to be authentic, to live as God has intended us to live, so that, through You, we can obtain eternal happiness. We ask this of You, Jesus, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

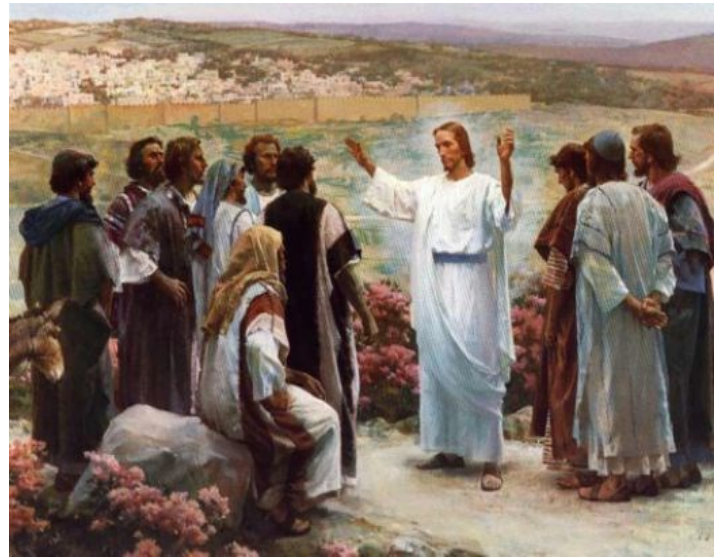


# If You Love **Jesus**...

WEEK A - E6

JOHN 14:15-21

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Today's Gospel reading continues last week's reading, in which Jesus speaks to His disciples at the Last Supper before His Passion and Death. Jesus reassures them that He will not abandon them; instead, He will send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to defend and protect them so that they will continue to live in union with Jesus and His Father.

Jesus reminds us of our responsibility to follow His commandments, just as He is responsible for sending us the Holy Spirit; we are not alone in our struggles. He tells us to continue to believe in Him even when the rest of the world does not. By keeping to our responsibilities, we will realize the love and joy God gives us.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus reminds us of our responsibilities with him, which includes our responsibilities with others. We are responsible for our chores, schoolwork, jobs, keeping our health, and many other obligations. We are also responsible for our own actions; for our actions affect not only us, but those around us as well.

As Eucharistic Youth members, we should keep in mind our VEYM's Ten Vows “Mười Điều Tâm Niệm”. The ninth and tenth verses remind us to fulfill our responsibilities, and completing the Spiritual Bouquet (Bó Hoa Thiêng) is a great way to keep our responsibilities in check.

*Thiếu Nhi dù khó trăm chiều,  
Chu toàn bốn phận mọi điều chăm chuyên.  
Thiếu Nhi thực hiện hoa thiêng,  
Chép ghi mỗi tối, cộng biên mỗi tuần.*



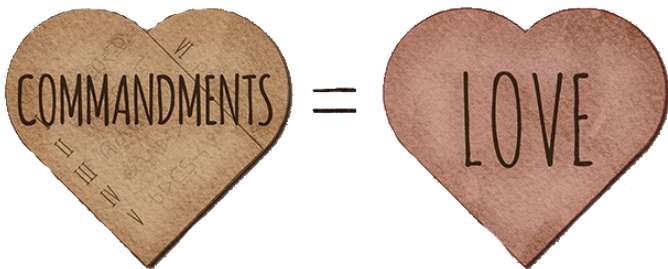
### 3. REFLECT IT!

Many times we feel the weight of our responsibilities and fall. Sometimes we don't want to get up and face that great weight. However, always remember that you are not alone in your struggles. God gave us the Holy Spirit and companions to help us keep our responsibilities. Whenever we need help we need to reach out to the Holy Spirit, to our Huynh Truong mentors, to our friends and family, because God did not leave us all alone on this earth.

### 5. REMEMBER IT!

*"If you love me,  
you will keep my  
commandments."*

*(John 14:15)*



### 4. LIVE IT!

#### [ RESPONSIBILITY ]

**RESPONSIBILITY** – A strong sense of obligation to our duties.

Every morning when you pray to God, ask him to help you throughout the day. Keep your duties in check throughout the day either by checklist, doing them as soon as they come to you. At night, use God's Ten Commandments to examine your conscience and ask God to remind you of the things you forgot or could not get to so, you may do them the next day.

### 6. PRAY IT!

Dear God, please help us with our responsibilities to You, to others, and to ourselves. Guide us through the day as we do our duties, and help strengthen our sense of duty, to better serve You and everyone. Amen.

# The Ascension of Jesus

WEEK A - The Ascension of the Lord

MATTHEW 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."



## 1. Explore It!

The Gospel today is sometimes referred to as the "Final Commission". Jesus met with His disciples and gave them three commands: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations". Previously, Jesus had sent the Twelve Apostles to the House of Israel to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal. In this Final Commission, the disciples were to go to "all nations". Their mission is to deliver the Good News to all people, to baptize, and to teach. True discipleship means to live and follow the examples of Jesus. He was the model to the life of the disciples. Those who followed Jesus had to commit themselves to stay with Him, take up the cross and die with Him.

"Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit": The Holy Trinity is the source, the end, and the way of life. Through Jesus, we get to know

the Father and the Holy Spirit. Those baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity enjoy a new life and live as brothers and sisters in fraternity.

"Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you": Jesus taught us God's Law, the Law of Love. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:36-40)

As disciples of Jesus, we may be facing difficulties and persecutions in His name. Jesus promised to remain with us, through the Holy Spirit, until the end of time.

## 2. Connect It!

How do we make disciples of all nations? We see that some of Jesus' followers still doubted, but nonetheless they still followed Him. We as followers of Jesus believe and worship Him. What makes good disciples? Is it spreading the Good News? Is it praying when we need guidance? Or is it helping the homeless? Whatever it may be, do all things in the name of Jesus following in His examples so we can help make disciples of all nations.

## 3. Reflect It!



What is your relationship and connection with Jesus in this passage? Jesus tells us to make disciples of all nations! How will you do that in your everyday life? In the passage it tells us that even some of Jesus'

followers had doubts. It's okay to fail at times. We just have to respond to those failures with love and do better next time. So, spread the Good News!

## 4. Live It [Discipleship]

**Discipleship:** Living and growing in Christ; modeling and teaching others God's way of life.

To demonstrate your commitment to discipleship, this week, go out to the community and perform at least one hour of community service; for example, volunteer to teach the Bible to young children, serve food at a homeless shelter, and help care for the sick.

Learn how to properly administer an emergency Baptism.

## 5. Remember It!

**“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.”**  
(Matthew 28:19)

## 6. Pray It!

Lord, sometimes we think You might have put too much trust in us, and we worry that we won't be able to fulfill Your belief in us. We ask You to send the Holy Spirit to come down upon us, and help unlock the closed doors within our hearts. Guide us to use our will to carry out Your will, the message of Your love into everyone's life. Amen.



# JESUS' Disciples Received the Holy Spirit

WEEK A - Pentecost Sunday

JOHN 20:19-23

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!

The disciples were meeting in Jerusalem in a room with the doors shut when Jesus appeared among them. This dramatic scene provides the content for John's last reference to the Holy Spirit in his Gospel. Jesus bestowed the Holy Spirit who would help the disciples in many ways. Jesus and the Holy Spirit restored their faith and empowered the disciples to proclaim the Good News to the whole world.

"Peace be with you." By greeting His disciples with the gift of peace, Jesus taught them the connection between the gifts of peace and forgiveness and the action of the Holy Spirit. Jesus then commissioned His disciples to continue the work that He had begun, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." He breathed the Holy Spirit upon the disciples and sent them to continue His work of reconciliation through the forgiveness of sins. In Greek and Hebrew, the word "spirit" can also be translated as "breath." Jesus' act of breathing the Holy Spirit mirrored God's act of breathing life into Adam at the time of Creation.

Last week's Gospel calls us to "make disciples of all nations" and to baptize others in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This week's Gospel reminds us that we are called to be agents of peace and harmony among people in the world. In the Sacrament of Baptism, we are cleansed of sin and receive new life in the Holy Trinity. In the Sacrament of Penance, we celebrate the mercy of God through the forgiving of sins. This reconciling presence is also to be a way of life for true discipleship of Christ.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and the Son, continues to be present, active and alive in each one of us. Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, we receive the Seven Gifts and the Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit are:

- ◆ **Wisdom** helps us recognize the importance of others and the importance of keeping God central in our lives.
- ◆ **Understanding** is the ability to comprehend the meaning of God's message.
- ◆ **Knowledge** is the ability to think about and explore God's revelation, and also to recognize there are mysteries of faith beyond us.
- ◆ **Counsel** is the ability to see the best way to follow God's plan when we have choices that relate to him.
- ◆ **Fortitude** is the courage to do what one knows is right.
- ◆ **Piety** helps us pray to God in true devotion.
- ◆ **Fear of the Lord** is the feeling of amazement before God, who is all-present, and whose friendship we do not want to lose.

The Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit are: Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Self-Control, Chastity.

### 3. REFLECT IT!

1. What role does the Holy Spirit play in your personal life?
2. How can you use the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life and others to strengthen the peace and unity of our fraternal community?
3. We all share in the responsibility to tell the world of the Resurrection of Jesus and His love for us. What specifically can you do in the upcoming weeks to share this Good News with others?

### 4. LIVE IT! [ OPENNESS ]

**Openness:** Willingness or readiness to accept new ideas or truths.

"Pentecost" happens in our lives whenever we use the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit to serve others in our community. This week, open your mind, heart, and soul to allow the Holy Spirit to work in you by doing at least one of the following suggested actions: Make peace with someone whom you have hurt or someone who has hurt you, help a needy person, or allow God to forgive your sins by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### 5. REMEMBER IT!

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

**(John 20:23)**



### 6. PRAY IT!

Dear Lord, we thank you for sending the Holy Spirit, the power of love that bonds You to Your Son Jesus Christ and the power of life that raised Him up from His sacrificial death. We thank you for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost and the public inauguration of the missionary Church. Fill us with the courage to spread Your Words. We know that You are always here to listen, and that You will always help us. We thank you for showing us mercy every time we sin, forgiving us even when we turn away from You. Teach us to be like You, Lord: slow to judgement and anger, and quick to compassion and forgiveness. Amen.

# BELIEVE IN THE NAME OF JESUS

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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

## I. EXPLORE IT!

Faith in the Most Blessed Trinity is the beginning and end of our belief. In today's Gospel St. John emphasizes the deep unity between the Father and the Son. The Love that unites the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit. God loves us so much that He sends down His only Son to bring salvation to the world. By becoming man, God the Son offered us a share in the inner life of the Trinity. By grace, we are brought into the perfect communion of life and love which is God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The message stresses that, only through Jesus, may one be saved. Jesus is not just one of the many teachers of the world, nor is His message only one of many great philosophies of the world, but He is beyond that, He is God. Jesus said He is the "Alpha and Omega", the beginning to end, in other words, eternal. He is the one that is the Savior of the world and no one else. It is only through accepting Jesus as our only Savior and Lord may we, too, be saved. If we accept anything other than Jesus as our God and Savior, then we deny our salvation, which can only be found through Him.



## 2. CONNECT IT!

Pope Francis remarked at the Feast of the Holy Trinity in 2014: "The Solemnity of the Holy Trinity... leads us to contemplate and worship the divine life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: a life of communion and perfect love, origin and aim of all the universe and of every creature: God. We also recognize in the Trinity the model for the Church, in which we are called to love each other as Jesus loved us. And love is the concrete sign that demonstrates faith in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit... The Holy Spirit, gift of the Risen Jesus, conveys divine life to us and thus lets us enter into the dynamism of the Trinity, which is dynamism of love, of communion, of mutual service, of sharing. A person who loves others for the very joy of love is a reflection of the Trinity. A family in which each person loves and helps one another is a reflection of the Trinity. A parish in which each person loves and shares spiritual and material effects is a reflection of the Trinity." How do you respond to His message?

### 3. REFLECT IT!

How do we understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity? Are we ready to have a deeper relationship with the Holy Trinity?

Thank God, our Father, for the gift of life and for all the wonders He created around us.

Thank Jesus, God's Love, for becoming one with us on our journey on earth, for the gift of salvation, and for continuing to be with us in the Holy Eucharist.

Thank the Holy Spirit, our Sanctifier, for His peace and love, for transforming and guiding us toward heaven.



### 4. LIVE IT! [ PURPOSEFULNESS ]

**PURPOSEFULNESS** - having an aim, goal, and full meaning.

Our purpose in life is for God's glory. The reason we are here on earth, in other words, is to praise God, worship Him, to proclaim His greatness, to experience His love, and to accomplish His will. This week, pray that we may give glory to the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit by demonstrating the compassionate love of God in our lives and especially in our care for the poor and the needy. Make the Sign of the Cross and pray the "Glory Be" with greater solemnity and devotion.

### 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"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."**

**(John 3:16)**

### 6. PRAY IT!

Father Almighty,

You have given us Jesus to learn how to love You and others around us. You have given us our Salvation to once more have a chance to be with You.

Help us, in the name of the Holy Trinity, to live a more purposefully life and learn to forgive and love others with open hearts.

Amen.

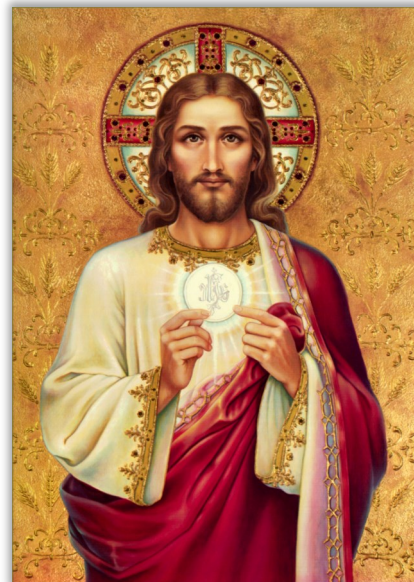


# JESUS IS THE LIVING BREAD

WEEK A - Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

JOHN 6:51-58

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.” The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.”



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

This is the last of the readings from the Bread of Life Discourse in John’s Gospel. In the previous passages, Jesus fed the hungry crowd by multiplying bread miraculously. He presented Himself as 'bread came down from heaven'. In today's Gospel, He seeks to satisfy everyone's soul. Jesus gives us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. He gives Himself totally and invites us to be in communion

with Him, so that we can experience His love. He wants us to unite our weakness and suffering with His so that we can experience His strength and His courage. By eating the Body of Christ we are assimilated into Him. Blood is the sign of life, so by drinking His blood, we take on His divine life. We are all parts of His body, thus, we share Christ's life with our Christian brothers and sisters.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus tells us that He is the Living Bread, and whoever receives Him will live with Him forever. We are always hungry right? A bowl of Phở or a hamburger would be food to nourish our bodies. Likewise, the Eucharist as Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity is also food for us. But even more than just regular food, Jesus, through the Sacrament of the Eucharist nourishes not only our bodies, but nourishes our soul and fulfills our hearts. In essence, Jesus is the “real” food that completely fulfills us, a SUPERFOOD if you will. In eating His body and drinking His blood, we become one body

in Jesus and with Him, also becoming one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. When we receive Him, we also become one with each other linking us as the Body of Christ. As St. Augustine stressed, “we become what we receive” or in other words, “we are what we eat!” So during communion, when we receive the Eucharist, we not only obtain, but also let in and accept Jesus into us, and we believe that when we receive Jesus, we receive life, not just a life that perishes like regular food, but on the contrary, a life that is everlasting in His love and glory as He had promised.



### 3. REFLECT IT!

- As a member of the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement, how do I live the Sacrament of Eucharist in my life? Even if I cannot go to Mass every day or every Sunday, my life should be Eucharistic. How do I try to attain this objective?
- We all live with the same life's blood. How do I share my life, my talents, my goods with others, knowing that we share the same life of Jesus?

### 5. REMEMBER IT!

“Whoever eats my flesh  
and drinks my blood  
has eternal life.”  
(John 6:54)

### 4. LIVE IT [THANKFULNESS]

**THANKFULNESS:** Feeling or expressing gratitude; appreciative.

The word "Eucharist" means "Thanksgiving". Meditate on God's wondrous gifts to us, especially the gift of the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ.

Thank God for the gift of the Eucharist by living fully the Eucharistic Day. Make an effort to participate meaningfully in the Mass and in Eucharistic Adoration. Share God's goodness and love to others, especially the poor and needy.

### 6. PRAY IT!

*(Composed by Blessed James Alberione)*

Jesus Divine Master, I thank and bless Your most lovable Heart for the great gift of the Holy Eucharist. Your love makes You dwell in the holy tabernacle, renew Your Passion in the Mass, and give Yourself as food for our souls in Holy Communion. May I know You hidden God! May I draw salutary waters from the font of Your Heart. Grant me the grace to visit You every day in the sacrament, to understand and actively participate in Holy Mass, to receive Holy Communion often, with faith and love.

Amen.



WEEK A - O10

MATTHEW  
9:9-13

# WITH HOPE, MATTHEW FOLLOW JESUS

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" He heard this and said, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Tax collectors were despised and condemned by the Jews because they collect taxes on behalf of the Romans. First of all, the Romans were pagans (i.e., they worshipped pagan gods instead of the God of Israel). Second of all, most tax collectors would cheat the people by collecting more than necessary so they can keep the surplus. For those two reasons, the Jews viewed the tax collectors as collaborators and traitors to their own people and their own religion. Additionally, sharing a meal with someone is a very intimate act. Jesus associated Himself with sinners by eating with them. To the Pharisees and Jews alike, doing so would cause uncleanness. Jesus used the prophet Hosea's words to respond to their question: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice". Today, Jesus shows mercy by inviting Matthew to follow Him and by sharing a meal with sinners.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

As a tax collector, Matthew was despised and rejected by society. By inviting him, Jesus showed Matthew mercy and acceptance. And so, he left everything behind and immediately followed Jesus. Like Matthew, Jesus is also calling each and every one of us. He wants to show us His love and mercy. He wants to give us hope and acceptance. And ultimately, He wants us to be in the kingdom of God eternally.

### 3. REFLECT IT!

Matthew must have wanted more than being a tax collector. Jesus gave him hope that “more” is possible when Jesus approached him. Jesus is inviting you now: “Follow me”. How do you respond? Are you ready to follow Him? What is preventing you from following Him?

### 4. LIVE IT! [ HOPE ]

Hope is a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.

“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). Difficulties, obstacles, and life challenges may take our hope away or may make us forget about our desire of heaven. Put your faith and hope in Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit to help you on a daily basis. Make an Act of Hope regularly.



### 5. REMEMBER IT!

HE SAID TO HIM,  
“FOLLOW ME.”  
AND HE GOT UP AND  
FOLLOWED HIM.  
(MATTHEW 9:9)

### 6. PRAY IT!

#### 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.

# THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

MATTHEW 9:36-10:8



At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Israel’s agriculture revolves around shepherding and farming so they would completely understand the imagery Jesus mentioned. Domesticated sheep without a shepherd would not last long as they cannot take care of themselves like the wild sheep. They would be unhealthy, their wool would be dirty and full of parasites, and they would not be able to fend for themselves against predators. Wheat at harvest time would be abundant but most of the yield will go to waste if there were not enough laborers to harvest. In these two scenarios, there is a great need for servant leaders to take care of the sheep and harvest the wheat. This is the first time the twelve

Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus; Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him.

Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them thus, “Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand’. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.

disciples are called “apostles” as they are “being sent” by Jesus after He gave them authority. To begin their ministry, Jesus told the apostles to go to the lost sheep of Israel instead of the pagans and the Samaritans. It was not until the Great Commission, right before His Ascension, that Jesus told them to go and “make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19).



## 2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus recognized the need of the people and the first advice He gave was to pray when He said, “ask the master of the harvest”. Right after that, He provided a solution: giving the apostles authority and telling them to drive out unclean spirits and to cure diseases and illnesses. He also reminded the apostles that since they received the gifts freely, they should give them away freely as well.

As Knights of the Eucharist with our motto of “Dấn thân”, we throw ourselves into the world regardless of dangers with the mission to bring God to everyone. And like the apostles, we do so willingly and without cost.

## 4. LIVE IT! [SHARING]

**Sharing** is giving a portion of something to others.

With gratitude and humility, let us recognize the gifts that God has bestowed upon us and try our best to share those gifts with others. Here are some examples:

- If you are good with math, help your friends or your siblings with their homework.
- If you are blessed with a great voice, sing in a choir.
- If you have the gift of time, spend it volunteering or in prayer for others.
- If you have money or material goods, donate it to the poor.

## 6. PRAY IT!

Loving Jesus! Thank you for all the graces and gifts You have bestowed upon each of us. Please help us to recognize those gifts and to share them with others. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

Jesus is very in tune with the needs of the people. Do you know and understand the people around you? Do you know what they need? Do you pray for them and entrust them to the Lord?

Jesus also gives specific instructions to His apostles so they know exactly how they are to help. Do you know what specific gifts God give you to help others? How would you share your gifts with others?

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**“WITHOUT COST  
YOU HAVE  
RECEIVED;  
WITHOUT COST  
YOU ARE TO GIVE.”  
(MATTHEW 10:8)**

# ACKNOWLEDGE JESUS

WEEK A - O12

MATTHEW 10:26-33



**J**esus said to the Twelve: "Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of

them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Chapter 10 of Matthew begins with Jesus giving the Twelve authority and sending them forth to begin their ministry. Their mission is to proclaim the kingdom of heaven and to bring God's mercy and grace to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel". Jesus also told them of the coming persecutions that He and them will have to face (Mt 10:16-25). Immediately after, in today's Gospel, Jesus told the Twelve to "fear no one" for God is on their side, the Father takes care of His children, "even all the hairs of your head are counted". There is no reason to be afraid.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Self-preservation is a natural instinct to ensure our survival and fear helps us to seek safety and to avoid harm. However, Jesus knew if we focus on our earthly self-preservation, we will lose the true life - the eternal life in the heavenly kingdom. He assures us that God the Father would always provide for our needs. Only without fear can we truly be His disciples and witnesses to "speak in the light" and acknowledge Jesus before others.

### 3. REFLECT IT!

Fear prevents us from true freedom to do God's will - to love God and love others.

- What fear do you have?
- What is keeping you away from God?
- What is keeping you from helping and loving those around you?
- How do you use the courage that the Holy Spirit bestows upon you to keep fear at bay?

### 4. LIVE IT!

#### [COURAGE]

Courage is the ability to face one's difficulties, danger, pain, without fear; bravery.

Courage (or fortitude) is a gift of the Holy Spirit to help us stand up for our faith. In other words, it helps us to acknowledge Jesus and to be His witnesses (i.e., martyrs). Take courage to profess your faith and do apostolic works wherever and whenever: have a daily prayer routine, participate in Mass, and perform acts of mercy. When in doubt, find God's encouraging words in Scriptures.

### 5. REMEMBER IT!

"BUT WHOEVER DENIES ME  
BEFORE OTHERS, I WILL DENY  
BEFORE MY HEAVENLY FATHER."

(MATTHEW 10:33)

### 6. PRAY IT!

Loving Jesus! We thank you for choosing us to be Your disciples. You know our fears and weaknesses. Please send the Holy Spirit to instill our hearts and minds with love for You and the gift of courage so that we can proclaim Your kingdom and be Your witnesses.  
Amen.

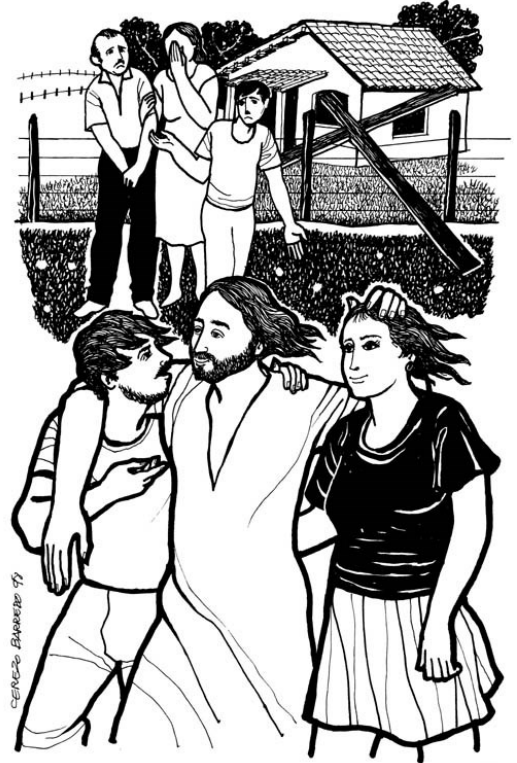
# CONDITIONS AND REWARDS FOR JESUS' DISCIPLES

WEEK A - 013

MATTHEW  
10:37-42

Jesus said to his apostles: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

"Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because the little one is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus was a devout Jew and kept all of the Ten Commandments, including "honor your father and your mother." Thus, He was not telling the apostles that they must disregard or be unfilial to their parents. However, to be worthy of Jesus (or to have Jesus as the center of their lives), they must put Him first and love Him above all else. By doing so, the apostles were able to fill their hearts with Jesus and His love; thereby, they were able to love others more perfectly. Additionally, Jesus asked that His apostles detach themselves from this earthly life so they can grasp onto Jesus, the eternal life.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Being a disciple of Jesus is not simply defined by certain actions a person does. It is defined by the very life a person lives - a life that has Christ as the center. Just as St. Paul said in his letter to the Romans today: "you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus". Jesus wants us to have a share in His life. He wants us to detach ourselves from this world and attach ourselves onto Him. Doing so will help us to carry out our apostolic works easier with greater love.



### 3. REFLECT IT!

When we love someone or something before God, we allow that someone or something to govern our lives and we put God aside. However, when we love God before all else, we allow God to govern our lives and God allows us to put everything else in the right perspective so that our lives can be in harmony with others and the world.

Where is God in your life right now, compared to family, friends, school, etc.? If God is first priority, how do you see and love others? If God is not first priority, what is your perspective of others and of the world?

### 4. LIVE IT! [ DETACHMENT ]

**Detachment** is an aloofness (indifference), as from worldly affairs or from the concerns of others.

Detach yourself from worldly things and attach yourself to Christ. If you spend time watching TV and videos, detach yourself from the screen. If you spend too much time on your phone, detach yourself from it. If you are wasting your time with bad friends, detach yourself from them. Instead, spend more time in prayer especially before the Eucharist and spend more time listening to God through reading the Scriptures.

### 5. REMEMBER IT!

**“Whoever loses his  
life for my sake  
will find it.”  
(Matthew 10:39)**

### 6. PRAY IT!

Lord Jesus, we thank you for Your ardent love. We want to earnestly respond by putting You as the center of our lives. Help us to let go of everything, even our very lives, so that we can have You, the eternal life. Amen.



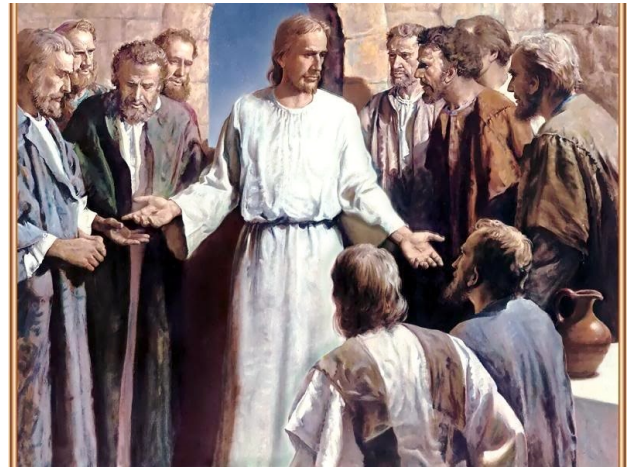
# THE GENTLE MASTERY OF JESUS

WEEK A – 014

MATTHEW 11:25-30

At that time Jesus exclaimed: "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him."

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

Our readings today have a message and good news for those who are weary and troubled.

Jesus offers us the rest we need to refresh our souls. "Come to me, all you who are heavy laden, weary, and burdened, and I will give you rest." The good news is that Jesus knows, and cares, about our weariness. We are not alone.

The image of yoke is an image familiar to His first century audience. A yoke allows us to carry a huge amount of weight, balanced over the shoulders. His yoke is easy. Having Jesus at the center of our lives, doesn't add an more burdens of those who are already burdens.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus offers us rest, but then He invites us to take His yoke - meaning to go back to work! To go back to the busyness of living... for the love of God. Jesus said: "My yoke is easy, my burden is light;" to continue to live our lives according to God's holy will. To do and be what God calls us to be in our life.

Jesus wants us to rest, but also to return to work - to the busyness of living - wisely. He just wants us to learn a wiser way to go about our daily activities. The rest that Jesus promises is actually a joyful refreshment in the midst of the burdens of life... refreshing our soul.

### 3. REFLECT IT!

When you are worn out, what you do not want to hear is someone who dismisses or makes it sound like what you are feeling is not important.

Jesus simply offers Himself, like a strong shoulder, to lean against. He gives us permission to admit the truth - we are tired or feeling burdened. We have been working and living too hard, too long. And so consequently, we have exhausted our inner lives by neglecting our spiritual life, by neglecting the primary relationships that give us peace and joy - the relationship with God and one another.

### 4. LIVE IT! [GENTLENESS]

Gentleness is the quality of being kind, tender, or mild-mannered.

Do you sometimes find yourself weary - from struggles, pains, disappointments? Jesus' invitation, 'Come to me' is always open, especially when you need peace, rest, protection, and God's love. Inside you there is a space for the divine. You can ask God to come into your weary heart and to fill it with what only God can give. In that secret place heart can speak to heart. Ask today for what you want and be open to what God sees best to give you.

### 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"Take my yoke  
upon you and learn  
from me, for I am meek  
and humble of heart."  
(Matthew 11:29)**

### 6. PRAY IT!

Lord, why do we think we can do everything by ourselves? You designed us to need other people, to help other people, and to depend upon God for everything. This is the law of Your universe. Like a little child in its mother's arms, so we keep ourselves in You, O Lord. Teach us to trust You and to obey Your will. Amen.

# JESUS' PARABLE OF THE SOWER

On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying:



"A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or

thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

The disciples approached him and said, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" He said to them in reply, "Because knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted. To anyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand. Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says: You shall indeed hear but not understand, you shall indeed look but never see. Gross is the heart of this people, they will hardly hear with their ears, they have closed their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and be converted, and I heal them.

"But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. "Hear then the parable of the sower. The seed sown on the path is the one who hears the word of the kingdom without understanding it, and the evil one comes and steals away what was sown in his heart. The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy. But he has no root and lasts only for a time. When some tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away. The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit. But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold."

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

The parable itself is meant to give us encouragement. Then later explanation is meant to be a warning. When the going is rough, we need to be confident that with God's help we can overcome the difficulties and be part of the harvest of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Gospel raises uncomfortable questions. Jesus urges us to examine our approach to God. We should draw encouragement from God's power and desire to

overcome all obstacles to a successful harvest. Jesus goes on to explain the parable in detail, but only to the disciples who are happy because they see and believe. Accompanying Jesus makes them happier than the prophets who had hoped to see what they saw but did not see it. Jesus identifies the difficulties that hinder the acceptance and growth of the seed. The problem is not that the seed is refused. They all receive the seed but some either neglect it or allow it to be stolen from them.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

God persists in continuing to sow His word in our hearts. It would be good for us today to ask ourselves what specific obstacles He finds in our lives. What is it, apart from God, that is given priority in our lives? What receives most attention in our day-to-day lives? What occupies our hearts? What gives meaning to our lives? We will not be converted to hear and obey God's word, unless we identify the source of our indifference, our laziness and resistance.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

God measures by a different set of standards. In the parable of the sower, the seeds represent God's word. We learn that God throws Himself upon the earth and shares Himself with each of us and does not expect anything in return. In the end, it is up to us how we respond to God's call.

Will we accept the Word of God and allow it to soften the edges and break up the clods in our own lives?

We have been given the personal freedom to choose to accept God's love. By choosing yes, we agree to cultivate the soil of our lives, so we may bear abundant fruit.

## 3. LIVE IT! [ ENTHUSIAM ]

Enthusiasm is the desire to learn.

Love always bears fruit. The consoling point of the story - you never know when you will get fruit. Love given is never lost. Like dropping something into the river, you never know where it will end up. Love given to children in the family also bears fruit in the next generation. We never know.

Part of life is trial and effort. Jesus was the same. He threw out love like the sower throws out the seed. He knows it may fall badly. But He gives it anyway. He picked up the cross with love. He gave love on Calvary to everyone. God is like that. It may take years to flower. God doesn't stint the seed, nor does he stint love.

## 5. REMEMBER IT!

**"But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it."**

(Matthew 13:23)

## 6. PRAY IT!

Dear God, have mercy on us, God, in Your goodness.  
Help Your word to bear fruit in our lives today.  
Amen.

Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. The slaves of the householder came to him and said, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' His slaves said to him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' He replied, 'No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn."'

He proposed another parable to them. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the 'birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.'" He spoke to them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened." All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world.



Then, dismissing the crowds, he went into the house. His disciples approached him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He said in reply, "He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. Just as weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

## 1. EXPLORE IT!

In last week's Gospel, Jesus first taught the parable of the sower where the seeds fell on four types of soil and gave varying results. The seeds represent God's word. We learned that God shares Himself with each of us and does not expect anything in return. In the end, it is up to us how we respond to God's call. In this week's Gospel, Jesus proposed the parable of the weeds that gave importance to the patience we should have until the end of ages tolerating the bad (weed) grow along with the good (wheat) for the safety of the good. Why does God allow evil to exist in the world? God gives us free will. He gives us the chance and the choice to follow Him. God allows us the opportunity to repent if we walk away from His love. God uses our rejection as the opportunity for greater good, as he did with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

## 2. CONNECT IT!

We want success and perfection quickly; nothing unusual in that. Living in an age of the immediate in so many ways on social media. We have little patience at times with our own slow development and growth. All human development has its trial and error, its good times and failures.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

A man came to God from his perfect farm- well ploughed furrows in a straight line, all weeded and looking well. God said: Well done, you have cleared your land of weeds and brambles, but there are no flowers! We know people, even saints, who were so keen on their own perfection that they lacked care for others along the way. Or people, even saints, who were bad - tempered and full of faults, but cared for everyone they met.

We are a mixture of saint and sinner inside ourselves, and indeed in the church. Jesus watches the growth of ordinary nature, the laws of the environment and draws conclusions. We are to plant love, care, forgiveness, compassion and all the gifts of God's spirit and make them flourish. We may do that with our faults and failings, too. Even if they grow, they will be seen by God for what they are: part of the good person you are!

## 4. LIVE IT! [FAIRNESS]

**Fairness:** Impartial and just treatment or behavior without favoritism or discrimination.

We have to be patient with our enemies. When we try to destroy those who persecute us, we might damage ourselves and the church. Our natural reaction to enemies would be to take revenge on them. Jesus taught through His public ministry how to respond to our adversaries. We can point out their mistakes, but we are not entitled to judge them, Judgment is reserved by God. At present, we cannot tell which ones are wheat and which ones are weeds.

Think of ways you can choose love and inspire hope. Resolve to accomplish one or two ways this week. Ask God for forgiveness for our failures to do good through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



## 5. REMEMBER IT!

*"First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn."*

*(Matthew 13:30)*

## 6. PRAY IT!

Think of some fault or failing. Put a color on it.  
Allow God to paint your fault in gold -  
His paint of love!

Lord, deliver me from evil and may Your kingdom  
come within me! Amen.

# Jesus' Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven

Jesus said to his disciples: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind. When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away. Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. "Do you understand all these things?" They answered, "Yes." And he replied, "Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old."



## 1. EXPLORE IT!

In this week's Gospel, Jesus's parable reminds us that as Christians, what we should most love, what should most capture our imagination, what we should be willing to sacrifice everything else for is the Kingdom of Heaven: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds

and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." The Kingdom of Heaven is a kingdom of "love, justice, and peace" and "the righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Roman Catholic Catechism 2046, 2819).



## 2. CONNECT IT!

This week's Gospel should cause us to ponder what it is that we cannot give up in order to follow Jesus. The Gospel compels us to ask where it is that we have to

put our treasure, because as we know, where our treasure is, there also is our heart (Matthew 6:21). And the moral of this week is that we need to cling a

little less tightly to those things that we treasure most if we want to be able to go and follow Jesus when the opportunity presents itself.

## 3. REFLECT IT!

The man who found the buried treasure in the field sold everything he had in order to buy that field. The merchant who found the pearl of great price sold everything in order to buy it. Jesus is talking about priceless value of heaven that one can readily sacrifice everything just to possess it. Can we let go of valued possessions in favor of heaven?

Heaven is not just some abstract idea. Heaven is real, for it is Jesus Himself. And, Jesus is with us in the Mass! Are we ready to leave behind your tasks at home to be here at Mass on Sunday? Are we ready to sacrifice that sport game or forget about outing with friends and taste the sweetness of heaven here in the Mass with Jesus?

## 4. REMEMBER IT!

*“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”*

(Matthew 13:44)

## 5. LIVE IT! [ WISDOM ]

**Wisdom** - ability to discern inner qualities and relationships

This is something we have to think about very seriously. We are Catholics. We have the fullness of the Truth. We have all the sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ. And we encounter and receive Jesus really present in the Eucharist. Unfortunately, many of us take our catholic faith for granted. We often tend to neglect Sunday mass.

Let us ask God to continually grant us the gift of wisdom, like the one granted to Solomon, and to open the eyes of our faith so that each time we come to Mass, we will be able to see the infinite beauty and priceless value of heaven - despite the distraction and limitations of this material world.

## 6. PRAY IT!

May we eagerly look forward to every Mass as a great blessing and a precious opportunity for us to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist. May we experience a taste of “heaven on earth,” and begin to enjoy eternal happiness now and forever. Amen.

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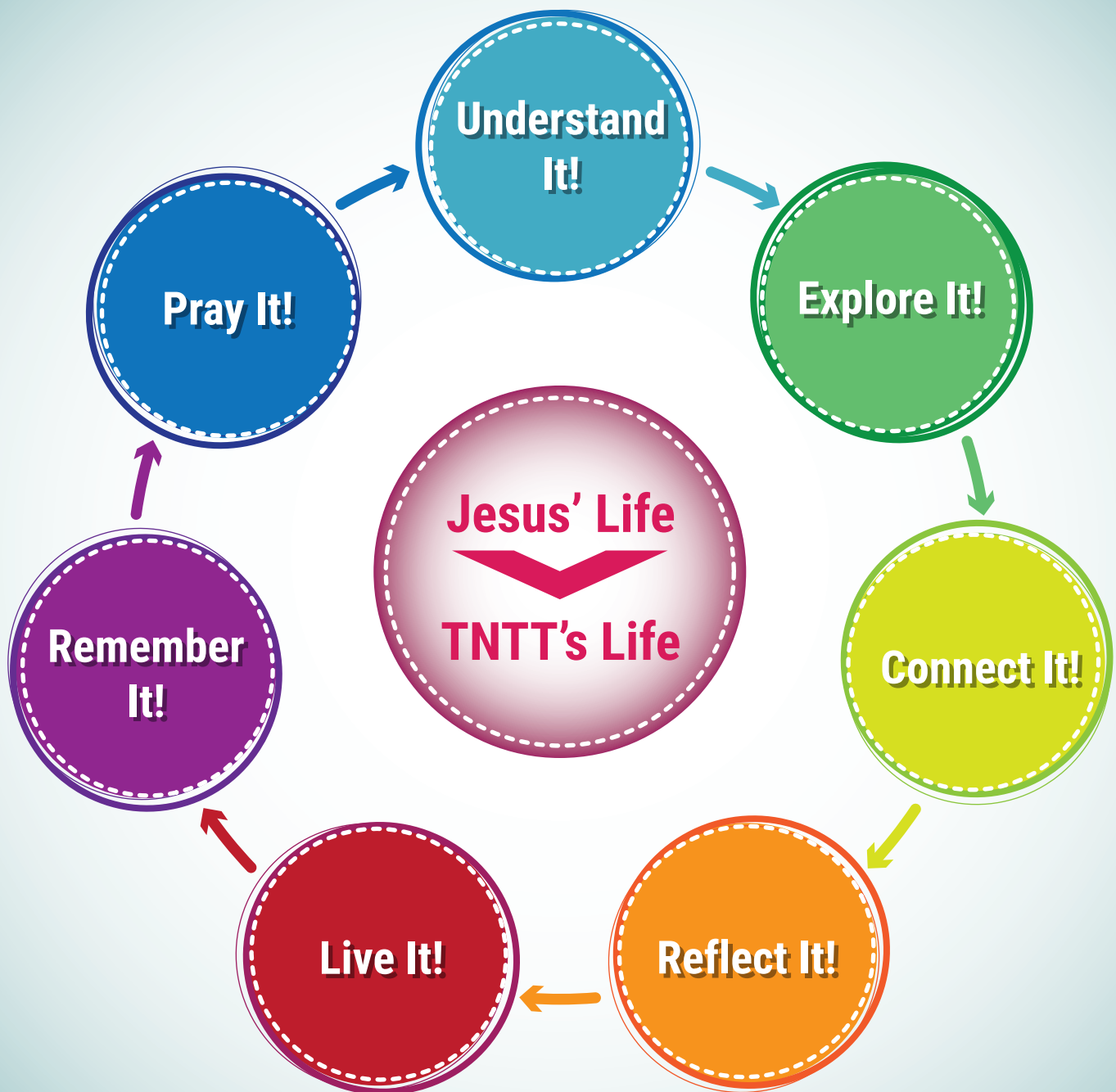
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# WEEKLY SCRIPTURE LESSON MOTTO

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



*“Go and Make  
**Disciples**  
of All Nations”*

Mt 28:19

