



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

7711 GARDEN GROVE, GARDEN GROVE, CA 92841

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Weekly Gospel Lessons



NAME _____

TEAM _____

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

Lesson Journal

Date/Page	Week	Lesson - [Virtue]	Assignments
January 10, 2016 Page 2	Ord. C-1	The Baptism of Jesus - [Purity]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
January 17, 2016 Page 4	Ord. C-2	Jesus at the Cana Wedding - [Sympathy]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
January 24, 2016 Page 6	Ord. C-3	Jesus is the Messiah - [Respect]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
February 1, 2016 Page 8	Ord. C-4	The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth - [Acceptance]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
February 8, 2016 Page 10	Ord. C-5	Believe in Jesus - [Trust]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
February 14, 2016 Page 12	Lent C-1	Facing Temptations Like Jesus - [Determination]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
February 21, 2016 Page 14	Lent C-2	The Transfiguration of Jesus - [Obedience]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
February 28, 2016 Page 16	Lent C-3	Jesus Calls Us to Repent - [Commitment]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
March 6, 2016 Page 18	Lent C-4	Jesus Tells Us about the Father's Love for the Lost Son - [Self-Discipline]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
March 13, 2016 Page 20	Lent C-5	Jesus' Mercy toward a Woman Caught in Adultery- [Gentleness]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
March 20, 2016 Page 22	Palm Sunday	The Passion of Christ - [Sacrifice]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
March 27, 2016 Page 28	Easter	Jesus Rises from the Dead - [Hope]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
April 3, 2016 Page 30	Easter C-2	Jesus Strengthened the Faith of Thomas - [Faith]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
April 10, 2016 Page 32	Easter C-3	Peter Professed his Love to Jesus - [Excellence]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
April 17, 2016 Page 34	Easter C-4	Jesus Knows His Sheep - [Responsibility]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
April 24, 2016 Page 36	Easter C-5	Jesus' New Commandment - [Love]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
May 1, 2016 Page 38	Easter C-6	The Peace of Jesus - [Truthfulness]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
May 8, 2016 Page 40	Easter C-7	The Ascension of Jesus - [Patience]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
May 15, 2016 Page 42	Easter C-8 Pentecost	The Disciples Received the Holy Spirit - [Openness]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
May 22, 2016 Page 44	Most Holy Trinity	Jesus Reveals the Holy Trinity - [Understanding]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue
May 29, 2016 Page 46	Most Holy Body & Blood	Jesus' Miracle with Five Loaves of Bread and Two Fishes - [Sharing]	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Do homework/Practice virtue



Baptism of Jesus



WEEK C – BAPTISM OF JESUS LUKE 3:15–16.21–22



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

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

1. EXPLORE IT!

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

meant a change in the way one sees their relationship with God. According to the prophet, changing one's life means practicing fraternity and justice. People are invited to be open to the person of Jesus, the saving Messiah.

In the first scene of the Gospel passage, John prophetically affirms that there is one “who is mightier” than he who is to come, a term used in the Old Testament to signify an attribute of the Creator, considered sovereign of the universe and of history.

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

humble and unworthy to the person of Jesus.

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

3. REFLECT IT!

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

4. LIVE IT! [PURITY]

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

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

V. Do you reject Satan?

R. I do.

V. And all his works?

R. I do.

V. And all his empty promises?

R. I do.

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

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

R. I do.

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

R. I do.

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

R. Amen.

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

5. REMEMBER IT!

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

6. PRAY IT!

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

Jesus at the Wedding in Cana

WEEK C-2

JOHN 2:1-11



On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” [And] Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

1. EXPLORE IT!

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

3. REFLECT IT!

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

4. LIVE IT! [SYMPATHY]

Sympathy is a feeling or impulse of compassion.

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



5. REMEMBER IT!

*"Do whatever he
tells you."*
(John 2:5)

6. PRAY IT!

Dear Lord, I want to take a minute, not to ask anything from you, but to simply pray for my (father, mother, uncle, etc.) _____.
Please protect _____ and grant him the graces that he/she needs at this times. Amen.

JESUS IS THE MESSIAH



WEEK C-3 LUKE 1:1-4; 4:14-21

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

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

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

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

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

1. EXPLORE IT!

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

Today’s Gospel recalls the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry after he was baptized and tempted in the desert. The Holy Spirit

descended on Jesus at His baptism (Luke 3:22) and He was full of the Spirit and led by the Spirit when He went into the desert (Luke 4:1). Jesus returned to Galilee filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

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

In the synagogue on the Sabbath day in Nazareth, Jesus reads the passage from the prophet Isaiah (Is 61:1-2). This is where the prophet announces the coming of a

2. CONNECT IT!

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

messiah who will free the people from all their afflictions.

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

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

4. LIVE IT! [RESPECT]

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

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

3. REFLECT IT!

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

How can we get to know Jesus in faith?

5. REMEMBER IT!

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

6. PRAY IT!

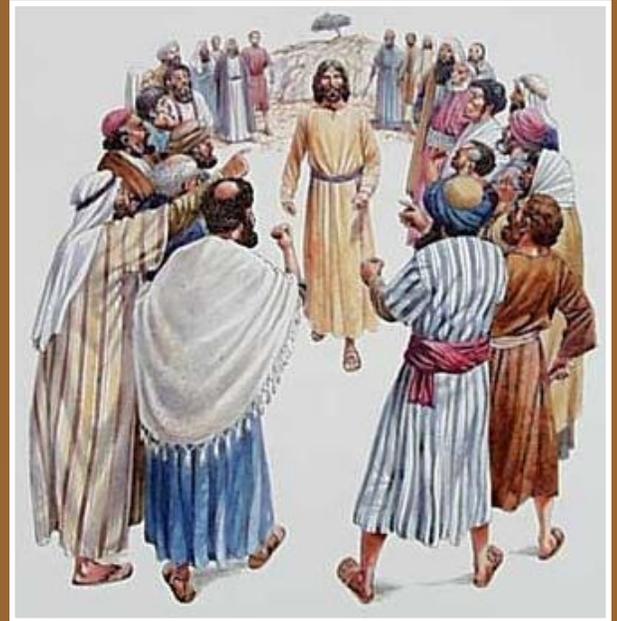
Imagine yourself sitting in the synagogue with Jesus. Jesus says that He is the Anointed One, the Messiah, and that He will bring good news, sight, freedom, and life into this world. He invites you to be with Him in this mission. What is it that you would want to say to Him?



The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

Week C-4 Luke 4:21-30

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



1. EXPLORE IT!

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

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

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

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

3. REFLECT IT!

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

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

4. LIVE IT! [ACCEPTANCE]

Acceptance is the act of accepting something or someone

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

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

5. REMEMBER IT!

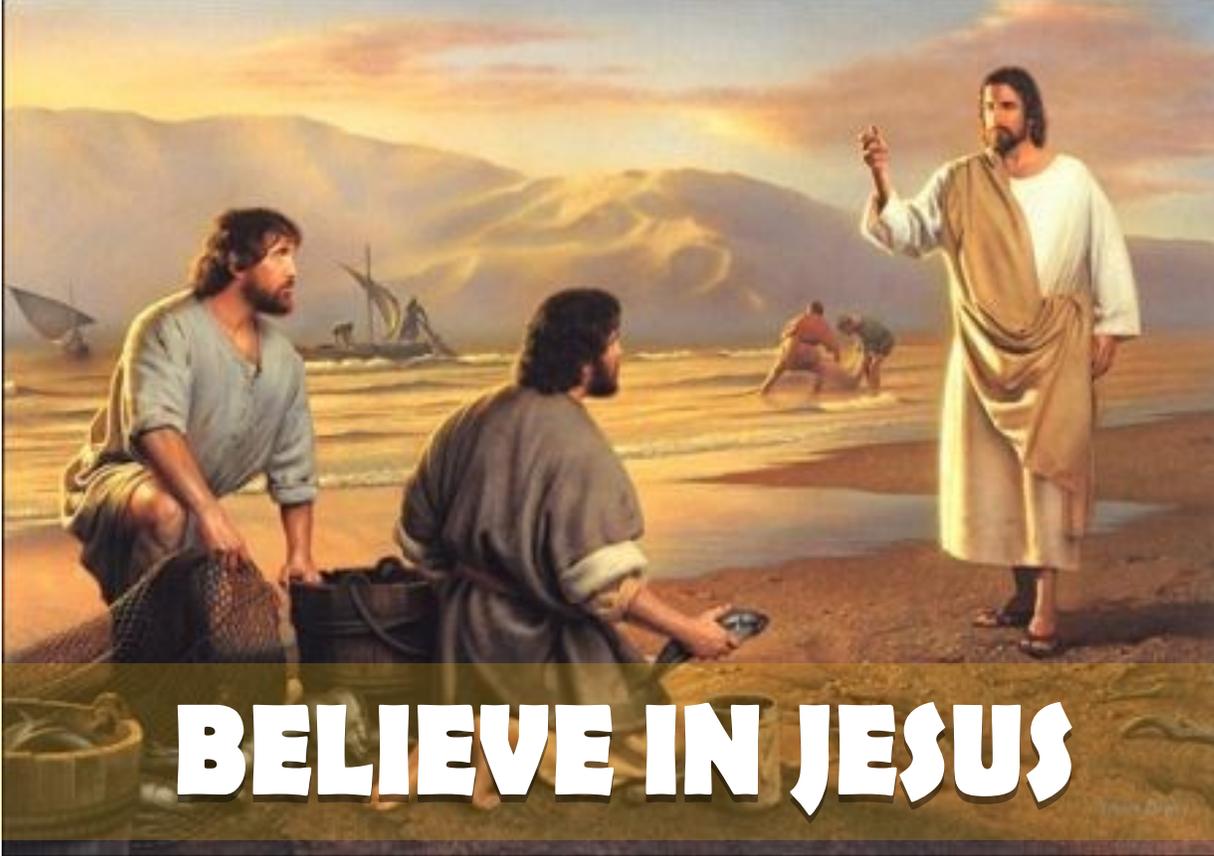
**"Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place."
(Luke 4:24)**

6. PRAY IT!

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

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

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



WEEK C-5
LUKE 5:1-11

BELIEVE IN JESUS

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

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

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

1. EXPLORE IT!

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

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

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

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

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

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

3. REFLECT IT!

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

4. LIVE IT! [TRUST]

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

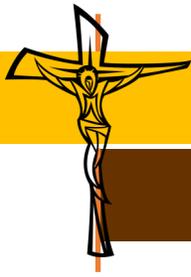
Write in your spiritual journal an experience when you wanted to do "your way" and when you put your trust in Jesus and followed His command.

6. PRAY IT!

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

5. REMEMBER IT!

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



FACING TEMPTATIONS LIKE JESUS

Week C-1-Lent

Luke 4:1-13

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



1. Explore it!

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

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

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

The devil knows the Scripture very well, even better than any

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

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

When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time. We have to remember that the devil will never stop tempting us." Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

2. CONNECT It!

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

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

3. REFLECT it!

Let us reflect on the temptations Jesus faced.

The temptation of hunger

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

What is your hunger?

5. REMEMBER it!

“YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD, YOUR GOD, AND HIM ALONE SHALL YOU SERVE.” (LUKE 4:8)

The temptation of power and glory

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

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

4. LIVE it! [DETERMINATION]

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

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

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

Are your hungers filled? How so?

If they are unfilled, how do you feel?

The temptation of trust

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

What is your unheard prayer?

6. PRAY it: Write your prayer to ask for determination to love and trust God unconditionally.

The Transfiguration of Jesus



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

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

1. EXPLORE IT!

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

3. REFLECT IT!

<p>1. Remember your peak and most profound experiences of God, when you felt very close to Him and Him to you. Remember how these experiences changed your life. How did it feel after you came down from your "mountain experience"? Are you able to continue encountering God and Jesus in your daily ordinary life?</p>	<p>2. Are there times in your life when you felt there was a great cloud between you and God? When praying to God, we became transfigured and come to realize Jesus was there the entire time.</p>	<p>3. Are you able to recognize God's glory in the midst of your problems, difficulties, and pain? Listen to the voice of Jesus, what is he saying to you?</p>
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4. LIVE IT! [OBEDIENCE]

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

5. REMEMBER IT!

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

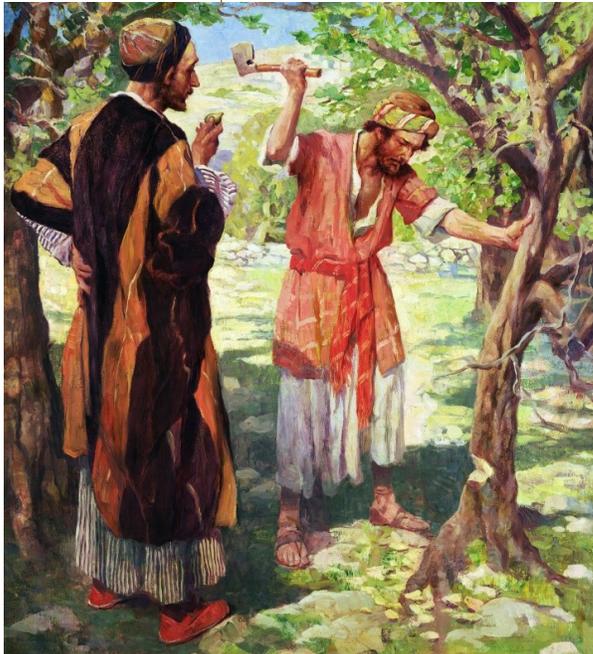
6. PRAY IT!

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

Jesus Calls Us To Repent

WEEK C-3 LENT

LUKE 13:1-9



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

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.

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

1. EXPLORE IT!

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

3. REFLECT IT!

GOD'S WORDS

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

4. LIVE IT!

[COMMITMENT]

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

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

5. REMEMBER IT!

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

6. PRAY IT!²

Dear Heavenly Father,

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

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

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

Reference

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

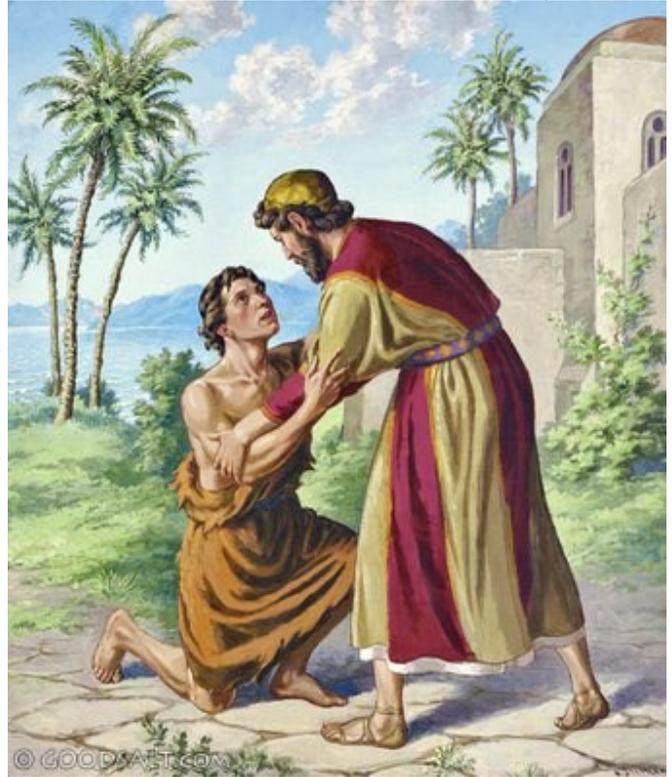
² A prayer of Commitment to God, <http://www.hiskingdomprophecy.com/a-prayer-of-commitment-to-god/>

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

WEEK C-4 LENT

LUKE 15:1-3, 11-32

The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them he addressed this parable: "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him,



"Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers." So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began. Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'

1. EXPLORE IT!

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

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

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

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

5. REMEMBER IT!

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

3. REFLECT IT!

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

4. LIVE IT!

[SELF-DISCIPLINE]

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

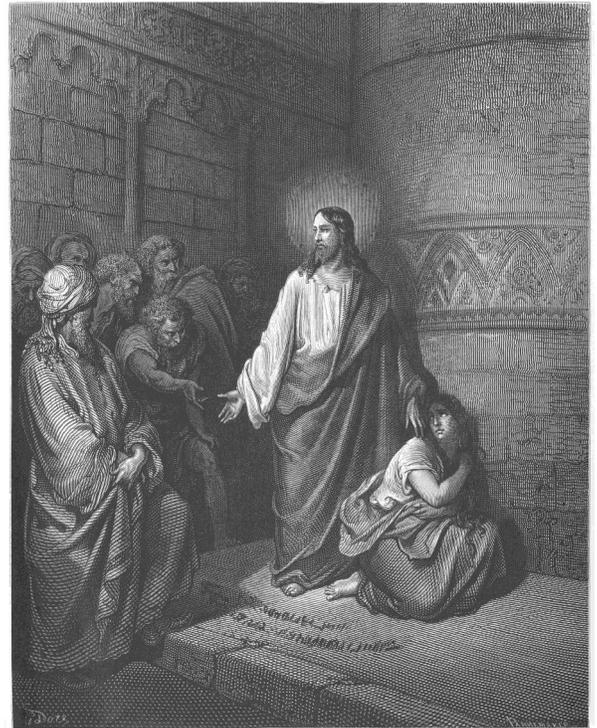
Make a list of things to do and check it off when done. Also, make a schedule for the tasks, chores, studying, or practices. Do them according to the schedule.

6. PRAY IT!

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

Jesus' Mercy Towards a Woman Caught in Adultery

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore."



I. EXPLORE IT!

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

3. REFLECT IT!

Read the Scripture passage and answer the questions below.

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

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

4. LIVE IT! [GENTLENESS]

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

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

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

5. REMEMBER IT!

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

6. PRAY IT!

Prayer for Healing

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

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

THE PASSION OF CHRIST



WEEK C – PALM SUNDAY

LUKE 22:14–23, 56



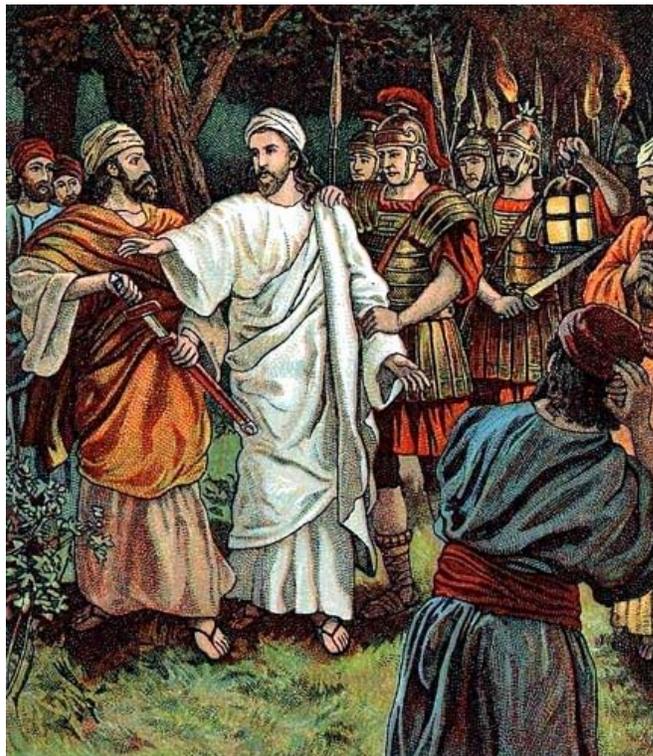
When the hour came, Jesus took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it again until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you that from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you. “And yet behold, the hand of the one who is to betray me is with me on the table; for the Son of Man indeed goes as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom he

is betrayed.” And they began to debate among themselves who among them would do such a deed.

Then an argument broke out among them about which of them should be regarded as the greatest. He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and those in authority over them are addressed as ‘Benefactors’; but among you it shall not be so. Rather, let the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater: the one seated at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one seated at table? I am among you as the one who serves. It is you who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer a kingdom on you, just as my Father has conferred one on me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. “Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers.” He said to him, “Lord, I am prepared to go to prison and to die with you.” But he replied, “I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows this day, you will deny three times that you know me.”

He said to them, “When I sent you forth without a money bag or a sack or sandals, were you in need of anything?” “No, nothing,” they replied. He said to them, “But now one who has a money bag should take it, and likewise a sack, and one who does not have a sword should sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me, namely, He was counted among the wicked; and indeed what is written about me is coming to fulfillment.” Then they said, “Lord, look, there are two swords here.” But he replied, “It is enough!”

Then going out, he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place he said to them, "Pray that you may not undergo the test." After withdrawing about a stone's throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground. When he rose from prayer and returned to his disciples, he found them sleeping from grief. He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not undergo the test." While he was still speaking, a crowd approached and in front was one of the Twelve, a man named Judas. He went up to Jesus to kiss him. Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" His disciples realized what was about to happen, and they asked, "Lord, shall we strike with a sword?" And one of them struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said in reply, "Stop, no more of this!" Then he touched the servant's ear and healed him. And Jesus said to the chief priests and temple guards and elders who had come for him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? Day after day I was with you in the temple area, and you did not seize me; but this is your hour, the time for the power of darkness." After arresting him they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest; Peter was following at a distance. They lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat around it, and Peter sat down with them. When a maid saw him seated in the light, she looked intently at him and



said, "This man too was with him." But he denied it saying, "Woman, I do not know him." A short while later someone else saw him and said, "You too are one of them"; but Peter answered, "My friend, I am not." About an hour later, still another insisted, "Assuredly, this man too was with him, for he also is a Galilean." But Peter said, "My friend, I do not know what you are talking about." Just as he was saying this, the cock crowed, and the Lord turned and looked at Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." He went out and began to weep bitterly. The men who held Jesus in custody were ridiculing and beating him. They blindfolded him and questioned him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" And they reviled him in saying many other things against him.



When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, "If you are the Christ, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further need have we for

testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth.”

Then the whole assembly of them arose and brought him before Pilate. They brought charges against him, saying, “We found this man misleading our people; he opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar and maintains that he is the Christ, a king.” Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He said to him in reply, “You say so.” Pilate then addressed the chief priests and the crowds, “I find this man not guilty.” But they were adamant and said, “He is inciting the people with his teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to here.”

On hearing this Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean; and upon learning that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod who was in Jerusalem at that time. Herod was very glad to see Jesus; he had been wanting to see him for a long time, for he had heard about him and had been hoping to see him perform some sign. He questioned him at length, but he gave him no answer. The chief priests and scribes, meanwhile, stood by accusing him harshly. Herod and his soldiers treated him contemptuously and mocked him, and after clothing him in resplendent garb, he sent him back to Pilate. Herod and Pilate became friends that very day, even though they had been enemies formerly. Pilate then summoned the chief priests, the rulers, and the people and said to them, “You brought this man to me and accused him of inciting the people to revolt. I have conducted my investigation in your presence and have not found this man guilty of the charges you have brought against him, nor did Herod, for he sent him back to us. So no capital crime has been committed by him. Therefore I shall have him flogged and then release him.” But

all together they shouted out, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us.” — Now Barabbas had been imprisoned for a rebellion that had taken place in the city and for murder. — Again Pilate addressed them, still wishing to release Jesus, but they continued their shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate addressed them a third time, “What evil has this man done? I found him guilty of no capital crime. Therefore I shall have him flogged and then release him.” With loud shouts, however, they persisted in calling for his crucifixion, and their voices prevailed. The verdict of Pilate was that their demand should be granted. So he released the man who had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder, for whom they asked, and he handed Jesus over to them to deal with as they wished.

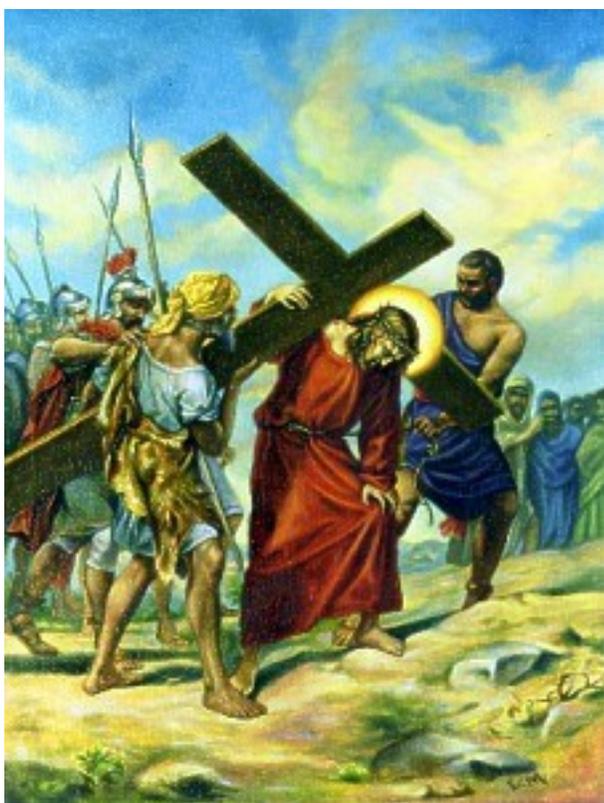
As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus. A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.’ At that time people will say to the mountains, ‘Fall upon us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ for if these things are



done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?"

Now two others, both criminals, were led away with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." They divided his garments by casting lots. 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 Christ 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 Christ? 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."

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

The centurion who witnessed what had happened glorified God and said, "This man was innocent beyond doubt." When all the people who had gathered for this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their breasts; but all his acquaintances stood at a distance, including the women who had followed him from Galilee and saw these events. Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph who, though he was a member of the council, had not consented to their plan of action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea and was awaiting the kingdom of God. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. After he had taken the body down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb in which no one had yet been buried. It was the day of preparation, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had come from Galilee with him followed behind, and when they had seen the tomb and the way in which his body was laid in it, they returned and prepared spices and perfumed oils. Then they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.



1. EXPLORE IT!

The celebration of Palm Sunday recalls Jesus' messianic entry into Jerusalem. This paschal event led to His passion, death, and resurrection. It gives us a glimpse of the victorious future toward which the Church is journeying. By going through the door of His Passover in the earthly Jerusalem, He is foreshadowing His victorious entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem and, together with Him, the community of Christian disciples. With Palm Sunday, the Church enters Holy Week, which culminates with the celebration of the Easter Triduum.

God's tender mercy fills the Passion according to Luke. We come to know the ultimate self-gift of Jesus Christ to the Father as the author of the sacred text unfolds the narrative of the infinite mercy and compassion of the Lord.

On the eve of His Passion, Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist. He offered himself, not things, for those who believe in Him, in anticipation of the wedding feast of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem. In this Last Supper, Jesus used the Breaking of Bread, a rite that is part of a Jewish meal. It is by this act of love that His disciples will recognize Him after His Resurrection. When we assemble for Eucharistic celebration and eat the one broken bread, Jesus Christ, we enter into communion with Him and form but one body in Him.

On the Mount of Olives, Judas betrays Jesus, his savior, with a kiss. In the midst of the chaos, the high priest's slave is maimed and Jesus, just betrayed by one He loves, responds with mercy; he heals the slave's ear. In His own suffering, Jesus responds with love and tender loving care to the needs of others.

Immediately following this, we move to the courtyard of the high priest's house. It is cold outside; people are warming themselves by the fire. Peter, who has been the Lord's constant companion for three years, the leader of the apostles, one of the privileged three to have witnessed Jesus' transfiguration on Mount Tabor, is approached by a maid, "This man also was with him." Three times, once for each blessed year he has known the Lord, Peter vehemently denies knowing the Lord! "And the Lord turned and looked at Peter." The gaze of Christ! The merciful gaze of Jesus caused Peter to remember how the denial had been foretold, and moved him to weep bitter tears of repentance. Jesus is slow to anger and rich in kindness.

On the *via dolorosa*, Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem. He is burdened by the heavy cross, the weight of our sins, and yet pauses to give comfort to others. He teaches us that we may

seek not so much to be consoled, as to console others in their difficult times.

On Golgotha, Jesus is crucified in the manner of common criminals. The Son of God, the innocent Paschal Lamb is nailed to a cross for our sins. From the cross he cries out, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." In the midst of His greatest suffering, in His hour of death, He calls to the Father for mercy for His betrayers, His crucifiers, those responsible for His humiliating death: us. The total self-gift has been given. Jesus has emptied Himself to the Father so that we might live.

The last words that Jesus uttered to any person on earth before He breathed forth His Spirit to the Father were words of love, compassion, and forgiveness to the "good thief." The thief asks, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus responds to this simple request of remembrance by pledging, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." Not only will the thief be remembered; His merciful redeemer grants him a place in Paradise! Such is the extravagant, overabundant mercy and compassion of our Lord.

2. CONNECT IT!

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

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

3. REFLECT IT!

A. Reflect on how the many “powerful” acted: the priests, the Scribes and Pharisees, Pilate, Herod, and how the “little ones” acted: the disciples, the people, the women, the soldiers, and others. Look at how you act in your daily life. With which character do you like to identify with? How would you have thought, acted, spoken, and decided in their place?

B. How does the liturgy of Palm Sunday and of the Lord’s Passion impact you? What do you do to deepen your participation in the Holy Week celebration and make it more meaningful?

C. As we commemorate the Lord’s entrance into Jerusalem, do we wish to honor Him as the triumphant King? Are we disposed to pray to Christ with a contrite heart: *“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom”* (Lk 23:42).

4. REMEMBER IT!

**“THIS IS MY BODY,
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN
FOR YOU, DO THIS IN
MEMORY OF ME.”
(LUKE 22:19).**

5. LIVE IT! [SACRIFICE]

- ◇ To help us participate more intimately in the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, make an effort to spend an hour in Eucharistic Adoration.
- ◇ Participate in Christ’s passion and sacrificial love by consciously uniting your own pain and suffering with those of Jesus. Contribute to His redemptive work by acts of charity on behalf of the poor, the marginalized and the victims of war, violence, and various forms of injustice.
- ◇ If you have not done it yet, watch Mel Gibson’s film, *“The Passion of the Christ”* to witness a deeper insight and more incisive experience of the Lord’s Passion.

6. PRAY IT!

The Passion narrative shows us the cruelty of our sin, and the infinite mercy of God. “Just as I have done so you must do.” In our own trials and sufferings, let us recall the mercy of Jesus, who forgave until the last moment of his Passion. Let us imitate our Lord, and not spare anyone our forgiveness, mercy and compassion; not the bystanders in our lives like the high priest’s slave, not the dear but weak friends in our lives like Peter, nor the enemies who make our lives difficult. Let us love and forgive until it hurts. Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us!

This is the Eucharistic prayer for this Sunday:

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



Jesus Rises from the Dead

WEEK C-EASTER SUNDAY

JOHN 20:1-9

The Empty Tomb

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him."

So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead.



1. EXPLORE IT!

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

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

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

3. REFLECT IT!

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

4. LIVE IT! (HOPE)

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

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

(Act of Hope)

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

5. REMEMBER IT!

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

(LUKE 20:2)

6. PRAY IT!

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

Jesus Strengthened the the Faith of Thomas

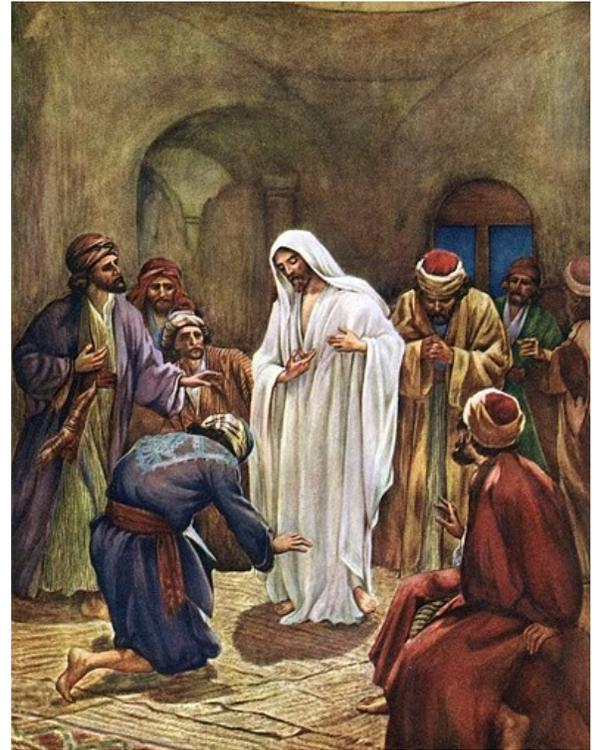
WEEK C - DIVINE MERCY JOHN 20:19-31

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

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

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

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



1. EXPLORE IT!¹

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

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

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

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

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

What do you believe? What do you see?

3. REFLECT IT!²

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

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

4. LIVE IT! [FAITH]

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

Faith is knowledge and trust (YouCat #21)

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

Profess the faith:

Bear witness to the faith:

Spread the faith:

5. REMEMBER IT!

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

6. PRAY IT!

Act of Faith

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

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

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

Peter Professes His Love to Jesus

WEEK C-3 EASTER JOHN 21:1-19

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



to him, "Feed my lambs." He then said to Simon Peter a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." Jesus said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that Jesus had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

1. EXPLORE it!

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

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

Jesus was standing on the shore and the disciples did not recognize Him until after they listened to His directions to

cast the net on the right side of the boat and they caught a large number of fish. Peter was eager to meet Jesus and jumped into the sea to swim to shore. Once all the disciples had arrived onshore, Jesus took the bread and gave it to them as well as the fish. This was now the third time Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples after rising from the dead.

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

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

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

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

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

2. CONNECT It!

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

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

4. LIVE it! [EXCELLENCE]

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

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

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

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

3. REFLECT it!



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

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

ME: _____

JESUS: _____

3. REMEMBER it!

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

5. PRAY it!

Prayer to Love God above all Things

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



JESUS

Knows His Sheep

WEEK C-4 EASTER

JOHN 10: 27-30

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

1

EXPLORE IT!

The words of Jesus in the reading were directed to Jewish leaders who wanted to trick Jesus. They were hoping He would call Himself the Messiah. Instead, Jesus refers to Himself as "the Good Shepherd." He describes the secure and lasting relationship He has with His sheep, those who truly hear Him and believe. Just as no one can separate Jesus and His Father, no one can take Jesus' disciples away from Him.

2

CONNECT IT!

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

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

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

3

REFLECT IT!

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

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

4

LIVE IT! [RESPONSIBILITY]

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

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

REMEMBER IT!

5

"My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life."

(Jn 10:27)

6

PRAY IT!

(From the prayers composed by Blessed James Alberione)

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

Jesus' New Commandment



WEEK C-5 EASTER JOHN 13:31-33a, 34-35

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

I. EXPLORE IT!

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

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

love
one
ANOTHER.

3. REFLECT IT!

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

His messengers just as He had done in obedience to His Father.

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

4. LIVE IT! [LOVE]

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

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

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

5. REMEMBER

6. PRAY IT!²

[Catholic Act of Love]

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

Reference:

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

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



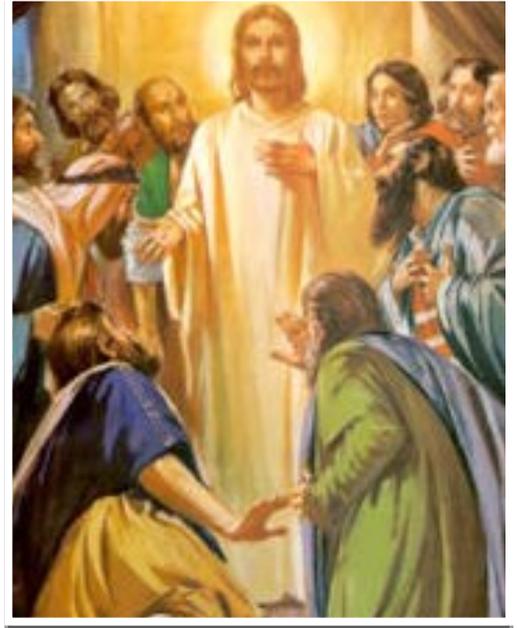
THE PEACE OF JESUS

WEEK C-6 EASTER JOHN 14:23-29

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Whoever loves me will keep my word,
and my Father will love him,
and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.
Whoever does not love me does not keep my words;
yet the word you hear is not mine
but that of the Father who sent me.

“I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate,
the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will
teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives do I give it to you.
Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.
You heard me tell you, ‘I am going away and I will come
back to you.’



If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe.”

1. EXPLORE IT!

- ◇ In last week’s Gospel, Jesus asks His disciples to “love one another”, Jesus’s new commandment. In today’s Gospel, Jesus continues and says that whoever loves Him will follow His commandment, and God the Father will love that person, and both Jesus and the Father will come and live with him.
- ◇ Jesus is going back to His Father in heaven and give His peace to His disciples.
- ◇ Jesus promises the disciples that His Father will send the Holy Spirit who will teach and guide the disciples and be with them while Jesus is not around.

2. CONNECT IT!

“Whoever loves me will keep my word” – when we say that we love someone, is that good enough? Perhaps, it is not. Today, Jesus asks us to keep His commandments (God’s commandments) if we truly love him. “And we (Jesus and His Father) will come and make our home with him” – Keeping God’s 10 Commandments and “Love one another”, is how we can prepare our body to become God’s home.

“My peace I give to you” – The peace of Christ is to live in harmony and communion with God. Jesus asks us to love one another and to unite with Him through the Eucharist.

3. REFLECT IT!

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you”. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. The peace of Christ for us is not the absence of conflicts, the serenity of life, health...rather, the plenitude of every good, the absence of anxiety in the face of what is going to happen. The Lord does not assure us well-being, but the fullness of a personal relationship in a loving adherence to His projects which are good for us. We will possess peace, when we finally learn to trust in that which the Father chooses for us.

5. REMEMBER IT!

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

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

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

4. LIVE IT!

TRUTHFULNESS

Truthfulness - Telling or being in the habit of telling the truth.

Don't lie to ourselves. We often try to interpret truth in our own way, and so truth appears to change in different circumstances when it actually remains the same.

Instead, be courageous and tell the truth even if it causes pain.

Don't go with the crowd. Several people or a group of people agreeing on an idea does not necessarily make that idea true. One might deceive himself to accept a lie as the truth to show an agreement with others.

Instead, be courageous to accept the truth even it feels embarrassing to stand firm.

6. PRAY IT!



The Ascension of JESUS

WEEK C—ASCENSION OF THE LORD
LUKE 24: 46–53

And he said to them “Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And [behold] I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Then he led them [out] as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God.

1. EXPLORE IT!

Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus and His disciples went to Mount Olivet, near Jerusalem. There, Jesus promised His followers that they would soon receive the Holy Spirit, and He instructed them to remain in Jerusalem until the Spirit had come. Then Jesus blessed them, and as He gave the blessing, He began to ascend into heaven. It is plain from Scripture that Jesus' ascension was a literal, bodily return to heaven. He rose from the ground gradually and visibly, observed by many intent onlookers.

2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus died, rose on the third day, and ascended into heaven. When Jesus came back from the dead, He met with the Apostles and spent his time with them. The Apostles were not expecting Jesus, but they gladly welcomed Him nonetheless. If Jesus were to return to earth within one hour, what would you do to prepare for his arrival?"

3. REFLECT IT!

The Ascension of Jesus Christ is meaningful for several reasons: It signalled the end of His earthly ministry. God the Father had lovingly sent His Son into the world at Bethlehem, and now the Son was returning to the Father. The period of human limitation was at an end. It signified success in His earthly work. All that He had come to do, He had accomplished.

Today marks the return of His heavenly glory. Jesus' glory had been veiled during His sojourn on earth, with one brief exception at the Transfiguration. It set the pattern for His

return and when Jesus comes to set up the Kingdom, He will return just as He left-literally, bodily, and visibly. Are you able to see the “remnants” of Jesus physically on Earth, such as the Eucharist, the love of others, and especially, during the Sacrifice of the Mass?

4. REMEMBER IT!

“...and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations...”
(Lk 24:47).

5. LIVE IT! [PATIENCE]

Patience is the state of endurance under difficult circumstances, which can mean persevering in the face of delay or provocation without acting on negative annoyance/anger; or exhibiting forbearance

Taking it “slow”, and enjoying the journey of life are common pieces of advice. Are you able to recognize the journey in front of you that require patience? Each night, reflect on and write down your thoughts about a journey you’re excited for that will require patience to fully complete!

6. PRAY IT!

Lord, give me the strength to be patient with myself and the world as I seek greater understanding through You. Let Your brand of patience be the foundation of forgiveness and wisdom with everyone I care and interact with.

Jesus' Disciples Received the Holy Spirit



WEEK C- PENTECOST JOHN 20:19-23

Appearance to the Disciples.

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

1

EXPLORE IT!

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

2

CONNECT IT!

"Receive the Holy Spirit"

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

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

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

3

REFLECT IT!

“Receive the Holy Spirit”

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

4

LIVE IT! [OPENNESS]

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

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

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

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!

[Prayer to the Holy Spirit]

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

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JESUS REVEALS THE HOLY TRINITY



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

1. EXPLORE IT!

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

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

2. CONNECT IT!

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

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

3. REFLECT IT!

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

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

4. LIVE IT!

[UNDERSTANDING]

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

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

5. REMEMBER IT!

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

6. PRAY IT!

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

Jesus' miracle with five loaves of bread and two fishes

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

Jesus spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of God, and he healed those who needed to be cured. As the day was drawing to a close, the Twelve approached him and said, "Dismiss the crowd so that they can go to the surrounding villages and farms and find lodging and provisions; for we are in a deserted place here." He said to them, "Give them some food yourselves." They replied, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have, unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these people." Now the men there numbered about five thousand. Then he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty." They did so and made them all sit down. Then taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. They all ate and were satisfied. And when the leftover fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets.



1. EXPLORE IT!

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

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

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

3. REFLECT IT!

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

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

4. LIVE IT [SHARING]

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

5. REMEMBER IT!

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

6. PRAY IT!

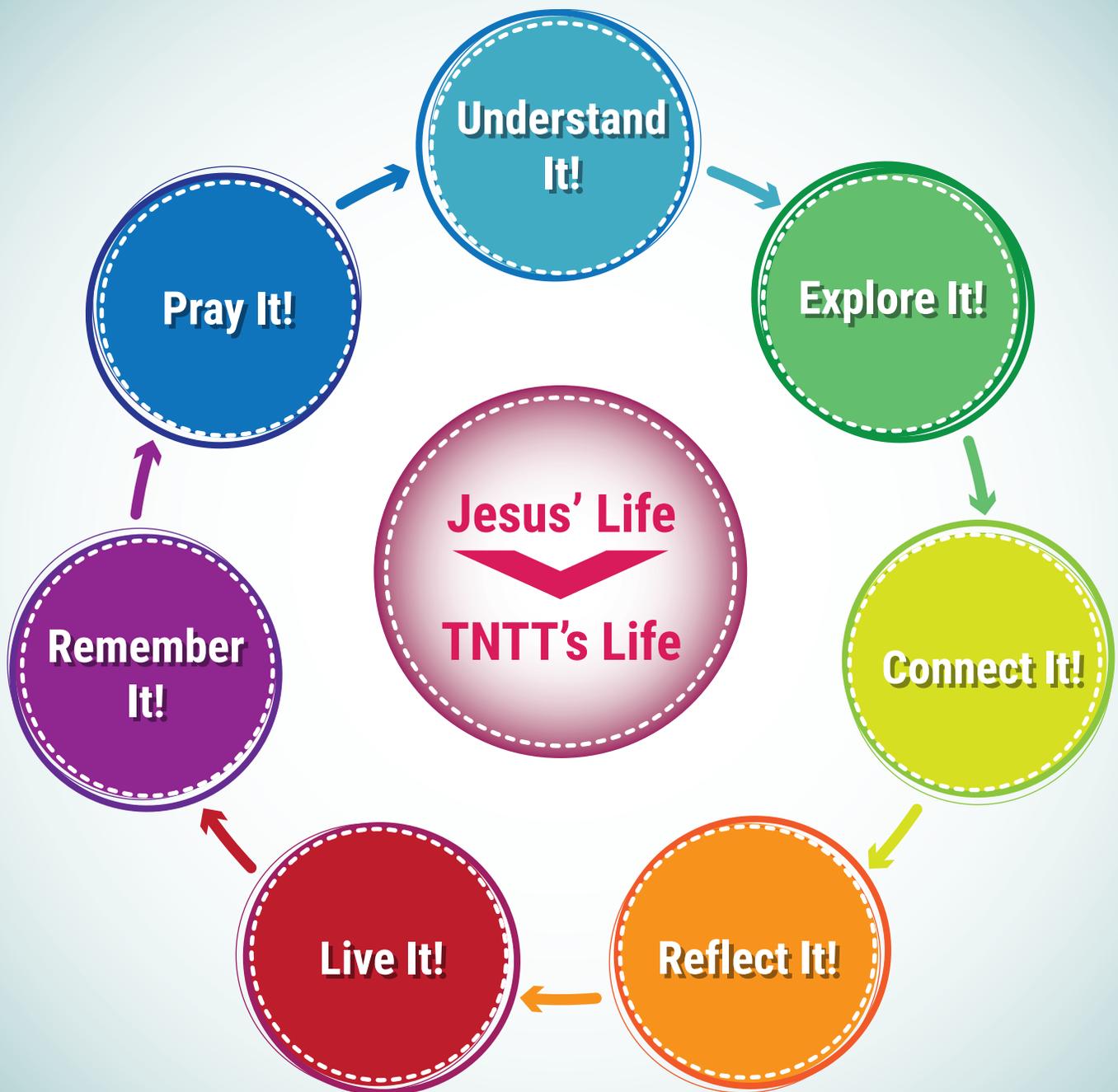
Lord, allow me to share my talents, my love, my belongings, my heart to all those I love, those around me, and those who I meet randomly in life. Grant me the wisdom and understanding to share my time for the Your sake in all that I do.

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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)



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