



HOLY FAMILY
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Small Christian Community Gatherings in Grace

*First Sunday of Lent
February 26, 2023*

through

*Pentecost
May 28, 2023*

*“For where
two or three
have gathered
together
in my name,
I am there
in their midst”*

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(Matthew 18:20)

COVENANT PRAYER

*Loving God, we are thankful for this Small Christian Community, Gathered in Grace,
to hear your Word and share Your Good News
for the salvation of the world.*

*We believe Jesus is present and continues
to break open the Word and speak to our hearts
as once He did for His disciples.*

*Open our minds, our hearts and our lips
so that what we hear we will understand,
what we understand we will share.*

*Remind us of the needs of our community, our church
and our world as we strive to know your Word.*

*Give us the strength to be present to one another
and while in this community may we always
be respectful of each other and honor a spirit
of confidentiality and trust.*

*Temper our differences with love and understanding,
and call us all to mutual respect and compassion.*

*May this community and the covenant we share,
be a reflection of the covenant you made with our ancestors,
a bond that is only strengthened and deepened each time
we gather to know, love and serve You.*

*When our time of prayer and reflection is complete,
may your Spirit be with us as we,
together with our larger community of faith,
live the Word in our world.*

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen!

GRACE MOMENTS

Share your experience of one of the following Adventures in Grace spiritual exercises since you last met:

1. Grace is God's Presence and Gift of Self. When, where, and/or how did I experience Grace?
2. Baptism is being drenched in the mysterious Love of God. How did I experience myself as baptized?
3. What gift was I able to affirm, call forth, give thanks for?
4. How did I mediate the Grace of Mercy to someone or in some situation.
5. How was I fed/nourished spiritually?

LECTIO DIVINA (Sacred Reading)

Settle into silence for a moment. Remember that God is always present. Allow silence to take root for several long moments.

Someone volunteers to read the First Reading. Invite the group to open their hearts to the passage, be curious, and listen as if they are hearing it for the first time. Listen for a word, phrase, thought, or image that speaks to them today. The text is then read slowly and meditatively. After a moment of silence, continue with the discussion questions for the reading.

Repeat this format for the Second Reading.

Repeat this format for the Gospel, but after the reading and moment of silence, invite group members to speak their word, phrase, thought, or image aloud with no elaboration or discussion. They may also "pass." When all who wish to speak have done so, silently meditate on what has been shared for a few moments, then continue with the discussion questions for the Gospel.

At the end of the discussion, invite everyone to offer prayers of petition. Conclude with:

"For these prayers that we speak, and for those we hold in the silence of our hearts, we pray together in the words that Jesus taught us, 'Our Father, ...' Amen."

Small Christian Community: Gatherings in Grace Guide

The First Sunday in Advent through the Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

<p>1st Sunday of Lent 5 February 26, 2023</p> <p>2nd Sunday of Lent 7 March 5, 2023</p> <p>3rd Sunday of Lent 9 March 12, 2023</p> <p>4th Sunday of Lent 12 March 19, 2023</p> <p>5th Sunday of Lent 15 March 26, 2023</p> <p>Palm Sunday 18 April 2, 2023</p> <p>The Resurrection of the Lord 24 Easter April 9, 2023</p>	<p>2nd Sunday of Easter 26 Divine Mercy April 16, 2023</p> <p>3rd Sunday of Easter 28 April 23, 2023</p> <p>4th Sunday of Easter 30 April 30, 2023</p> <p>5th Sunday of Easter 32 May 7, 2023</p> <p>6th Sunday of Easter 34 May 14, 2023</p> <p>Ascension of the Lord 36 May 21, 2023</p> <p>Pentecost Sunday 38 May 28, 2023</p>
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First Sunday of Lent February 26, 2023

FIRST READING

Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7

A reading from the Book of Genesis.

The LORD God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.

Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the man whom he had formed.

Out of the ground the LORD God made various trees grow that were delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that the LORD God had made.

The serpent asked the woman,
"Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?"

The woman answered the serpent:
"We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.'"

But the serpent said to the woman:
"You certainly will not die!

No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is evil."

The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom.

So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

SECOND READING

Romans 5:12-19

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all men, inasmuch as all sinned—for up to the time of the law, sin was in the world, though sin is not accounted when there is no law.

But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin after the pattern of the trespass of Adam, who is the type of the one who was to come.

But the gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one, the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ overflow for the many.

And the gift is not like the result of the one who sinned.

For after one sin there was the judgment that brought condemnation; but the gift, after many transgressions, brought acquittal.

For if, by the transgression of the one, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, just as through one transgression condemnation came upon all, so, through one righteous act, acquittal and life came to all.

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so, through the obedience of the one, the many will be made righteous.

GOSPEL

Matthew 4:1-11

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry.

The tempter approached and said to him,

"If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread."

He said in reply,

"It is written:

One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God."

Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down.

For it is written:

He will command his angels concerning you and with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone."

Jesus answered him,

"Again it is written,

You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test."

Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me."

At this, Jesus said to him,

"Get away, Satan!

"Get away, Satan!

It is written:

The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve."

Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- When have you experienced a setback that opened your eyes? How did you grow from it?
- Who or what would you consider the "serpents" in today's world? What can we do to protect ourselves from them?

SECOND READING

- How do you define sin? How does this shape the way you live your life?

GOSPEL

- Jesus' three responses to the devil's temptations all centered around loyalty to and faith in God. How has your faith shaped the way you respond to challenges and temptations?
- When has an angel appeared in *your* life to support you when you really needed it?
- As Lent begins, what is your plan to deepen your awareness of Christ in your life?

Second Sunday of Lent March 5, 2023

FIRST READING

Genesis 12:1-4a

A reading from the Book of Genesis.

The LORD said to Abram:
"Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk
and from your father's house to a land that I will
show you.

I will make of you a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
so that you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you
and curse those who curse you.
All the communities of the earth
shall find blessing in you."

Abram went as the LORD directed him.

SECOND READING

2 Timothy 1:8b-10

A reading from the Second letter to Timothy

Beloved:

Bear your share of hardship for the gospel
with the strength that comes from God.

He saved us and called us to a holy life,
not according to our works
but according to his own design
and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus
before time began, but now made manifest
through the appearance of our savior Christ
Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and
immortality to light through the gospel.

GOSPEL

Matthew 17:1-9

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them;

his face shone like the sun

and his clothes became white as light.

And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him.

Then Peter said to Jesus in reply,

"Lord, it is good that we are here.

If you wish, I will make three tents here,

one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

While he was still speaking, behold,

a bright cloud cast a shadow over them,

then from the cloud came a voice that said,

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

When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid.

But Jesus came and touched them, saying,

"Rise, and do not be afraid."

And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them,

"Do not tell the vision to anyone

until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- God directed Abram to “go forth” to make a great nation. When have you felt a calling or direction from God?
- When have you ever strongly felt God’s presence? What did it look and feel like?

SECOND READING

- When have you experienced God giving you strength in the face of hardship? How did you respond to it?

GOSPEL

- Throughout the Gospel, Peter, James and John accompanied Jesus to significant events, and were his inner circle. How does the inner circle of your SCC-GiG help you in your faith journey? What strength have you received from your personal inner circle?
- Why do you think that Jesus told the disciples not to discuss His transfiguration until He was raised from the dead?

3rd Sunday of Lent March 12, 2023

FIRST READING

Exodus 17:3-7

A reading from the Book of Exodus.

In those days, in their thirst for water, the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “Why did you ever make us leave Egypt?

Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?”

So Moses cried out to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people?

A little more and they will stone me!”

The LORD answered Moses,

“Go over there in front of the people, along with some of the elders of Israel, holding in your hand, as you go, the staff with which you struck the river.

I will be standing there in front of you on the rock in Horeb.

Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink.”

This Moses did, in the presence of the elders of Israel. The place was called Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled there and tested the LORD, saying,

“Is the LORD in our midst or not?”

SECOND READING

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God.

And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

GOSPEL

John 4:5-42

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

Jacob's well was there.

Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well.

It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her,

"Give me a drink."

His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.

The Samaritan woman said to him,

"How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?"

—For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.—

Jesus answered and said to her,

"If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

The woman said to him,

"Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep;

where then can you get this living water?

Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself

with his children and his flocks?"

Jesus answered and said to her,

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again;

but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst;

the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus said to her,

"Go call your husband and come back."

The woman answered and said to him,

"I do not have a husband."

Jesus answered her,

"You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.'

For you have had five husbands,

and the one you have now is not your husband.

What you have said is true."

The woman said to him,

"Sir, I can see that you are a prophet.

Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain;

but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem."

Jesus said to her,

"Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews.

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth;

and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him.

God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth."

The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything."

Jesus said to her,

"I am he, the one speaking with you."

At that moment his disciples returned,

and were amazed that he was talking with a woman,

but still no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

The woman left her water jar

and went into the town and said to the people,

"Come see a man who told me everything I have done.

Could he possibly be the Christ?"

They went out of the town and came to him.

Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat.”
 But he said to them,
 “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”
 So the disciples said to one another,
 “Could someone have brought him something to eat?”

Jesus said to them,
 “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me
 and to finish his work.

Do you not say, ‘In four months the harvest will
 be here’?

I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the
 harvest.

The reaper is already receiving payment
 and gathering crops for eternal life,
 so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together.
 For here the saying is verified that ‘One sows and
 another reaps.’

I sent you to reap what you have not worked for;
 others have done the work,
 and you are sharing the fruits of their work.”

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to
 believe in him
 because of the word of the woman who testified,
 “He told me everything I have done.”

When the Samaritans came to him, they invited
 him to stay with them;
 and he stayed there two days.

Many more began to believe in him because of his
 word, and they said to the woman,
 “We no longer believe because of your word;
 for we have heard for ourselves,
 and we know that this is truly the savior of the
 world.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- Have you ever asked for a “sign” from God during a difficult time in your life? Did you receive it? What did it look like?

SECOND READING

- Paul tells the Romans that we are all justified by faith in Jesus Christ. How do you use this gift to enhance your faith journey and witness the love of God to others?

GOSPEL

- Who are the “Samaritans” in our society?
- How does our society as a whole sin against certain people or certain groups? What do you see as your personal responsibility for this?
- We are now at the half-way point of Lent. What is going well and what do you still hope to accomplish?

4th Sunday of Lent March 19, 2023

First Reading

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

A reading from the First Book of Samuel

The LORD said to Samuel:

"Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my king from among his sons."

As Jesse and his sons came to the sacrifice, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought,

"Surely the LORD's anointed is here before him."

But the LORD said to Samuel:

"Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him.

Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart."

In the same way Jesse presented seven sons before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse,

"The LORD has not chosen any one of these."

Then Samuel asked Jesse,

"Are these all the sons you have?"

Jesse replied,

"There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep."

Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrives here."

Jesse sent and had the young man brought to them.

He was ruddy, a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance.

The LORD said,

"There—anoint him, for this is the one!"

Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 5:8-14

A reading from the letter to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.

Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light.

Therefore, it says:

"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

GOSPEL

John 9:1-41

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam” – which means Sent, – So he went and washed and came back able to see.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, “Isn’t this the one who used to sit and beg?”

Some said, “It is,” but others said, “No, he just looks like him.”

He said, “I am.”

So they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”

He replied,

“The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went there and washed and was able to see.”

And they said to him, “Where is he?”

He said, “I don’t know.”

They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened eyes on a Sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes and I washed, and now I can see.”

So some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not

from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath.”

But others said, “How can a sinful man do such signs?”

And there was a division among them.

So they said to the man born blind again, “What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?”

He said, “He is a prophet.”

Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. They asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?”

His parents answered and said, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who opened his eyes.

Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself.”

His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Christ, he would be expelled from the synagogue.

For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; question him.”

So, a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner.”

He replied, “If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see.” So they said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

He answered them,

“I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become disciples, too?”

They ridiculed him and said, “You are that man’s disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from.”

4th Sunday of Lent • March 19, 2023

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- In the first reading it says that a “man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart.” What does it mean to “look into the heart?”
- When have you fallen into a trap of judging by appearance instead of what is in the heart? How could this have been avoided?

SECOND READING

- What does it mean to live as “children of the light?”

GOSPEL

- The Pharisees criticized Jesus for helping the blind man. Have you ever been criticized unfairly for helping someone? How did you respond to it?
- Describe a time when God walked with you through a dark valley. What was the outcome?

The man answered and said to them, “This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes.

We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything.”

They answered and said to him, “You were born totally in sin, and you are trying to teach us?”

Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

He answered and said, “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”

Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, the one speaking with you is he.”

He said, “I do believe, Lord, and he worshiped him.

Then Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind.”

Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not also blind, are we?”

Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains.

5th Sunday of Lent March 26, 2023

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 37:12-14

A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel.

Thus says the Lord GOD:

O my people, I will open your graves
and have you rise from them,
and bring you back to the land of Israel.
Then you shall know that I am the LORD,
when I open your graves and have you rise
from them,

O my people!

I will put my spirit in you that you may live,
and I will settle you upon your land;
thus you shall know that I am the LORD.
I have promised, and I will do it, says the
LORD.

SECOND READING

Romans 8:8-11

**A reading from the letter of Paul to the
Romans.**

Brothers and sisters:

Those who are in the flesh cannot please
God.

But you are not in the flesh;
on the contrary, you are in the spirit,
if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.
Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ
does not belong to him.

But if Christ is in you,
although the body is dead because of sin,
the spirit is alive because of righteousness.
If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from
the dead dwells in you,
the one who raised Christ from the dead
will give life to your mortal bodies also,
through his Spirit dwelling in you.

GOSPEL

John 11:1-45

**A reading from the Holy Gospel according to
John.**

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany,
the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord
with perfumed oil
and dried his feet with her hair;
it was her brother Lazarus who was ill.
So the sisters sent word to him saying,
“Master, the one you love is ill.”
When Jesus heard this he said,
“This illness is not to end in death,
but is for the glory of God,
that the Son of God may be glorified through
it.”

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and
Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill,

he remained for two days in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

The disciples said to him,

"Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?"

Jesus answered,

"Are there not twelve hours in a day?

If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

He said this, and then told them,

"Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him."

So the disciples said to him,

"Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved."

But Jesus was talking about his death, while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep.

So then Jesus said to them clearly,

"Lazarus has died.

And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe.

Let us go to him."

So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples,

"Let us also go to die with him."

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

And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him;

but Mary sat at home.

Martha said to Jesus,

"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."

Jesus said to her,

"Your brother will rise."

Martha said to him,

"I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day."

Jesus told her,

"I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this?"

She said to him, "Yes, Lord.

I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

When she had said this,

she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The teacher is here and is asking for you."

As soon as she heard this,

she rose quickly and went to him.

For Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still where Martha had met him.

So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her

saw Mary get up quickly and go out,

they followed her,

presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him,

she fell at his feet and said to him,

"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping,

he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said,

"Where have you laid him?"

They said to him, "Sir, come and see."

And Jesus wept.

So the Jews said, "See how he loved him."

But some of them said,

"Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?"

5th Sunday of Lent • March 26, 2023

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- How have you experienced moments of death and resurrection in your life?
- What is your belief of eternal life? What does it look like?

SECOND READING

- Paul says, “the Spirit of God dwells in you.” In today’s world, what can we do to keep our lives centered in the Spirit?
- How have you seen God’s life-giving power at work even now?

GOSPEL

- Lazarus was bound by wrappings of funeral cloth. What are some ways that we are still bound and need to be set free?
- In what ways do you overcome the despair and hopelessness the world offers?

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

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion April 2, 2023

First Reading

Isaiah 50:4-7

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

The Lord GOD has given me
a well-trained tongue,
that I might know how to speak to the weary
a word that will rouse them.

Morning after morning
he opens my ear that I may hear;
and I have not rebelled,
have not turned back.

I gave my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who plucked my
beard;

my face I did not shield
from buffets and spitting.

The Lord GOD is my help,
therefore I am not disgraced;
I have set my face like flint,
knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

Second Reading

Philippians 2:6-11

**A reading from the letter of Paul to the
Philippians.**

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of
God,

did not regard equality with God
something to be grasped.

Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
coming in human likeness;
and found human in appearance,
he humbled himself,
becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.

Because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
which is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
of those in heaven and on earth and under
the earth,

and every tongue confess that
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion • April 2, 2023

Gospel

Matthew 26:14-27:66

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

One of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples approached Jesus and said, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The teacher says, "My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples.'"" The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered, and prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me." Deeply distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another, "Surely it is not I, Lord?" He said in reply, "He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will betray me. The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.

It would be better for that man if he had never been born."

Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply,

"Surely it is not I, Rabbi?"

He answered, "You have said so."

While they were eating,

Jesus took bread, said the blessing,

broke it, and giving it to his disciples said,

"Take and eat; this is my body."

Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,

"Drink from it, all of you,

for this is my blood of the covenant,

which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.

I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine

until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father."

Then, after singing a hymn,

they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them,

"This night all of you will have your faith in me shaken,

for it is written:

I will strike the shepherd,

and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed;

but after I have been raised up,

I shall go before you to Galilee."

Peter said to him in reply,

"Though all may have their faith in you shaken, mine will never be."

Jesus said to him,

"Amen, I say to you,

this very night before the cock crows, you will deny me three times."

Peter said to him,

"Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you."

And all the disciples spoke likewise. Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane,

and he said to his disciples,
 "Sit here while I go over there and pray."
 He took along Peter and the two sons of
 Zebedee,
 and began to feel sorrow and distress.
 Then he said to them,
 "My soul is sorrowful even to death.
 Remain here and keep watch with me."
 He advanced a little and fell prostrate in
 prayer, saying,
 "My Father, if it is possible,
 let this cup pass from me;
 yet, not as I will, but as you will."
 When he returned to his disciples he found
 them asleep.
 He said to Peter,
 "So you could not keep watch with me for one
 hour?
 Watch and pray that you may not undergo the
 test.
 The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
 Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again,
 "My Father, if it is not possible that this cup
 pass
 without my drinking it, your will be done!"
 Then he returned once more and found them
 asleep,
 for they could not keep their eyes open.
 He left them and withdrew again and prayed a
 third time,
 saying the same thing again.
 Then he returned to his disciples and said to
 them,
 "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?
 Behold, the hour is at hand
 when the Son of Man is to be handed over to
 sinners.
 Get up, let us go.
 Look, my betrayer is at hand."

While he was still speaking,
 Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived,
 accompanied by a large crowd, with swords
 and clubs, who had come from the chief
 priests and the elders of the people.

His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying,
 "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him."
 Immediately he went over to Jesus and said,
 "Hail, Rabbi!" and he kissed him.
 Jesus answered him,
 "Friend, do what you have come for."
 Then stepping forward they laid hands on Jesus and
 arrested him.
 And behold, one of those who accompanied Jesus
 put his hand to his sword, drew it,
 and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his
 ear.
 Then Jesus said to him,
 "Put your sword back into its sheath,
 for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.
 Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father
 and he will not provide me at this moment
 with more than twelve legions of angels?
 But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled
 which say that it must come to pass in this way?"
 At that hour Jesus said to the crowds,
 "Have you come out as against a robber,
 with swords and clubs to seize me?
 Day after day I sat teaching in the temple area,
 yet you did not arrest me.
 But all this has come to pass
 that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled."
 Then all the disciples left him and fled.

Those who had arrested Jesus led him away
 to Caiaphas the high priest,
 where the scribes and the elders were assembled.
 Peter was following him at a distance
 as far as the high priest's courtyard,
 and going inside he sat down with the servants
 to see the outcome.
 The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept
 trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus in
 order to put him to death, but they found none,
 though many false witnesses came forward.
 Finally two came forward who stated, "This man
 said 'I can destroy the temple of God and within
 three days rebuild it.'"
 The high priest rose and addressed him,
 "Have you no answer? What are these men
 testifying against you?"

But Jesus was silent.

Then the high priest said to him, "I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Christ, the Son of God."

Jesus said to him in reply,

"You have said so. But I tell you:

From now on you will see the 'Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power' and 'coming on the clouds of heaven.'"

Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need have we of witnesses? You have now heard the blasphemy; what is your opinion?"

They said in reply, "He deserves to die!"

Then they spat in his face and struck him, while some slapped him, saying, "Prophecy for us, Christ: who is it that struck you?"

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean."

But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about!"

As he went to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean."

Again, he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man!"

A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away."

At that he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man."

And immediately a cock crowed.

Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus has spoken:

"Before the cock crows you will deny me three times."

He went out and began to weep bitterly.

When it was morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

Then Judas, his betrayer, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, deeply regretted what he had done. He returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood."

They said, "What is that to us? Look to yourself."

Flinging the money into the temple, he departed and went off and hanged himself.

The chief priests gathered up the money, but said, "It is not lawful to deposit this in the temple treasury, for it is the price of blood."

After consultation, they used it to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why that field even today is called the Field of Blood.

Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet,

And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of a man with a price on his head, a price set by some of the Israelites, and they paid it out for the potter's field just as the Lord had commanded me.

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and he questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so."

And when he was accused by the chief of priests and elders, he made no answer.

Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?"

But he did not answer him one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner whom they wished.

And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them, "Which one do you want me to release to you, Barabbas or Jesus called Christ?"

For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over. While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent him a message, "Have nothing to do with this righteous man. I suffered much in a dream today because of him."

The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus. The governor said to them in reply, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?”

They answered, “Barabbas!”

Pilate said to them,

“Then what shall I do with Jesus called Christ?”

They all said, “Let him be crucified!”

But he said, “Why, what evil has he done?”

They only shouted the louder,

“Let him be crucified!”

When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all, but that a riot was breaking out instead, he took water and washed his hands in the sight of the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. Look to it yourselves.”

And the whole people said in reply, “His blood be upon us and upon our children.”

Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand.

And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head.

And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and let him off to crucify him.

As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.

And when they came to a place called Golgotha – which means Place of the Skull, - they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall.

But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink. After they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there.

And they placed over his head the written charge against him:

This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.

Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and the other on his left.

Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, and come down from the cross!”

Likewise the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him and said, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. So he is the king of Israel! Let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

The revolutionaries who were crucified with him also kept abusing him in the same way.

From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

And about three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*”

which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Some of the bystanders who heard it said, “This one is calling for Elijah.”

Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. But the rest said, ““Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him.”

But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit.

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom.

The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- In Isaiah we hear: “*I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame.*”
When have you been helped by God in turning a negative experience into a positive one?
How did this strengthen you?

SECOND READING

- Contrast God’s definition of power with human displays of violence, brute force, and humiliation. How do we as a faith community connect power to gentleness, humility, and steadfast love?

GOSPEL

- When you were young in faith, what was your focus as you heard the Passion read? Is your focus different now? In what way?
- What are your thoughts and feelings about Jesus’s passivity and submission leading up to and during his crucifixion? How does this impact how we approach “crucifixion moments” in our lives?
- Throngs of people who initially proclaimed Jesus, deny him, turn their backs on him and even abuse him. When in your life have you felt betrayed? How did you respond to it?

tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many.

The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening and they said, “Truly, this was the Son of God!”

There were many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. Among them were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over.

Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed.

But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb.

The next day, the one following the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said,

“Sir, we remember that this imposter while still alive said, ‘After three days I will be raised up.’ Give orders, then, that the grave be secured until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him and say to the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead.’ This last imposture would be worse than the first.”

Pilate said to them, “The guard is yours; go, secure it as best you can.”

So they went and secured the tomb by fixing a seal to the stone and setting the guard.

The Resurrection of the Lord April 9, 2023

First Reading

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter proceeded to speak and said:
 “You know what has happened all over
 Judea,
 beginning in Galilee after the baptism
 that John preached,
 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth
 with the Holy Spirit and power.
 He went about doing good
 and healing all those oppressed by the devil,
 for God was with him.

We are witnesses of all that he did
 both in the country of the Jews and in
 Jerusalem.

They put him to death by hanging him on a
 tree.

This man God raised on the third day and
 granted that he be visible,
 not to all the people, but to us,
 the witnesses chosen by God in advance,
 who ate and drank with him after he rose
 from the dead.

He commissioned us to preach to the people
 and testify that he is the one appointed by
 God as judge of the living and the dead.

To him all the prophets bear witness,
 that everyone who believes in him
 will receive forgiveness of sins through his
 name.”

Second Reading

Colossians 3:1-4

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

Brothers and sisters:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is
 above,
 where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.
 Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.
 For you have died, and your life is hidden with
 Christ in God.

When Christ your life appears,
 then you too will appear with him in glory.

Gospel

John 20:1-9

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

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.

The Resurrection of the Lord • April 9, 2023

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- The first reading reflects on Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. What does the resurrection of Jesus mean to you?
- Peter said, “*We are witnesses of all that He did.*” What have you witnessed recently that caused you to reflect on the grace of God?

SECOND READING

- Paul says: “*Think of what is above not of what is on earth.*” What does this mean to you?

GOSPEL

- Mary and Mary Magdeline are the first people to whom Jesus appears after his resurrection. What do you see as the significance of women being the first to witness?
- As part of Easter we renew our baptismal promises and affirm with Colossians that we have and will be raised up with Christ. How do these rituals and beliefs that we celebrate during Easter affect your faith journey?

2nd Sunday of Easter – Divine Mercy April 16, 2023

First Reading

Acts 2:42-47

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

They devoted themselves
to the teaching of the apostles and to the
communal life,
to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.
Awe came upon everyone,
and many wonders and signs were done
through the apostles.
All who believed were together and had all
things in common;
they would sell their property and
possessions
and divide them among all according to each
one's need.
Every day they devoted themselves
to meeting together in the temple area
and to breaking bread in their homes.
They ate their meals with exultation and
sincerity of heart,
praising God and enjoying favor with all the
people.
And every day the Lord added to their
number those who were being saved.

Second Reading

1 Peter 1:3-9

A reading from the First Letter of Peter.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us
a new birth to a living hope through the
resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
to an inheritance that is imperishable,
undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for
you who by the power of God are
safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that
is ready to be revealed in the final time.
In this you rejoice, although now for a little
while you may have to suffer through various
trials, so that the genuineness of your faith,
more precious than gold that is perishable
even though tested by fire, may prove to be
for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation
of Jesus Christ.
Although you have not seen him you love
him;
even though you do not see him now yet
believe in him, you rejoice with an
indescribable and glorious joy,
as you attain the goal of your faith, the
salvation of your souls.

Gospel

John 20:19-31

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

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

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

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

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

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- Early Christian worship centered around small house churches not unlike our Small Christian Community Gatherings in Grace. How has participation in your SCC-GiG enriched your faith?
- What do you cherish the most in being part of an SCC-GiG?

SECOND READING

- Describe a time when you felt the Holy Spirit was present in a particular situation in your life. What was it like?

GOSPEL

- How did you develop the roots of the faith that you live by today?
- Did you ever have a point in your life where your faith was tested? How did you overcome it?

3rd Sunday of Easter April 23, 2023

First Reading

Acts 2:14, 22-23

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed:

“You who are Jews, indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem. Let this be known to you, and listen to my words. You who are Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazorean was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it.

For David says of him:

I saw the Lord ever before me, with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed. Therefore my heart has been glad and my tongue has exulted; my flesh, too, will dwell in hope, because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.

My brothers, one can confidently say to you about the patriarch David that he died and was buried, and his tomb is in our midst to this day. But since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he abandoned to the netherworld nor did his flesh see corruption.

God raised Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured him forth, as you see and hear.”

Second Reading

1 Peter 1:17-21

A reading from the First Letter of Peter.

Beloved:

If you invoke as Father him who judges impartially according to each one’s works, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning, realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold

but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb.

He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Gospel

Luke 24:13-35

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

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

And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, “What are you discussing as you walk along?” They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?” And he replied to them, “What sort of things?”

They said to him, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us:

they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive.

Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see.”

And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures.

As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther.

But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.”

So he went in to stay with them.

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them.

With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.

Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?”

So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!”

3rd Sunday of Easter • April 23, 2023

Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- In Acts, Peter reminds the Israelites of the “*mighty deeds, wonders, and signs*” they have witnessed. What have you witnessed that has strengthened your faith?
- Imagine the people in Acts experience an internal flame as they hear Peter preach. What in your spiritual practice fuels your internal flame?

SECOND READING

- Peter urges us to conduct ourselves with reverence because of the blood by which we were ransomed. How do we demonstrate this reverence?

GOSPEL

- On the road to Emmaus, at first, the two disciples did not recognize Jesus. Why didn’t they see Him? When are there times in our lives that we don’t recognize Him?
- The disciples finally recognized Jesus through “the breaking of the bread.” How has the Eucharist experience made Jesus known to you?
- What does the resurrection of Jesus mean to you?

4th Sunday of Easter April 30, 2023

First Reading

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed:

“Let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, “What are we to do, my brothers?”

Peter said to them,

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off,

Whoever the Lord our God will call.”

He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day.

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:20b-25

A reading from the First Letter of Peter

Beloved:

If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God.

For to this you have been called,

because Christ also suffered for you

leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps.

He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.

When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed.

For you had gone astray like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Gospel

John 10:1-10

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said:

“Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber.

But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice.

But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers.”

Although Jesus used this figure of speech, the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

So Jesus said again, “Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep.

All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate.

Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.

A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy;

I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- During the Adventures in Grace pilgrimage, we learned that baptism is not limited to a one time-long ago event. We are baptized to the extent that we know (as in a FELT experience) that we are loved by God.
 - Who helped administer baptism to you?
 - Who are the most baptized people you know?
 - What keeps you from knowing yourself as baptized?

SECOND READING

- Peter states that “Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps.” What does it mean to you to follow in Christ’s footsteps?

GOSPEL

- In the Gospel, Jesus says: “*I came so that they might have life and have it abundantly.*” What does “abundant life” mean to you in this context?
- In the Gospel Jesus states that “whoever enters through me will be saved.” What does it mean to you to be saved?

5th Sunday of Easter May 7, 2023

First Reading

Acts 6:1-7

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

As the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, “It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table.

Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them.

The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:4-9

A reading from the First Letter of Peter.

Beloved:

Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

For it says in Scripture:

Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame.

Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith:

The stone that the builders rejected has become a cornerstone,
and

A stone that will make people stumble, and a rock that will make them fall.

They stumble by disobeying the word, as is their destiny.

You are a “chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Gospel

John 14:1-12

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.

Where am I going you know the way.”

Thomas said to him,

“Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?”

Jesus said to him “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him,

“Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip?”

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves.

Amen, amen, I say to you,

whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- This reading depicts the apostles empowering their followers to take on supportive roles in their ministry. In what ways do you feel invited to participate in the various ministries at Holy Family? What are the barriers for participation?
- The apostles prayed and laid hands on the seven men. What are your thoughts on the practice of laying hands on someone? When have you experienced this practice?

SECOND READING

- Who and what were instrumental in setting the “cornerstone” of your faith? How have you built upon it over time?

GOSPEL

- Can you relate to Thomas? What are times in your life that you had doubt...and times of great faith?
- How do you envision the “place” that has been prepared for you?

6th Sunday of Easter May 14, 2023

First Reading

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed Christ to them. With one accord, the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip when they heard it and saw the signs he was doing. For unclean spirits, crying out in a loud voice, came out of many possessed people, and many paralyzed or crippled people were cured. There was great joy in that city.

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Second Reading

1 Peter 3:15-18

A reading from the First Letter of Peter.

Beloved:
 Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.
 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that be the will of God, than for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God.
 Put to death in the flesh,
 he was brought to life in the Spirit.

Gospel

John 14:15-21

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows him.

But you know him, because he remains with you, and will be in you.

I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live.

On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you.

Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me.

And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- What are the parallels between the early Christian community as described in Acts and life in our Christian community today?
- Even though the Samaritan people were baptized, it was necessary for Peter and John to separately pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. When have you received the Holy Spirit in your life?

SECOND READING

- In what ways do you “sanctify Christ” or make Christ holy in your heart?

GOSPEL

- Jesus states that “*if you love me, you will keep my commandments.*” What commandments are Jesus referring to?
- Jesus states: “*I am in my Father, and you are in me and I in you...*” When do you sense the presence of God in you?

The Ascension of the Lord May 21, 2023

First Reading

Acts 1:11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for “the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

When he had said this as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.”

Second Reading

Ephesians 1:17-23

A reading from the Letter to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might, which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens, far above every principality, authority, power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

The Ascension of the Lord • May 21, 2023

Gospel

Matthew 28:16-20

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted.

Then Jesus approached them and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- In Acts, Jesus said: “*It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority.*” How does “not knowing” impact the way you live your life?
- Upon Jesus’ ascension, his work was transferred to the apostles. How are we called to continue the work of Jesus as part of our faith tradition?

SECOND READING

- The second reading is a prayer for wisdom and knowledge. How has your wisdom of the Holy Spirit grown through your lifetime? How is that reflected in the way you deal with others?

GOSPEL

- Why do the apostles continue to doubt Jesus after all that they have been through with him? When in your life have you doubted the presence of God?
- The mountain in Sacred Scripture is often the location of divine revelation. What have been your “mountaintop experiences” when you truly felt the presence of God?

Pentecost Sunday May 28, 2023

First Reading

Acts 2:1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong and driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were.

Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem.

At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. There were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God”

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

No one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.

To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

Gospel

John 20:19-23

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

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 in 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.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- In the first reading, the act of speaking in tongues was a unifying experience including every known nation at the time. What are the cultural barriers that exist today that prevent us from acting as one in the Holy Spirit? What steps can we take to remove the barriers?
- Have you ever been part of or witnessed the act of speaking in tongues? What was it like? What are your thoughts about it?

SECOND READING

- Paul says: “*There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit.*” What gifts has the Spirit given you that you share with others?

GOSPEL

- In the Gospel, the apostles are commissioned into a holy responsibility to forgive, heal, and hold onto others as Christ would. Why is this so challenging in today’s world?
- What have been your biggest spiritual takeaways as we conclude the Lent and Easter seasons? Is there anything that you plan to do differently moving forward as a result?