



HOLY FAMILY
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Small Christian Community Gatherings in Grace

*First Sunday of Lent
February 18, 2024*

through

*Pentecost
May 19, 2024*

*"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

1 st Sunday of Lent 5 February 18, 2024	2 nd Sunday of Easter 23 Divine Mercy April 7, 2024
2 nd Sunday of Lent 7 February 25, 2024	3 rd Sunday of Easter 25 April 14, 2024
3 rd Sunday of Lent 9 March 3, 2024	4 th Sunday of Easter 27 April 21, 2024
4 th Sunday of Lent 11 March 10, 2024	5 th Sunday of Easter 29 April 28, 2024
5 th Sunday of Lent 13 March 17, 2024	6 th Sunday of Easter 31 May 5, 2024
Palm Sunday 15 March 24, 2024	Ascension of the Lord 33 May 12, 2024
The Resurrection of the Lord 21 Easter March 31, 2024	Pentecost Sunday 35 May 19, 2024

First Sunday of Lent February 18, 2024

FIRST READING

Genesis 9:8-15

A reading from the Book of Genesis.

God said to Noah and to his sons with him:
"See, I am now establishing my covenant with you
and your descendants after you
and with every living creature that was with you:
all the birds, and the various tame and wild animals
that were with you and came out of the ark.
I will establish my covenant with you,
that never again shall all bodily creatures be
destroyed by the waters of a flood;
there shall not be another flood to devastate the
earth."

God added:

"This is the sign that I am giving for all ages to
come, of the covenant between me and you
and every living creature with you:
I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign
of the covenant between me and the earth.
When I bring clouds over the earth,
and the bow appears in the clouds,
I will recall the covenant I have made
between me and you and all living beings,
so that the waters shall never again become a flood
to destroy all mortal beings."

SECOND READING

1 Peter 3:18-22

A reading from the First Letter of Peter.

Beloved:

Christ 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.
In it he also went to preach to the spirits in
prison, who had once been disobedient
while God patiently waited in the days of Noah
during the building of the ark,
in which a few persons, eight in all,
were saved through water.
This prefigured baptism, which saves you now.
It is not a removal of dirt from the body
but an appeal to God for a clear conscience,
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
who has gone into heaven
and is at the right hand of God,
with angels, authorities, and powers subject to
him.

GOSPEL

Mark 1:12-15

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert,
and he remained in the desert for forty days,
tempted by Satan.

He was among wild beasts,
and the angels ministered to him.

After John had been arrested,
Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of
God:

"This is the time of fulfillment.
The kingdom of God is at hand.
Repent, and believe in the gospel."

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- God established a covenant with Noah and all living things. In what ways do you see God in nature? How can we "Be More" reverent to the nature around us?
- God established a covenant with the earth. What can we do to honor this covenant? As individuals? As a community?

SECOND READING

- In the reading, Peter talks about being saved through baptism. What does "being saved" mean to you as a Catholic? In what ways does this differ from other religions?

GOSPEL

- Jesus started his mission immediately after spending forty days being tempted by Satan and spending time with the "wild beasts." Why do you believe that Jesus needed to endure these temptations before starting his mission?
- When have temptations and demons in your life led you closer to God?
- Has there been a specific instance in your life when you felt you were guided by an angel?
- As we proceed with the Holy Family "Be More" series, each of us are encouraged to become familiar with the various methods of prayer as reflected by St. Ignatius. This may be a good opportunity to review the practices as a group. If you are not familiar with them, feel free to pick up an Ignatian prayer booklet at the information desk in the narthex.

Second Sunday of Lent February 25, 2024

FIRST READING

Genesis 22:1-2, 10-13, 15-18

A reading from the Book of Genesis.

God put Abraham to the test.
He called to him, "Abraham!"
"Here I am!" he replied.
Then God said:
"Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love,
and go to the land of Moriah.
There you shall offer him up as a holocaust
on a height that I will point out to you."

When they came to the place of which God had told
him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the
wood on it.
Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his
son.
But the LORD's messenger called to him from heaven,
"Abraham, Abraham!"
"Here I am!" he answered.
"Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger.
"Do not do the least thing to him.
I know now how devoted you are to God,
since you did not withhold from me your own beloved
son."
As Abraham looked about, he spied a ram caught by its
horns in the thicket. So he went and took the ram
and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son.

Again the LORD's messenger called to Abraham from
heaven and said:
"I swear by myself, declares the LORD,
that because you acted as you did in not withholding
from me your beloved son, I will bless you abundantly
and make your descendants as countless as the stars of
the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants
shall take possession of the gates of their enemies,
and in your descendants all the nations of the earth
shall find blessing—
all this because you obeyed my command."

SECOND READING

Romans 8:31b-34

A reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:
If God is for us, who can be against us?
He who did not spare his own Son
but handed him over for us all,
how will he not also give us everything else
along with him?

Who will bring a charge against God's chosen
ones?
It is God who acquits us, who will condemn?
Christ Jesus it is who died—or, rather, was
raised—
who also is at the right hand of God,
who indeed intercedes for us.

GOSPEL

Mark 9:2-10

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus.

Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here!

Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified.

Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; from the cloud came a voice,

"This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone but Jesus alone with them.

As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- In this reading, God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his only son. Why do you think God tested Abraham in such a shocking way?
- When in your life do you feel that your faith was put to the test? How did you respond?

SECOND READING

- Was there a time in your life when you felt that God interceded for you in times of darkness?

GOSPEL

- How is the Trinity revealed in this reading?
- What is the significance of Peter, James and John joining Jesus on his trip up the mountain?
- Who is or has been instrumental on your spiritual journey?

3rd Sunday of Lent March 3, 2024

FIRST READING

Exodus 20:1-17

A reading from the Book of Exodus.

In those days, God delivered all these commandments:

“I, the LORD, am your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that
place of slavery.
You shall not have other gods besides me.
You shall not carve idols for yourselves
in the shape of anything in the sky above
or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the
earth; you shall not bow down before them or
worship them.

For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous
God, inflicting punishment for their fathers’
wickedness on the children of those who hate
me, down to the third and fourth generation;
but bestowing mercy down to the thousandth
generation on the children of those who love me
and keep my commandments.

“You shall not take the name of the LORD, your
God, in vain. For the LORD will not leave
unpunished the one who takes his name in vain.

“Remember to keep holy the sabbath day.
Six days you may labor and do all your work, but
the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD, your
God.

No work may be done then either by you, or your
son or daughter, or your male or female slave, or
your beast, or by the alien who lives with you.

In six days the LORD made the heavens and the
earth, the sea and all that is in them;
but on the seventh day he rested.

That is why the LORD has blessed the sabbath
day and made it holy.

“Honor your father and your mother,
that you may have a long life in the land
which the LORD, your God, is giving you.

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your
neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.

You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife,
nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or
ass, nor anything else that belongs to him.”

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 22-25

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters:

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for
wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified,
a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to
Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews
and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God
and the wisdom of God.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than
human wisdom, and the weakness of God is
stronger than human strength.

Third Sunday of Lent • March 3, 2024

GOSPEL

John 2:13-25

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there.

He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.”

His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, *Zeal for your house will consume me.*

At this the Jews answered and said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”

The Jews said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about human nature.

He himself understood it well.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- The Ten Commandments focus on our relationship with God and our relationship with people. How do you live the commandments with this focus?
- How do you reconcile the punishing God of the Old Testament with the loving God that we have come to believe in and know?

SECOND READING

- What are your thoughts about the last lines of the reading, “*For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.*”
- The reading states that “*Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom.*” When have you experienced a “sign” where you knew that God was in your presence?

GOSPEL

- Why do you think Jesus did not trust those who “*began to believe*” in him? When have you been in a situation where you had difficulty trusting someone close to you? How did you handle it?
- What were your thoughts and key takeaways from Fr. Greg Boyle’s discussion on Monday?
- Our Parish Mission will be on Tuesday, March 5 and Wednesday, March 6 with Fr. Michael Sparough. In preparation, what does it mean for you to live and work for the “Greater Glory of God?” Fr. Sparough will provide his reflection during the Mission.

4th Sunday of Lent March 10, 2024

FIRST READING

2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23

A reading from the Second Book of Chronicles

In those days, all the princes of Judah, the priests, and the people added infidelity to infidelity, practicing all the abominations of the nations and polluting the LORD's temple which he had consecrated in Jerusalem. Early and often did the LORD, the God of their fathers, send his messengers to them, for he had compassion on his people and his dwelling place.

But they mocked the messengers of God, despised his warnings, and scoffed at his prophets, until the anger of the LORD against his people was so inflamed that there was no remedy.

Their enemies burnt the house of God, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, set all its palaces afire, and destroyed all its precious objects.

Those who escaped the sword were carried captive to Babylon, where they became servants of the king of the Chaldeans and his sons until the kingdom of the Persians came to power. All this was to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah:

"Until the land has retrieved its lost sabbaths, during all the time it lies waste it shall have rest while seventy years are fulfilled."

In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD inspired King Cyrus of Persia to issue this proclamation throughout his kingdom, both by word of mouth and in writing:

"Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia:

All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD, the God of heaven, has given to me, and he has also charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Whoever, therefore, among you belongs to any part of his people, let him go up, and may his God be with him!"

SECOND READING

Ephesians 2:4-10

A reading from the Letter to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ — by grace you have been saved —, raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast.

For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.

Fourth Sunday of Lent • March 10, 2024

GOSPEL

John 3:14-21

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- In the first reading, God offers compassion and mercy, rebuilding Jerusalem after it was destroyed.
- Where do you see examples of God’s compassion and mercy during these turbulent times?
- What are some recent examples of human compassion after a major catastrophic event?

SECOND READING

- As we learned during our Adventures in Grace initiative, grace is God’s aching to give us a portion of God’s self over and over again. Where do you find grace in your life today?

GOSPEL

- How do you understand the words, “*whoever does not believe has already been condemned?*” What does it mean to be condemned?
- Do you believe that people who have not heard of Christ or who have not been taught to believe in him are condemned? What about people who know of Christ, but have not accepted Christ in their life?
- We are more than halfway through Lent. Where are you in your Lenten journey? Have you been able to incorporate any of the St. Ignatius Spiritual Exercises or methods of prayer discussed as part of our “Be More” series into your Lenten practices? Which prayer type best resonates with you?

5th Sunday of Lent March 17, 2024

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:31-34

A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah.

The days are coming, says the LORD,
when I will make a new covenant with the
house of Israel and the house of Judah.
It will not be like the covenant I made with
their fathers the day I took them by the hand
to lead them forth from the land of Egypt;
for they broke my covenant,
and I had to show myself their master, says
the LORD.

But this is the covenant that I will make
with the house of Israel after those days,
says the LORD.

I will place my law within them and write it
upon their hearts; I will be their God, and
they shall be my people.

No longer will they have need to teach their
friends and relatives how to know the
LORD.

All, from least to greatest, shall know me,
says the LORD, for I will forgive their
evildoing and remember their sin no more.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 5:7-9

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

In the days when Christ Jesus was in the
flesh, he offered prayers and supplications
with loud cries and tears to the one who was
able to save him from death, and he was
heard because of his reverence.

Son though he was, he learned obedience
from what he suffered;
and when he was made perfect, he became
the source of eternal salvation for all who
obey him.

GOSPEL

John 12:20-33

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me. “I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.” The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come for my sake but for yours. Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- In the first reading, God writes the “law” upon the hearts of the people. What does this mean to you?
- Have your beliefs in Catholic doctrine changed over time? How?

SECOND READING

- The reading states that Jesus “learned obedience from what he suffered.” What have you learned from the challenging times in your life?
- Did those challenges bring you closer to God?

GOSPEL

- How is Christ written in your heart? Do you feel connected this Lent or are you searching?
- Where are you spiritually as we enter Holy Week and prepare for Easter? What messages or learnings from the “Be More” series resonated most closely with you?

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion March 24, 2024

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.

Gospel

Mark 14:1-15:47

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were to take place in two days' time. So the chief priests and the scribes were seeking a way to arrest him by treachery and put him to death.

They said, "Not during the festival, for fear that there may be a riot among the people."

When he was in Bethany reclining at table in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of perfumed oil, costly genuine spikenard. She broke the alabaster jar and poured it on his head.

There were some who were indignant. "Why has there been this waste of perfumed oil?

It could have been sold for more than three hundred days' wages and the money given to the poor."

They were infuriated with her.

Jesus said, "Let her alone.

Why do you make trouble for her?

She has done a good thing for me.

The poor you will always have with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them, but you will not always have me.

She has done what she could.

She has anticipated anointing my body for burial.

Amen, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went off to the chief priests to hand him over to them.

When they heard him they were pleased and promised to pay him money.

Then he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"

He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water.

Follow him.

Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"'

Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready.

Make the preparations for us there."

The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them;

and they prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he came with the Twelve.

And as they reclined at table and were eating, Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."

They began to be distressed and to say to him, one by one, "Surely it is not I?"

He said to them,

"One of the Twelve, the one who dips with me into the dish. For 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."

While they were eating,

he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body."

Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is the blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when

I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”
Then, after singing a hymn,
they went out to the Mount of Olives.
Then Jesus said to them,
“All of you will have your faith shaken, for it
is written:

*I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be dispersed.*

But after I have been raised up,
I shall go before you to Galilee.”
Peter said to him,
“Even though all should have their faith
shaken, mine will not be.”
Then Jesus said to him,
“Amen, I say to you, this very night before
the cock crows twice you will deny me three
times.”

But he vehemently replied,
“Even though I should have to die with you,
I will not deny you.”

And they all spoke similarly.
Then they came to a place named
Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples,
“Sit here while I pray.”

He took with him Peter, James, and John,
and began to be troubled and distressed.
Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful
even to death.

Remain here and keep watch.”
He advanced a little and fell to the ground and
prayed that if it were possible the hour might
pass by him; he said, “Abba, Father, all things
are possible to you. Take this cup away from
me, but not what I will but what you will.”
When he returned he found them asleep. He
said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could
you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and
pray that you may not undergo the test. The
spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the
same thing. Then he returned once more and
found them asleep, for they could not keep
their eyes open and did not know what to
answer him. He returned a third time and said
to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking
your rest? It is enough. The hour has come.
Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over

to sinners.
Get up, let us go.
See, my betrayer is at hand.”

Then, while he was still speaking,
Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived,
accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs
who had come from the chief priests,
the scribes, and the elders.
His betrayer had arranged a signal with them,
saying, “The man I shall kiss is the one;
arrest him and lead him away securely.”
He came and immediately went over to him and
said, “Rabbi.” And he kissed him.
At this they laid hands on him and arrested him.
One of the bystanders drew his sword,
struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his ear.
Jesus said to them in reply,
“Have you come out as against a robber,
with swords and clubs, to seize me?
Day after day I was with you teaching in the temple
area, yet you did not arrest me;
but that the Scriptures may be fulfilled.”
And they all left him and fled.
Now a young man followed him
wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body.
They seized him, but he left the cloth behind and
ran off naked.

They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the
chief priests and the elders and the scribes came
together. Peter followed him at a distance into the
high priest’s courtyard and was seated with the
guards, warming himself at the fire. The chief
priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to
obtain testimony against Jesus in order to put him
to death, but they found none. Many gave false
witness against him, but their testimony did not
agree.
Some took to the stand and testified falsely against
him, alleging, “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy
the temple made with hands and within three days I
will build another not made with hands.’”
Even so, their testimony did not agree. The high
priest rose before the assembly and questioned
Jesus, saying, “Have you no answer?”

What are these men testifying against you?" But he was silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him and said to him, "Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed One?" Then Jesus answered, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.'" At that the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as deserving to die. Some began to spit on him. They blindfolded him and struck him and said to him, "Prophecy!" And the guards greeted him with blows.

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the high priest's maids came along. Seeing Peter warming himself, she looked intently at him and said, "You too were with the Nazarene, Jesus." But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." So he went out into the outer court. Then the cock crowed. The maid saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." Once again, he denied it. A little later, the bystanders said to Peter once more, "Surely you are one of them; for you too are a Galilean." He began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man about whom you are talking." And immediately a cock crowed a second time. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times." He broke down and wept.

As soon as morning came, the chief priests with the elders and scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin held a council.

They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast he used to release to them one prisoner whom they requested. A man called Barabbas was then in prison along with the rebels who had committed murder in a rebellion. The crowd came forward and began to ask him to do for them as he was accustomed. Pilate answered, "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" For he knew that it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate again said to them in reply, "Then what do you want me to do with the man you call the king of the Jews?" They shouted again, "Crucify him." Pilate said, "Why? What evil has he done?" They only shouted louder, "Crucify him!" So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort. They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him. They began to salute him with, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and kept striking his head with reed and spitting upon him. They knelt before him in homage. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him.

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country,

the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

They brought him to the place of Golgotha- which is translated Place of the Skull – They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it.

Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting out lots for them to see what each should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews."

With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself by coming down off the cross."

Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes, mocked him among themselves and said, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe."

Those who were crucified with him also kept abusing him.

At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Some of the bystanders heard it and said, "Look, he is calling Elijah."

One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink saying, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down."

Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the younger James and Joses, and Salome. These women had followed him when he was in Galilee and ministered to him. There were also many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

When it was already evening, since it was the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a distinguished member of the council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God, came and courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Pilate was amazed that he was already dead. He summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus had already died. And when he learned of it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down, wrapped him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses watched where he was laid.

Palm Sunday • March 24, 2024

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- The first reading is one of the four “Servant Songs” in Isaiah. Where do you see injustice in today’s world? What can we, as individuals, do about it?
- As a community, what can (or should) we do to assist the migrants who want to call our country home?

SECOND READING

- How can Jesus’ example of being humble be reflected in our lives? St. Ignatius called it “humility through emptying.” What does that look like?

GOSPEL

- What feelings bubble up as you read the Passion? How has your focus and understanding of the events changed over time?
- What are your thoughts and feelings about Jesus’ 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 ever felt betrayed? How did you respond to it?

Easter Sunday - The Resurrection of the Lord March 31, 2024

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

1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters:
 Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the
 dough?
 Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a
 fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are
 unleavened.
 For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed.
 Therefore, let us celebrate the feast,
 Not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and
 wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of
 sincerity and truth.

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 • March 31, 2024

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

- What do you think Jesus is referring to when he says to “*clear out the old yeast?*” What “yeast” do you need to clear out as we move forward this Easter season?

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?
- The story of the tomb starts with darkness and ends with the realization of Jesus’ resurrection. How does the story relate to our lives?

2nd Sunday of Easter – Divine Mercy April 7, 2024

First Reading

Acts 4:32-35

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common.

With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all.

There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

Second Reading

1 John 5:1-6

A reading from the First Letter of John.

Beloved:

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the Father loves also the one begotten by him. In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments.

For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments.

And his commandments are not burdensome, for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world.

And the victory that conquers the world is our faith.

Who indeed is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood.

The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth.

Gospel

John 20:19-31

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 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

- The first reading talks about a community of believers reflecting on Jesus’ teachings much like our own SCC-GiG community. What has your participation in your SCC-GiG meant to you?
- What improvements or changes can we make to enhance your experience and overall participation in the SCC-GiG community?

SECOND READING

- The second reading reflects God in all of us. How do you see God in other people?

GOSPEL

- The story of Thomas is a story of faith. What people and/or events were instrumental in the development of your faith journey?
- Was there a time when you questioned your faith?
- What practices do you follow to sustain your faith?

3rd Sunday of Easter April 14, 2024

FIRST READING

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter said to the people:

"The God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,
the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant
Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in
Pilate's presence when he had decided to
release him.

You denied the Holy and Righteous One
and asked that a murderer be released to you.
The author of life you put to death,
but God raised him from the dead; of this we
are witnesses.

Now I know, brothers, that you acted out of
ignorance, just as your leaders did;
but God has thus brought to fulfillment
what he had announced beforehand
through the mouth of all the prophets,
that his Christ would suffer.

Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your
sins may be wiped away."

SECOND READING

1 John 2:1-5a

A reading from the First Letter of John.

My children, I am writing this to you
so that you may not commit sin.
But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate
with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one.
He is expiation for our sins,
and not for our sins only but for those of the
whole world.

The way we may be sure that we know him is
to keep his commandments.

Those who say, "I know him," but do not keep
his commandments are liars, and the truth is not
in them. But whoever keeps his word,
the love of God is truly perfected in him.

GOSPEL

Luke 24:35-48

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

The two disciples recounted what had taken place on the way, and how Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. Then he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.

Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have."

And as he said this,

he showed them his hands and his feet.

While they were still incredulous for joy and were amazed, he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?"

They gave him a piece of baked fish; he took it and ate it in front of them.

He said to them,

"These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled."

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

And he said to them,

"Thus it is written that the Christ 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."

3rd Sunday of Easter • April 14, 2024

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- In this reading, Peter offers forgiveness to people and leaders just as Jesus did on the cross. What are some examples today of someone forgiving the unforgivable?
- How difficult is it for you to forgive someone who has wronged you? How do you find the strength to do so?

SECOND READING

- In the second reading, John states that God will forgive not only our sins, but also the sins of the whole world. What are your thoughts on this given the different theological opinions on being saved?

GOSPEL

- In this reading, Jesus needs to prove to the Apostles that he is indeed the Christ who rose from the dead. Why do you believe the Apostles were still terrified of his presence?
- When did the presence of God in your life really sink in for you?
- Have you or someone close to you experienced locking the door of your heart to the outside world? What did it take to unlock it?

4th Sunday of Easter April 21, 2024

FIRST READING

Acts 4:8-12

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said:
 "Leaders of the people and elders:
 If we are being examined today
 about a good deed done to a cripple,
 namely, by what means he was saved,
 then all of you and all the people of Israel
 should know that it was in the name of Jesus
 Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified,
 whom God raised from the dead;
 in his name this man stands before you healed.
*He is the stone rejected by you, the builders,
 which has become the cornerstone.*
 There is no salvation through anyone else,
 nor is there any other name under heaven
 given to the human race by which we are to be
 saved."

SECOND READING

1 John 3:1-2

A reading from the First Letter of John

Beloved:
 See what love the Father has bestowed on us
 that we may be called the children of God.
 Yet so we are.
 The reason the world does not know us
 is that it did not know him.
 Beloved, we are God's children now;
 what we shall be has not yet been revealed.
 We do know that when it is revealed we shall
 be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Gospel

John 10:11-18

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said:

"I am the good shepherd.

A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them.

This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father;

and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold.

These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd.

This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again.

This command I have received from my Father."

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- In this reading, John heals a crippled man, proclaiming that the man was saved through Jesus Christ. Who are the people today who you see doing Christ's work, personally, in our community, or on the national or world stage?
- How do you pray during times of crisis or personal struggle? Do you pray on your own? Do you reach out to other people for their prayers as well? What are your beliefs on the power of prayer?

SECOND READING

- What does it mean to you to be a child of God? Do you feel that God is within us, or is God separate and someone we pray to?

GOSPEL

- Jesus explains that he lays down his life for his sheep. With that in mind, why do you think God allows wars and natural disasters?
- Jesus talks about there being one flock and one shepherd. Given the various world religions, what do you think Jesus meant by that?

5th Sunday of Easter April 28, 2024

FIRST READING

Acts 9:26-31

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When Saul arrived in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

Then Barnabas took charge of him and brought him to the apostles, and he reported to them how he had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

He moved about freely with them in Jerusalem, and spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord. He also spoke and debated with the Hellenists, but they tried to kill him.

And when the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him on his way to Tarsus.

The church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace.

It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers.

SECOND READING

1 John 3:18-24

A reading from the First Letter of John.

Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

Now this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything.

Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us.

Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.

GOSPEL

John 15:1-8

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower.

He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit.

You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you.

Remain in me, as I remain in you.

Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.

By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- The first reading talks about building the church community after Jesus' death. Given the decline in attendance at churches in general, what do you think that Holy Family can do to further energize the community?
- Saul (Paul) tried to join the disciples and was originally rejected because they were afraid of him. Who are the outcasts in our community? Who are the outcasts in today's world?
- What can we do for those who experience being outcasts?

SECOND READING

- John's primary message is to love one another. How do you maintain a loving spirit during difficult times? For those that you find challenging to love?

GOSPEL

- In the reading, Jesus describes the Father as the vine grower, Jesus as the vine, and all of us as the branches. As individuals, how do we grow as branches? What do we need to prune?
- What does it mean to become a disciple of Jesus? What are our responsibilities as disciples?

6th Sunday of Easter May 5, 2024

FIRST READING

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and, falling at his feet, paid him homage. Peter, however, raised him up, saying, "Get up. I myself am also a human being."

Then Peter proceeded to speak and said, "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him."

While Peter was still speaking these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word.

The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God.

Then Peter responded, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit even as we have?"

He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

SECOND READING

1 John 4:7-10

A reading from the First Letter of John

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.

Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.

In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him.

In this is love:

not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.

GOSPEL

John 15:9-17

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"As the Father loves me, so I also love you.

Remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete.

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing.

I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.

It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.

This I command you: love one another."

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- The reading states that "God shows no partiality." What can we do individually and as a church community to break down the social and political barriers that divide us?
- Many of the readings state that we should "fear" God or Jesus. How do you define "fear" in the context of the Bible?

SECOND READING

- What do you see in your daily life that reflects God's love?
- How do you stay in union with God?

GOSPEL

- Although there are ten commandments, Jesus only ever spoke of two, one being "love one another as I love you." Why do you think that is?
- Who has been the biggest influence in your life in reflecting the true spirit of God's love? How did they demonstrate their love? What was their spiritual connection with God?

The Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord May 12, 2024

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 12, 2024

Gospel

Mark 16:15-20

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe:

in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages.

They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God.

But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- What does the Holy Spirit mean to you? What role does the Holy Spirit play in your life?
- In the reading, Jesus was lifted into heaven. Do you view heaven as a place “up in the clouds?”
- How do you imagine heaven?

SECOND READING

- In Ephesians, Paul says, “*May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened.*” What in your spiritual journey was an enlightening moment for you?

GOSPEL

- In the Gospel, Jesus spoke of giving the disciples heavenly powers. When in your life have you felt the power of God supporting you?
- How can we “proclaim the gospel” in today’s world? What does that look like?

Pentecost Sunday May 19, 2024

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

Galatians 5:16-25

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Galatians

Brothers and sisters, live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want. But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, lust, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, That those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.

Gospel

John 15:26-27;16:12-15

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

“When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me. And you also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

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.”

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

FIRST READING

- What does it signify that everyone was speaking in their own language and being understood in their native language?
- Have you experienced the speaking of tongues? What was it like?
- Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Church. 2000+ years later, what in your opinion is the health of the Catholic Church? What challenges is the Church facing today as it moves forward?

SECOND READING

- In the reading, Paul warns of the “*works of the flesh.*” What other behaviors are exhibited in today’s society that you would consider “*works of the flesh?*”
- Do you think that Paul captured all the virtues when he identified the “*fruit of the Spirit?*” What would you add?

GOSPEL

- In the gospel, the Spirit comes as Christ departs to be our constant guide on the faith journey. How is the Spirit alive in your life?
- Now that Lent and Easter have concluded, where are you spiritually as you proceed with the rest of the liturgical year?