

REFLECT AND RENEW WEEK I - ENCOUNTER

This Lent, many Catholics around the Archdiocese are gathering for a five-week series to reflect on God's word and share their faith with one another. Even if you are unable to join in one of the sessions offered at the Cathedral, you are invited to pray and reflect each week.

OPENING PRAYER

O God,
who established the Holy Church
upon the foundation of the Apostles
with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone,
grant that the people gathered in your name
may revere you, love you, follow you
and grow into the temple of your glory,
until led by you, they come at last to the heavenly city.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

READING

Mt 16:13-19

When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How did you first encounter Christ—really encounter him?
- How do we encounter Christ in parish life?

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Almighty, ever-living God,
pour out your grace upon the Church and upon our parish
and extend the gift of your help to all who call upon you,
that the power of your word and of the Sacraments
may strengthen the hearts of your faithful.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

REFLECT AND RENEW WEEK II – GO FORTH

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READING

Genesis 12:1-4a

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.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk." Can you think of a time when God called you to move out of your comfort zone?
- "You will be a blessing." What does it mean to *be a blessing*? How is our parish community called to be a blessing to our broader community?

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Almighty ever living God,
we pray that in your Church,
the flood of your divine grace
may overwhelm human offences
so that your children, being dead to sin,
may be reborn to eternal life.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

REFLECT AND RENEW WEEK III - THIRST

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Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

READING

Ex 17:3-7

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?"

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- "In their thirst for water..." What are you thirsty for?
- What do you, what do we, "grumble" about?
- "Why did you ever make us leave Egypt?" What are we called to leave behind in order to follow God more closely – in our own lives, in our parish, in our Church?
- "Is the Lord in our midst or not?" What are signs that the Lord IS in our midst?

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Almighty ever living God,
we pray that in your Church
your faithful gathered around the table of the altar
celebrating the memorial of the Paschal Mystery
may be refreshed by the banquet
of Christ's Word and his Body.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

REFLECT AND RENEW WEEK IV - AWAKE

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Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

READING

Ephesians 5:8-14

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."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead." When have you experienced resurrection in your life?
- In Baptism, we died with Christ and were born again with him. How do you experience this newness of life?
- What do I/what do we need in order to really live as "children of the light" in our parish, community, world?

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Almighty ever living God,
we pray that in your Church
the joyful offering of praise may resound with human voices
joined to the song of the Angels,
and unceasing prayer rise up to you
for the salvation of the world.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

REFLECT AND RENEW WEEK V - ARISE

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Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

READING

Ezekiel 37:12-14

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.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What does it look like to live a new life—a risen life?
- When have you seen God bring life out of death, in your own life or in your family?
- What does a risen community look like? What's different?

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Almighty ever living God,
We pray that in your Church
the poor may find mercy,
the oppressed attain true freedom,
and all people be clothed with dignity of your children
until they come exultant to the Jerusalem which is above.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.