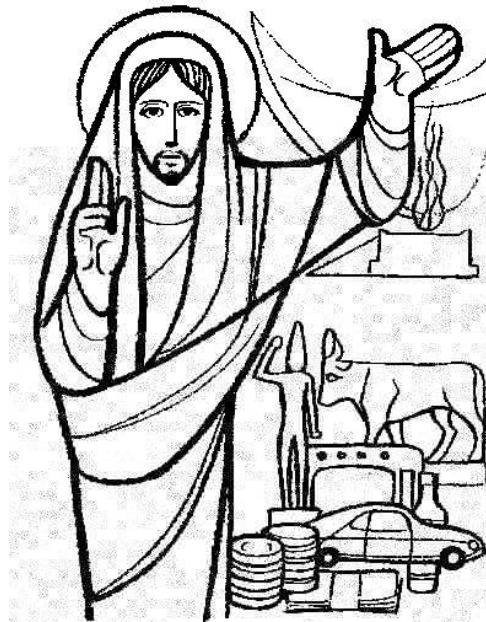




PREPARING for the RITE of ELECTION 2010



Preparation resources

In this handbook you will find resources to help your RCIA group prepare for the celebration of the Rite of Election which takes place in our Cathedral on the First Sunday of Lent at 3pm.

The resources are provided to enable your RCIA group to reflect on the readings for the day well in advance. There are reflection questions for the group and also some aids to opening up the prayers of the Rite. These are all related to the ongoing spiritual journey of the elect as we journey together towards Easter. There are helpful suggestions for sponsors and godparents about how they can be a support on the day. There are also some suggestions about how the parish can become more aware of their role in prayerfully supporting the elect and candidates for confirmation.

Exploring the Readings of the 1st Sunday of Lent

THE FIRST READING - A WANDERING ARAMEAN

Today's first reading describes an ancient thanksgiving ceremony. A farmer brings a basket of the first fruits of the harvest to the priest to give thanks to God. He then states a sort of creed in a brief acknowledgement of God's saving acts in history. It begins with the notion that the patriarchs came from Aram, usually identified with eastern Syria. The ritual ends with a prayer gesture: prostration before God.

READ THIS PASSAGE OUTLOUD and ASK the GROUP to CIRCLE or UNDERLINE any WORDS or PHRASES that stand out:

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy

Moses said to the people:

The priest shall take the panner from your hand and lay it before the altar of the Lord your God. Then, in the sight of the Lord your God, you must make this pronouncement:

'My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down into Egypt to find refuge there, few in numbers; but there he became a nation, great, mighty and strong. The Egyptians ill treated us; they gave us no peace and inflicted harsh slavery on us. But we called on the Lord, the God of our forebears. The Lord heard our voice and saw our misery, our toil and our oppression; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with mighty hand and outstretched arm, with great terror, and with signs and wonders. He brought us here and gave us a land where milk and honey flow. Here then I bring the first fruits of the produce of the soil that you, Lord, have given me.'

You must then lay them before the Lord your God, and bow down in the sight of the Lord your God.

THE WORD of the LORD THANKS BE TO GOD

Give the group time to reflect on the following questions and to take time to write the responses for themselves. Then invite each one to share what they feel comfortable with.....

- 1) Looking back on your journey of faith what are the things you are thankful for now?
- 2) What people in your life have shaped and changed you?
- 3) In what way/s do you bow down in the sight of God when you pray?

THE GOSPEL - THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

After his baptism, Jesus makes a retreat in the desert of Judea. Since he was alone at the time we must assume that he later shared news of this experience with his apostles. The devil tempts the Lord to use his divine power to win quick acclaim. But Christ has not come to work magic tricks. He has come to teach that salvation is possible for all, with the grace of his Father. The parapet or pinnacle of the Temple was probably part of the great piazza surrounding the building. Its southeast corner had a sheer drop of many yards. If Jesus jumped from this spot and landed safely, he would win public adulation. Jesus rejects this type of fame, knowing how fleeting it would be. Jesus refuses to be bowed down by the power of temptation

READ THIS GOSPEL OUTLOUD IN THREE DIFFERENT VOICES and LISTEN.....

[A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke](#)

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness, being tempted there by the devil for forty days. During that time he ate nothing and at the end he was hungry.

Then the devil said to him: *'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf.'*

But Jesus replied: *'Scripture says: Human beings do not live on bread alone.'*

Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him: *'I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall be yours.'*

But Jesus answered him: *'Scripture says: You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'*

Then he led him to Jerusalem and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. *'If you are the Son of God throw yourself down from here, for scripture says: He will put his angels in charge of you to guard you, and again, they will hold you up on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'*

But Jesus answered him: *'It has been said you must not put the Lord your God to the test.'*

Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left him, to return at the appointed time.

[THE GOSPEL of the LORD](#) [PRAISE to YOU LORD JESUS CHRIST](#)

- 1) Jesus was led by the Spirit. This same Spirit enabled him to resist the three temptations to seek easy solutions to human hungers, to ruthlessly pursue human power and to become superhuman. Share in what way/s you feel led by the Spirit in your life.
- 2) Jesus' journey of faith led him to a place of encounter - the wilderness of the desert. How do you create wilderness space for yourself where you can encounter God?
- 3) Jesus relied totally on the word of God. How does God's word feed you on your journey of faith?

PSALM 90 - A Prayer of Protecting Presence

Psalm 90 is full of military metaphors; it may have originated as a prayer for the king of Israel. Reference is made to the outstretched wings of angel figures in the Temple throne. The king prays that he will experience God's protection as he leaves Jerusalem to go into battle. This psalm is now sung every single evening in the night prayer of the Church where the focus is on the protecting presence of God through the night as we sleep. Here the psalm connects to the desert experience of Jesus who relies totally on God. In the Gospel the devil cleverly quotes this psalm to Jesus! As you pray this together as a group, imagine that Jesus is praying this as he is being tempted. You could also listen to the CD of 'You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord'

Be with me Lord when I am in trouble

*You who dwell in the shelter of the most high
who abide in the shade of the Almighty*

say to the Lord: My refuge, my stronghold, my God in whom I trust

Be with me Lord when I am in trouble

*Upon you no evil shall fall
no plague approach where you dwell
for you has he commanded his angels
to keep you in all your ways*

Be with me Lord when I am in trouble

*They shall bear you upon their hands
lest you strike you foot against a stone
on the lion and the viper you will tread
and trample the young lion and the dragon*

Be with me Lord when I am in trouble

*His love he set on me, so I will rescue him
protect him for he knows my name
when he calls I shall answer 'I am with you.'
I will save him in distress and give him glory*

Be with me Lord when I am in trouble

***DURING LENT PRAY THIS EVERY DAY and BE AWARE that God is
with you on your journey towards Easter***

THE SECOND READING - BELIEVING from the HEART

From St. Paul's letter to the Romans

Scripture says: *The word, that is the faith we proclaim, is very near to you, it is on your lips and in your heart.* If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. By believing from the heart you are made righteous; by confessing with your lips you are saved.

When scripture says: *those who believe in him will have no cause for shame,* it makes no distinction between Jew and Greek: all belong to the same Lord who is rich enough, however many ask for his help, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

THE WORD of the LORD THANKS BE TO GOD

- 1) Take time to remember the times when you have felt that God is very near to you
- 2) As a catechumen you will be called by the Cardinal to make your final preparation before standing up in front of the community and confessing your faith in Jesus. In what way/s do you feel ready to do this?
- 3) What does the phrase 'believing from the heart' mean to you at this stage on your journey?

We often use the phrase

'with all my heart',

this is the basis

of our

credo.

When we say I believe

we are really saying

this is what and who I give my heart to,

this was the basic creed of the first Christians

and that's why they could say Jesus is Lord.

Opening up the Word: Reflection from the Saints.....

God has created me,
God is my Lord, having dominion over me.
God is also my strength,
for I can do nothing good without God.
Through God I have living spirit,
through God I have life and movement,
through God I learn, I find my path.
If I call in truth, this God directs my steps,
setting my feet to the rhythm of God's precepts.
I run like a deer that seeks its spring.
ST. HILDEGARD of BINGEN



*God created me to do him some definite service;
he has committed some work to me
which he has not committed to another.*

*I have my mission -
I may never know it in this life,
but I shall be told it in the next...*

Therefore, I will trust him...

*If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve him;
in perplexity, my perplexity may serve him;
if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve him...*

*He does nothing in vain;
he may prolong my life,
he may shorten it,
he knows what he is about.*

John Henry Cardinal Newman

Reflecting on the Prayers in the Rite of Election.....

Those who are to be baptized are elected or called by the Bishop of the diocese as candidates for the Sacraments of Initiation at Easter. Each person will hear their name called out loud in the Cathedral.

When your name is called you should stand with you Godparent, or if your name is being called to complete your Christian Initiation you stand with your Sponsor.

Sponsors and Godparents stand alongside the person they are accompanying and place their hand on their shoulder as a gesture of support, affirmation, accompaniment and prayer.

GODPARENTS

Witness to the faith of the person they are accompanying by replying to the Bishops questions:

- *Have they faithfully listened to God's word proclaimed by the Church?*
- *Have they responded to that word and begun to walk in God's presence?*
- *Have they shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters and joined with them in prayer?*

A question for Godparents:

Take time before the Rite of Election to share with the person you are accompanying how you try to listen to God's word and respond to it, and why it is important for you to gather on a Sunday to pray with the Christian community?

SPONSORS

Are those who are accompanying candidates for confirmation and eucharist. Sponsors are asked a different set of questions by the Bishop:

- *Have they faithfully listened to the apostles' instruction proclaimed by the Church?*
- *Have they come to a deeper appreciation of their baptism, in which they were joined to Christ and his Church?*
- *Have they reflected sufficiently on the tradition of the Church which is their heritage, and joined their brothers and sisters in prayer?*
- *Have they advanced in a life of love and service?*

A question for Sponsors:

Before the Rite of Election share with the person you are accompanying how you try to reflect on what we believe, what difference baptism makes in your life and in what way/s you are responding to God's call to love and serve.

THE INTERCESSIONS

The option A intercessions strongly emphasise the sponsoring role of the community and their responsibility for passing on the Tradition:

Take time in your RCIA group to pray these intercessions, you could also print them in the Parish Newsletter as a reminder to the whole parish that they have a responsibility to care for those who are to be newly initiated into a way of life that they are already living.

WE PRAY that:

- Together we may fruitfully employ this season of Lent to renew ourselves by self denial and works of holiness
- That our catechumens and candidates may always remember this day and be grateful for the blessing they have received
- That their teachers may always convey the beauty of God's word to those who search for it
- That their godparents may be living examples of the Gospel
- That their families may help them to follow the promptings of the Spirit
- That our parish community, during this Lent, may grow in charity and constant prayer
- That those who have not yet overcome their hesitation may trust Christ and come to join our parish community as our sisters and brothers.....

LINKING the SUNDAY MASS with the RITE of ELECTION

It is crucial that those who are going to be called by the Bishop in the Cathedral feel the support of the parish community. A good way of doing this is by sending your group of catechumens and candidates to the Rite of Election from the parish Sunday Mass. You can obtain a format for this from Monsignor Regan and the Liturgy Commission.

The preaching for the first Sunday should make strong reference to the Rite of Election and the call of the Bishop.

Music needs to focus on the main themes in the readings. The following pieces of music are suggestions for the First Sunday of Lent, particularly if your parish is sending catechumens and candidates to the Cathedral:

- *You shall cross the barren desert*
- *You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord*
- *Be with me Lord (Alstott)*
- *Be with me Lord (Haugen)*
- *Praise to You O Christ our Saviour - can be used as a Gospel acclamation*
- *Here I am Lord*
- *God has chosen me*
- *Guide me O thou Great Redeemer*
- *All that is Hidden*
- *All that we have*
- *Do not be afraid*
- *Led by the Spirit*
- *Turn to Me*
- *Send me Jesus*

