



Diocese of  
Brentwood

Adult Religious Education & Formation for Ministry

# Year of Faith

11<sup>th</sup> October 2012 – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2013

A

## Resource For Parishes

OCTOBER 2012



YEAR OF FAITH <sup>2012</sup>/<sub>2013</sub>

*The 'door of faith' (Acts 14.27) is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church.*

*It is possible to cross that threshold when the word of God is proclaimed and the heart allows itself to be shaped by transforming grace.*

*Pope Benedict XVI, Porta Fidei*

# **A Resource for Parishes**

This resource has been designed with individuals and small groups in mind.

**Example:** An existing Prayer or Bible study group; Readers; Extraordinary Ministers of Communion; Catechists or other parishioners who are willing to come together to deepen their faith.

<b>Autumn 2012</b>	Christian Faith and Prayer: <b>CCC Parts One &amp; Four.</b>
<b>Spring 2013</b>	Profession of Faith- The Creed: <b>CCC Part One</b> The Sacrament of Baptism/Renewal of Baptismal Commitment. Confirmation: <b>CCC Part Two</b>
<b>Summer 2013</b>	Living the Christian Life: <b>CCC Part Three</b> Moral issues; The Commandments. Sacrament of Reconciliation.
<b>Autumn 2013</b>	Eucharist : <b>CCC Part Two</b>

## **For Group & Individual Reflection**

Reflections and questions to ponder as well as the Gospel for each Sunday will be offered on a monthly basis.

### **Aim**

It is hoped that by engaging with this resource, we will:

- Grow in our relationship with the Lord.
- Become better informed.
- Be confident in sharing our faith with others.
- Witness to those we encounter with renewed joy and hope.

### **FAITH & PRAYER - PARTS ONE & FOUR** **The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)**

#### **October 2012**

*You must wait for the eye of the soul to be formed in you. Religious truth is reached, not by reasoning, but by an inward perception.*

*Blessed John Henry Newman*

*(Letter of 1843 from a biography – Ian Kerr, 1988. page. 273).*

#### **Introducing the Year of Faith.**

*Pope Benedict XVI – Porta Fidei 10*

I would like to sketch a path intended to help us to understand more profoundly not only the content of the faith, but also the act by which we choose to entrust ourselves fully to God, in complete freedom. In fact, there exists a profound unity between the act by which we believe and the content to which we give our assent. Saint Paul



helps us to enter into this reality when he writes: *'Man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.'* (Rom 10:10).

The heart indicates that the first act by which one comes to faith is God's gift and the action of grace which acts and transforms the person deep within.

The example of Lydia is particularly eloquent in this regard. Saint Luke recounts that, while he was at Philippi, Paul went on the Sabbath to proclaim the Gospel to some women; among them was Lydia and *the 'Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul.'* (Acts 16:14).

There is an important meaning contained within this expression. Saint Luke teaches that knowing the content to be believed is not sufficient unless the heart, the authentic sacred space within the person, is opened by grace that allows the eyes to see below the surface and to understand that what has been proclaimed is the word of God.

## **Week 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> October**

### **Theme Encountering Jesus**

In his General Audience 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept. '08, Pope Benedict XVI describes faith as a personal encounter with Jesus Christ in the following words: *'Christianity is not a new philosophy or a new morality. We are only Christians if we encounter Christ.'*

### **For Personal/Group Reflection**

- Where are we most likely to experience this encounter in our lives today?
- What makes it difficult for us?
- What realistically might we as a community be able to do to maintain the vibrance of this encounter with Jesus Christ?

### **Peter's profession of faith**

When Jesus asks: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?", the disciples answer: *"Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."* In other words, Christ is seen as yet another religious figure, like those who came before him. Then Jesus turns to the disciples and asks them: *"But who do you say that I am?"* Peter responds with what is the first confession of faith: *"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God"*. Faith is more than just empirical or historical facts; it is an ability to grasp the mystery of Christ's person in all its depth. *Pope Benedict XVI, World Youth Day, Madrid, 2011.*



### **Praying with the Word of God - Lectio Divina**

'I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of Lectio Divina: the diligent reading of sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking and, in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart. If the practice of Lectio Divina is effectively promoted, I am convinced that it will bring to the church a new spiritual springtime.'

*Pope Benedict XVI*

### **Encountering Jesus in Scripture**

Faith grows when we listen more and more carefully to God's Word and enter a lively exchange with him in prayer.

*(Par 21, YOUCAT 2010)*

## **Lectio Divina**

(Refer to Suggestions for *Lectio*)

28<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year B

### **Gathering Prayer**

Let us pray.  
Heavenly Father,  
the hand of your loving kindness  
gently guides every moment of our day.  
Be with us on our pilgrimage of life.  
Pour out your Spirit upon us to unite us in faith,  
that by sharing your word,  
we may rejoice in your presence.  
We make this prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

### **The Rich Young Man**

Mark 10:17 – 30

He was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You must not kill; You must not commit adultery; You must not steal; You must not bring false witness; You must not defraud; Honour your father and mother.' And he said to him, 'Master, I have kept all these from my earliest days'. Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and he said, 'There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me' But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.

### **A Reflection on the Gospel Text.**

In his encounter with the rich young man 'Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him.' Jesus calls us into relationship and we see this in his meeting with the rich young man. He invites him to *go, sell everything, then come and follow him*. Jesus offered the young man a way of living where he would be free from his attachment to possessions and securities. However, he is unable to accept the challenge and goes away sad. Perhaps he is grieving at having to turn down the invitation of Jesus. The young man wants everything on his own terms and begins to recognise the distance between himself and what Jesus is asking. He chooses to cling to possessions at the expense of relationships and new possibilities.

We may need to reflect on how much we put our trust in God alone who is the source of our happiness. At a time when so many members of our communities are experiencing the consequences of redundancy, let us pray that they will not lose heart in spite of their trials and difficulties.

### **For Consideration During the Week**

- What are my riches and why do I 'cling' to them?
- What do I still lack?
- We must look into our hearts and hear Jesus speak to us-  
*'if you wish to be perfect'*.

What am I prepared to sacrifice in order to be free to respond to Jesus?  
What will lead me to a deeper encounter with Jesus?



## Closing Prayer

**Leader** Let us now conclude our time together by saying the prayer Jesus taught us- Our Father...

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**Week 20<sup>th</sup> /21<sup>st</sup> October.**

**Theme**

**FAITH**



### Some Definitions of Faith

- Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man. (CCC 162)
- Faith in God leads us to turn to him alone as our first origin and our ultimate goal, and neither to prefer anything to him nor to substitute anything for him. (CCC 229)
- The God of our faith has revealed himself as He Who Is; and he has made himself known as **"abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"** (Ex 34:6). God's very being is Truth and Love. (CCC 231)
- Believing in God, the only One, and loving him with all our being has enormous consequences for our whole life. (CCC 222)
- It means trusting God in every circumstance, even in adversity.  
A prayer of St. Teresa of Jesus wonderfully expresses this trust:  
*Let nothing trouble you  
Let nothing frighten you  
Everything passes  
God never changes  
Patience  
Obtains all  
Whoever has God  
Wants for nothing God alone is enough.* (CCC 227)
- Faith is a personal act – the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. (CCC 166)

*Faith means putting up with God's incomprehensibility for a lifetime.* Karl Rahner, SJ

### Questions to ponder

- What is faith for me?
- Can people lose the gift of faith and why?
- Is faith 'caught' or 'taught'?
- Take the prayer of St Teresa and ask yourself-  
How good am I in putting my trust in God no matter what the circumstance?

### Faith is often lived in darkness

Now, however, *"we walk by faith, not by sight"*; (2 Cor 5:7) we perceive God as *"in a mirror, dimly"* and only *"in part"* (1 Cor 13:12). Even though enlightened by him in whom it believes, faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test. The world we live in often seems very far from the one promised us by faith. Our experiences of evil and suffering, injustice and death, seem to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it. (CCC 164)

It is then we must turn to the witnesses of faith: to Abraham, who *"in hope... believed against hope"*; to the Virgin Mary, who, in *"her pilgrimage of faith"*, walked into the *"night of faith"* in sharing the darkness of her son's suffering and death; and to so many others: *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."* (CCC 165)

*'When we contemplate the blessings of faith even now, as if gazing at a reflection in a mirror, it is as if we already possessed the wonderful things which our faith assures us we shall one day enjoy'* St Basil

### **Lectio Divina**

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year B - World Mission Day

#### **Gathering Prayer – verse of Psalm 32**

Let us pray,

May your love be upon us, O Lord

as we place all our hope in you.

*Pause*

#### **Gospel** Mark 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus. "Master," they said to him "we want you to do us a favour."

He said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?"

They said to him, "Allow us to sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory." "You do not know what you are asking" Jesus said to them "Can you drink the cup that I must drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I must be baptised?" They replied, "We can." Jesus said to them, "The cup that I must drink you shall drink, and with the baptism with which I must be baptised, but as for seats at my right hand or my left, these are not mine to grant: they belong to those to whom they have been allotted."

When the other ten heard this they began to feel indignant with James and John, so Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."



#### **A Reflection on the Gospel Text.**

At one level we could take heart when we see how the apostles James and John who were in the company of Jesus, fail to grasp his teaching. They had not understood that Jesus' way of service had nothing in common with their request for places of honour in the kingdom of God. Jesus points out that there are no short cuts to God's glory. To drink from the cup that Jesus was to drink from, would mean taking a different route– one of suffering and self-sacrifice. *'For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many'* Those seeking places of honour, do so, to win the approval of others, to gain power and to

control the weak and less privileged. We see this acted out in governments, the work place and even in the Church. It is so easy for human ambition to blind us to the values of Jesus. Authentic discipleship is about embodying the example of Jesus in humility and love and this will always entail the cross.

### **For Consideration During the Week**

- Jesus always stood alongside others regardless of who they were. How do I identify with the needs of the weakest in my locality?
- Am I drawn to people in positions of power and prestige or is my preferred option to be with those who are in less privileged positions?  
Pray this week for the courage to be true to yourself, not needing to rely on places of honour and ambition.
- You may choose to pray the prayer of St Teresa each day. (See Page 6)
- Reflect on the following words by Flor McCarthy SDB:

*'The greatness of Jesus is seen in his laying down his life for others. It is by giving that we receive, and it is by serving that we grow in love.'*

- Pray for the parts of our world where there is much hatred and unrest due to ambition and abuse of power. Remember especially the innocent victims of violence and oppression.

### **Closing Prayer**

**Leader** Let us now conclude our time together by saying the prayer Jesus taught us- Our Father.....

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### **Week 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> October**

#### **Theme**

#### **PRAYER**

*'For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.'* St Thérèse of Lisieux  
(CCC 2558)

#### **Prayer as Relationship**

'Great is the mystery of faith!'

The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles' Creed (Part One) and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy (Part Two), so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father (Part Three). This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.

#### **Prayer in the Old Testament**

'Prayer is lived in the first place beginning with the realities of *creation*. The first nine chapters of *Genesis* describe this relationship with God as an offering of the first-born of Abel's flock, as the invocation of the divine name at the time of Enoch, and as 'walking with God'. Noah's offering is pleasing to God, who blesses him and through him all creation, because his heart was upright and undivided; Noah, like Enoch before him, 'walks with God'. This kind of prayer is lived by many righteous people in all religions.

In his indefectible covenant with every living creature, God has always called people to prayer. But it is above all beginning with our father Abraham that prayer is revealed in the old Testament.'

(CCC 2569)

- Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God.

(CCC 2559)



### Questions to Ponder

- What is prayer for me?
- Do I pray and why?
- What does prayer do for me?
- Do I ever feel discouraged in prayer?
- Where do I find God or when am I most aware of the presence of God in my life?
- Is my prayer talking to God or listening with the heart – ‘*Speak Lord, your servant is listening*’ or is it, ‘*Listen Lord, your servant is speaking!*’

### Finding God in the experiences of everyday life.

God aiding you  
In lane,  
In street,  
Through rain,  
Through sleet,  
Through blue-sky day,  
In car,  
In coach,  
On motorway,  
On train,  
On plane,  
In sunlight  
And in lamp post's glare,  
God aiding you,  
God everywhere.

*Joyce Denham, 'Circles of Prayer' with permission.*

### Lectio Divina

30<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year B

#### Gathering Prayer

##### Leader

Let us pray,  
Heavenly Father as we gather again in the awareness of your presence, open our minds and hearts to receive your word. May what we hear and share inspire us and encourage us to take the road that leads us to following you with renewed hope and trust.

We make this prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen.



#### Gospel Mark 10:46-52

*As Jesus left Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (that is, the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting at the side of the road. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout and to say, "Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me." And many of them scolded him and told him to keep quiet, but he*

only shouted all the louder, "Son of David, have pity on me." Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So they called the blind man. "Courage," they said "get up; he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he jumped up and went to Jesus. Then Jesus spoke, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Rabbuni," the blind man said to him "Master, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has saved you." And immediately his sight returned and he followed him along the road.

### **A Reflection on the Gospel Text**

The story begins with Bartimaeus a blind beggar, sitting by the side of the road. As Jesus and his followers approach, he hears that it is Jesus and he calls out, 'Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me'. The crowd insisted that he keep quiet but he called all the louder. When Jesus heard him he stopped and asked for the blind man to be brought to him. Bartimaeus threw off his cloak, jumped up and went to Jesus. Jesus asks what it is he wants. His response indicates that he once could see. It is the faith of the blind man that leads to his healing. Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has saved you'.

When Bartimaeus received his sight, he followed Jesus along the road as a true disciple. This encounter with Jesus shows how Christian faith grows. We too through our baptism are called to grow in our relationship with Jesus as we strive to put our trust in him.

### **Closing Prayer**

**Leader** Let us now conclude our time together by saying the prayer Jesus taught us- Our Father.....

### **For Consideration During the Week.**

- Before Bartimaeus meets Jesus, he throws off his cloak. What cloak do I cling to? What stands between me and Jesus?
- What in your opinion are some of the influences in our society that weaken our capacity to see as Jesus sees?  
Pray the following each day:  
*'Lord that I may see'*
- Applying this encounter of Bartimaeus with Jesus to your own life, ask yourself- where am I - am I *by the road side or on the road as a true disciple?*



### **Acknowledgements**

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