



## PARISH CONSULTATION WITH SMALL GROUPS SESSION 4 HANDOUT

Focus Area 2 (Sessions 3 & 4): Forming parishes that are in the service of evangelization.

### PRAYER

#### 1. Luke 24: 13-15, 27-33a, The Appearance on the Road to Emmaus (selected verses)

Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem.

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#### 2. Litany to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, abridged. Responses listed in bold.

- God our Father in heaven, **have mercy on us.**
- God the Son, Redeemer of the world, **have mercy on us.**
- God the Holy Spirit, **have mercy on us.**
- Heart of Jesus, Son of the eternal Father, **have mercy on us.**
- Heart of Jesus, holy temple of God, **have mercy on us.**
- Heart of Jesus, aflame with love for us, **have mercy on us.**
- Heart of Jesus, worthy of all praise, **have mercy on us.**
- Heart of Jesus, in whom the Father is well pleased, **have mercy on us.**
- Heart of Jesus, patient and full of mercy, **have mercy on us.**
- Heart of Jesus, atonement for our sins, **have mercy on us.**
- Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation, **have mercy on us.**
- Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection, **have mercy on us.**
- Heart of Jesus, salvation of all who trust in you, **have mercy on us.**
- Jesus, gentle and humble of heart. **Touch our hearts and make them like your own.**

Litany of the Sacred Heart (abridged), United States Council of Catholic Bishops.

## TOPIC 4A: LITURGY AND THE SUNDAY EXPERIENCE

### 1. Jesus establishes the true worship of the New Covenant.

The Jews of Jesus' day believed that by making a memorial of the Passover, all its saving power became present to them here and now. At the Last Supper, Jesus changes the Passover ritual. He declares himself as the Passover lamb, and his death the true sacrifice that will take away the sins of the world. The Last Supper, Jesus' death of the cross, and his resurrection from the dead make up one event, which we call Christ's Passover, his Paschal Mystery. This saving event, this perfect act of worship to the Father, is what Christ instituted in the Eucharist.

### 2. Through the Eucharist, Christ and his sacrifice become present to us.

Through the gift of the Eucharist, Jesus gives his Church a way to make his Paschal Mystery and all its redemptive effects present throughout time. Like the Jewish Passover memorial, the celebration of the Eucharist is not a mere symbolic remembering of the past, but instead makes Christ's offering on the cross present to us today. The Eucharist – which makes Jesus Christ truly present to us and allows us each to receive him into our body and soul – is the greatest miracle on earth.

### 3. We are called to active participation in Christ's sacrifice.

Through our baptism, each of us receives a share in Christ's priesthood. This means that we are called to do what priests do: offer sacrifice. Active participation in the liturgy is one of the ways that we express our baptismal priesthood. Through the ministry of the priest, we are able to offer ourselves to God by uniting our whole selves to Christ's sacrifice in the Mass.

### 4. The Mass is celebrated in diverse ways but is always united in essence.

For 2,000 years, the Catholic Church has been faithful to Christ's command to "do this in memory of me." The Church sanctions the use of various rites: different ways of praying the liturgy that took root in different cultural contexts, but which nonetheless honor its essence and maintain its continuity with the worldwide Church. Our Catholic neighbors attend Mass not only in the Latin Rite, which is the universal form of our Roman Catholic Church, but also in the Byzantine Rites, the Maronite Rite, and the Syro-Malabar Rite. Our Archdiocesan parishes celebrate the liturgy in diverse ways, with varieties of music and in various languages. The liturgy is not our prayer or our possession to change as we see fit. It is the prayer of Christ, which He entrusted to his Church, and which is handed on to us today.

### 5. Allow the Mass to transform you!

Saint Augustine said, "If we receive the Eucharist worthily, we become what we receive." (Easter Sermon, 227) If we seek to live our Christian life fully and participate frequently in the liturgy prayerfully and actively, we will be transformed into Christ.

## TABLE DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

### 1. GENERAL GUIDELINES (read out loud by the table facilitator)

- My job as facilitator is simply to make sure everyone at the table has an opportunity to contribute, the time is shared amongst all table members, and the discussion stays on track. Table facilitators, as members of the small group, will be involved in the discussion and provide individual feedback. Table facilitators are not theologians or experts.
- For fruitful table discussions, please take into consideration that the Synod process is intended to recommend pastoral priorities for our Archdiocese that are both realistic (e.g., within the competence of the Archdiocese to implement) and consistent with the teachings of the Church.
- Please turn to the Discussion Questions & Feedback Forms for our two topics today.
  - If you feel comfortable doing so, please fill out the demographic information.
  - Table discussion questions are listed at the top. We are each invited to choose one or two of the questions on which to share.
  - Below that you will see some ideas for consideration. The ideas for consideration are provided to help us get started in our discussion and provide a framework to give feedback.
  - The bottom of the form is where we provide feedback. We are asked which of the ideas for consideration have worked for us individually, and which ideas the parish or Archdiocese should prioritize in the future. We can choose up to three ideas under each of these two sections. In the third section, we can each provide an idea of our own, up to 20 words.

### 2. RESPECTFUL DISCUSSION GUIDELINES (read out loud by the table scribe)

- Everyone's input is valued. We are here to listen to each other and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit with a disposition of the heart that we all have something to learn. As it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:11: "Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do." We are not here to debate. Expect differing viewpoints and presume the good will of the other.
- People may share personal experiences. Please be sensitive to this vulnerability and do not share others' private information outside this group.
- Feedback forms do not have names. In addition, scribes have been asked to keep your responses confidential.

### 3. PROCESS FOR SHARING (read out loud by a table volunteer)

- To allow everyone an opportunity to share, we will proceed as follows:
  - The table facilitator will share first. After the facilitator is done, he or she invites another to share. You can invite anyone at the table, whether they are next to you or across from you. After that person has shared, they invite another. We will do this until everyone at the table has been asked to share.
  - All are encouraged to share but no one should feel pressured to speak. If you don't want to share, simply say "pass," and ask another to share.
  - We ask you to listen and not immediately respond to someone's sharing. After everyone has had an opportunity to share, the facilitator will initiate an open discussion of the question (time permitting).
- The facilitator will now read the discussion questions out loud and allow some quiet time to consider the questions and ideas for consideration. Then the facilitator will share first.

## TOPIC 4B: SHARING THE GOSPEL IN WORD AND DEED

### 1. Christ sends us on mission.

"Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord," is the last thing we hear at Mass. Our English word for the divine liturgy, "Mass," comes from the Latin word "missa," which implies being sent on a mission. Jesus sends us on mission to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." (Mt. 28:19) He is always with us, and it is his power that is at work in any of our efforts.

### 2. The Spirit helps us to continue Christ's mission.

The Holy Spirit transforms his followers into joyful, missionary disciples. Our call to share the Gospel flows out of the liturgy, and our mission must always be intimately connected to prayer, reception of the sacraments, and ongoing formation. Through these encounters with the Lord, we continue to receive the gift of Pentecost.

### 3. Our mission of love begins at home and radiates outward.

Jesus' commission to be witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8) has symbolic meaning for our mission fields today. Jerusalem was the home base of the apostles, and symbolically represents our immediate families and homelife. This is where we are to begin our mission of love. Judea and Samaria were different regions of Israel, and symbolically represents our communities – friends, neighbors, co-workers. The ends of the earth were those places unfamiliar to the apostles, and symbolically represents those on the margins of our society.

### 4. We continue Christ's mission through evangelization.

Inviting others into a relationship with Jesus Christ is one of the greatest acts of love we can make. Saint Paul models a compelling approach to evangelization during his visit to Athens. He meets the people where they are, affirming what is already good and true in their lives. He builds on this foundation to explain how Jesus is the answer to their questions and the fulfillment of their desires. Finally, he invites them to conversion and relationship with God by embracing Jesus and the Gospel.

### 5. We continue Christ's mission through acts of mercy.

Christ's followers don't just tell other people they are loved by God, they show them through loving acts of mercy. Serving others with compassion and joy brings to life a central Gospel truth: each and every person has infinite dignity and is worthy of love from the moment of conception until natural death.

### 6. We continue Christ's mission by promoting justice.

Justice means ensuring that every person is treated in accord with his or her dignity, as a beloved son or daughter of God. As part of our Christian mission, we are called to promote a society where all people – including the unborn and immigrant, the poor and elderly, and anyone and everyone else – are treated justly.

### 7. Let's be witnesses to the love of Christ!