



The Gift of Lent 2012

Resources for Discussion and Reflection Cycle B Weeks One Through Four

Prepared by the Lutheran-Catholic Covenant Commission of the
Northeastern Ohio Lutheran Synod of the ELCA &

WEEK ONE

Genesis 9:8-15 1Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:12-15

Both Noah and Jesus have one thing in common. They listen and obey. Noah, in spite of ridicule and absurdity, built the ark and saved life as God asked of him. Jesus, following his baptism, is asked to go into the desert. Jesus listens to this call and obeys. God the Father vindicates both Jesus and Noah and they come through their experience untouched, but not unchanged.

In your life, what was a time in spite of pain, confusion, or absurdity you listened and obeyed the call of God and, like Jesus, “angels came and ministered” to you?

What a gift Lent is. Forty days in the desert to sit back and put ourselves in the position of Jesus. We go into the desert to pray, to trust, to encounter our deepest self and our God. The Church offers us traditional and new practices of prayer, worship, ashes, conversion, confession, and calls us to remember. We are invited to journey with Jesus, identify reality in a new way, examine our lives, and accept God’s grace to resist temptation.

*In past Lents how have I used these gifts?
Right now, this Lent, what do I think would be most helpful?*

WEEK TWO

Genesis 22:1-2, 9, 10-13, 15-18 Romans 8:31-34 Mark 9:2-10

In the story we usually focus on Abraham. For a moment let us focus on the action of God after Abraham’s obedience. Scripture says God promises, “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...” Abraham is given a role to play in salvation history, and will be remembered throughout history as a blessing. Three world religions have their roots in him. All this because of love and obedience.

*Abraham, in obedience, is asked to sacrifice his son, his only son.
What is the part of your life, “your child” (the part of yourself that you are attached to),
God is asking you to “put a knife through”?*

This is the second week of Lent. Take a moment now to reflect on your Lenten prayer and practices so far.

*What has your Lenten experience been like?
What would be helpful to you in the form of recommitment?
What temptations have you been facing to give up your Lenten journey?*

WEEK THREE

Exodus 20:1-17 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 John 2:13-25

Jesus in today's gospel expresses himself in opposition to a sinful practice occurring in his time. He was not a man who stood by and let evil go unchallenged. Notice that he used forceful measures but not violence to speak the truth. Jesus presents, in his example, a call to us to risk speaking the truth even when to do so is uncomfortable and costs us something. This is an example of appropriate anger.

How well do I deal with anger situations?

If I am timid and have been unable to speak out, what might help me?

Can you think of an example where you were able to speak the truth in love and stayed in right relationship with the person you addressed?

Anger is a powerful emotion. Sometimes we express anger to silence or control another to get what we want. Sometimes our challenge of another is not done with respect.

In my life how do I express my anger?

Does it resemble Jesus' model?

How can this time of Lent help me?

WEEK FOUR

2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23 Ephesians 2:4-10 John 3:14-21

Today's reading speaks about Jesus being lifted up to save the world. Jesus did not come into the world to condemn but to save. He came ultimately to save us for eternal life but also to save people from destructiveness, distortion, and mediocrity in their lives. He longs to bring every human activity to fulfillment, to make the ordinary sacred. Life with Jesus brings a new light, a new perspective to everything.

Name one ordinary aspect of your life (work or home) that is elevated to a higher level by seeing it through the light of Jesus.

The Church often take stands that challenge the accepted practices of the world. Focus on one moral teaching of the Church that you might find difficult to accept or follow. Examine this teaching in the light of the value it seeks to defend.

Three situations that the world accepts as permissible are: pragmatic war, abortion, and racial or sexual discrimination. Choose one of these issues for reflection.

Why does the Church speak out against the world's thinking?

What the value the Church seeks to respect?

When you view this issue through the light of Jesus, what needs to change in your life?