

Journey of Faith

The Word into Life

YEAR B

A GUIDE FOR
GROUP REFLECTION
ON SUNDAY SCRIPTURE

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Imprimi Potest:
Thomas D. Picton, C.Ss.R.
Provincial, Denver Province
The Redemptorists

Imprimatur:
Most Reverend Robert J. Hermann
Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of St. Louis

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How to Use *The Word Into Life*

The *Lectionary for Sunday Mass* forms the basis for the RCIA process. This is appropriate since the Scriptures tell the story of the faith experienced by the people of God: the relationship between the chosen people and Yahweh, and the relationship between the early Christian community and Jesus of Nazareth, the son of God. As we reflect upon these faith stories, our own stories of how God has impacted our lives become more clearly perceived and articulated. Because the Scriptures convey the stories of a community, they are meant to be encountered in the community as we gather to worship and celebrate together. It is also fitting that the catechumens and candidates gather in community to break open God's word and to apply it to their own lives in the here and now.

In their reflection and linking of the Scriptures to their own lives, the early Christians began to develop official summaries and teachings regarding the meaning of their communal religious experiences. Since these doctrines and dogmas were born of theological reflection grounded in Scripture, the Church now links these teachings to Scripture in the RCIA process. Therefore, the sessions begin with Scripture reflection and move toward an encounter with Catholic belief. Since it is primarily through the Sunday liturgy that the community hands on its traditions and beliefs, this is also the most opportune time for the catechumens and candidates to be formed by the community. Beginning with the period of the catechumenate, it is urged that they be dismissed from the liturgy following the *Prayers of the Faithful* in order that they may go apart to reflect together upon the word of God and the teachings of the Church.

The Word into Life is available for each of the three liturgical years: A, B, and C, and contain all the readings for every Sunday of each year. The readings are arranged so that there are twenty-eight weeks between the first Sunday of Advent and Pentecost; and there are twenty-eight weeks between Trinity Sunday and Christ the King.

How to use *The Word Into Life* with *Journey of Faith*:

Relevant *Journey of Faith* lessons are listed at the end of each reflection. These include several lessons related to the theme, as well as an overarching lesson (or, occasionally two lessons) that ties most closely to the Scripture readings. Using the overarching lesson ensures you cover all the lessons in *Journey of Faith* in the course of the liturgical year.

Sundays between the first Sunday of Advent and the eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time refer you to lessons from the Catechumenate packet; Sundays between the first Sunday of Lent and Easter refer you to lessons from the Enlightenment and Purification packet; Sundays between the second Sunday of Easter and Pentecost refer you to lessons from the Mystagogy packet. Because the twenty-eight weeks between Trinity and Christ the King may be used either for continuing Mystagogy or for beginning a new journey of faith (or both), all the Sundays between Trinity and Christ the King refer you to both the Mystagogy and the Catechumenate packets.

The commentaries, themes, and prayers contained in this book are aids for preparing you to lead inquirers, catechumens, candidates, and neophytes. You are invited

and encouraged to familiarize yourself with these resources to better anticipate and stimulate questions and discussion. Leading others to Christ is the most important work you will do in your life; your personal preparation for such significant and rewarding work can never be adequately emphasized.

The Word into Life is intended for use by all team leaders of Christian initiation groups, whether the participants are adults or adolescents. They are also an excellent resource for the participants in *adult* initiation classes. They can also be used as a separate resource: Whether you are planning homilies, involved in small group faith-sharing, or simply searching for further enrichment and knowledge through the Sunday readings, *The Word into Life* will make it easier.

Included in *The Word Into Life* are:

- The readings for all Sundays of the liturgical year A, B, or C, Advent through Christ the King
- The readings for the Easter Triduum
- The year A readings for the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent
- The readings for those occasional Sundays that supersede ordinary time Sunday readings
- Scripture commentary for every set of readings
- Discussion and/or reflection questions for every set of readings
- Every set of readings is cross-referenced to the catechetical lessons
- A brief collection of short gathering prayers and dismissal prayers for each phase of the initiation process
- A thematic index

The readings are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible* (NRSV), approved for lectionary use by the bishops of both the United States and Canada. The most universally familiar and accepted English translation available today, it is also used in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Please be aware that, because the readings are taken from the NRSV, there are sometimes discrepancies in numbering. For example, the first reading for the first Sunday of Advent, year B, is taken from Is 63:16-17; 64:1,3-8 in the NRSV; the numbering system in your Bible or missalette may read Is 63:16-17,19; 64:2-7. You are alerted to such discrepancies by the (NRSV) reminder at the end of all citations where different numbering occurs.

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OVERVIEW

Suggested guideline for a Sunday session:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 30 minutes | Liturgy—all gather in church.
Dismissal after the <i>Prayer of the Faithful</i> . |
| 10 minutes | Refreshments and settling in. |
| 15 minutes | Prayer and reflection— Where are we
at this moment? |
| 45 minutes | Reread, reflect upon, and share the readings
of the day—either all or the one chosen for
this session. Spouses and sponsors can join
this session after Mass. |
| 10 minutes | Evaluation and prayer—How are we going
to live the Scriptures this week? |

Note: During Precatechumenate (Inquiry) or Mystagogy this format may be adapted for either a Sunday morning after Mass or for a weekday evening session.

*I thank you my God every time I remember you,
constantly praying with joy
in every one of my prayers for all of you,
because of your sharing in the gospel
from the first day until now...
And this is my prayer,
that your love may overflow
more and more with knowledge and full insight...
having produced the harvest of righteousness
that comes through Jesus Christ
for the glory and praise of God.*

Phil 1:3,4,5,9,11

Enjoy!

Reading 1, Isaiah 63:16-17;64:1,3-8 (NRSV)

You, O Lord, are our father; our Redeemer from of old is your name. Why, O Lord, do you make us stray from your ways and harden our heart, so that we do not fear you? Turn back for the sake of your servants, for the sake of the tribes that are your heritage. O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence. When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Psalm 80:1-2,14-15,17-18 (NRSV)

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel, Mark 13:33-37

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

God's Faithfulness

God established a covenant with Israel, the people specially chosen to be God's own. Covenant, loosely translated, means treaty, but the treaty (from God's end) is an irrevocable one. The people promise fidelity to Yahweh; Yahweh promises special protection in return for their fidelity. In today's readings we are reminded of God's faithfulness to the covenant—the faithfulness of Yahweh in the Hebrew Scriptures and the renewal of that faithfulness through Jesus of Nazareth in the Christian Scriptures.

In reflecting upon God's faithfulness, we cannot help but reflect upon our own unfaithfulness. Just as the story of the Jewish people is one of the covenant broken and renewed, so we must come to terms with the same process of fidelity and infidelity to God's commandments in our lives today.

In our first reading, the prophet Isaiah speaks to the Jewish people who have recently returned to Jerusalem from their exile in Babylon. When the southern kingdom fell in 587-86 B.C., the Babylonians deported the people. Families were separated from one another, land was seized, the Temple was destroyed. The people were resettled in Babylon, where they were allowed to live in safety but without rights to property, and without the opportunity to worship. For a people whose identity was bound up in land and Temple, to be without these was to exist in living death before God and before one another.

Covenant

Their thoughts turned to remembrance of the salvation Yahweh had gifted them with when they had been delivered from the hands of the Egyptians. The lament called for a renewal of the "awesome deeds" of the past, when the heavens were rent and the mountains quaked. But could the people expect Yahweh to honor the covenant when their hearts had become unclean—when their guilt surrounded them and none remembered to call upon Yahweh's name? How could Yahweh be faithful when the people had turned away?

You are our God, they prayed. "We are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands" (Is 64:8). The people knew, in the deepest recesses of their hearts, that Yahweh would never abandon them. They were the "chosen ones," the people who were peculiarly Yahweh's own.

In Isaiah's Gospel, it supposes the people to faithfulness. "Beware, keep alert," he warns them (13:33). One never knows when the master will return and call for an accounting. Just as the Jewish people feared that they had wrought Yahweh's anger by their faithlessness, Jesus

warns of the master's anger if the servants are caught sleeping. The master has chosen the servants and placed trust in them. A response of faithfulness to the master is demanded.

Saint Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, seems to turn the tables from faithlessness to faithfulness. Corinth was a seaport well known for the loose lifestyle of its inhabitants. In other letters to the Corinthians, Paul warned against visiting prostitutes, engaging in the activities of transvestites, drinking and eating to excess, and other behaviors unbecoming to Christians; but in today's reading he seems to be complimenting his followers and supporting their efforts to engage in clean living in the midst of the squalor of immoral lifestyles: "Just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you" (1:6). Rather than the image of the withered leaves in Isaiah's community, Paul sees a vibrant, faith-filled, and lifegiving community that, because of God's strength, will endure until the Second Coming of Christ upon the earth. In faithfulness to the New Covenant, Christ "will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:8).

Our Fickle Fidelity

Often the image we have of God in the Hebrew Scriptures is of the God of *wrath* who is much to be feared, and this picture is contrasted with John's God of *love* in the Christian Scriptures. But far more prominent in the Hebrew Scriptures is the God of *hesed* (steadfast love or loving-kindness) and *rahamim* (tender mercy or compassion). The Hebrew Scriptures are the story of the relationship between God and the "chosen people"; the story of troubled, broken hearts; the story of falling away and returning. This is a relationship that is one day intimate and the next estranged by the faithlessness of the people. So too our story in the Christian Scriptures, and the story of our very lives, is of estrangement and reconciliation. It is a story of dying and rising again. And always it is a story of a God who is faithful to us, even in the midst of our unfaithfulness.

Today's Good News

Advent is a time of *becoming*. It is the season in which we are reminded that we are continually on the journey to wholeness with God. With each life cycle our troubled, broken hearts are healed; we are brought low, and we are raised up. Our many deaths are celebrated in the glory of Resurrection and always, in the strength of Christ, the *hesed* and *rahamim* of God, that sustains us in the journey.

As we begin a new liturgical year, it is a good time to examine our relationships with God and with one an-

other, to determine those that need to be healed, those that need to be reconciled. We are invited to return from our exile to the material world that bombards us during the pre-Christmas season. We are called to a peace-filled preparation for the advent of new life—the life that will be ours as God renews the covenant with us, the "chosen people" made new in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, God-with-us.

Points for Reflection and Discussion

1. What are some activities that interfere with the building of relationships in your family during the pre-Christmas season? How can those be turned into peace-filled rather than tension-filled situations?

2. Both Paul and Mark tell us that the end is surely coming. If you knew that this would be your last Advent on earth, what would you do to prepare for Christmas?

Overarching Lesson: C10, The People of God

Themes

Conversion

C3, The Sacrament of Baptism

C4, The Sacrament of Confirmation

Covenant

C10, The People of God

C12, Church History

Remembrance

C2, The Sacraments: An Introduction

C11, The Early Church

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Reading 1, Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Psalms 85:8-9,10-11,12-13 (NRSV)

Reading 2, 2 Peter 3:8-15 (NRSV)

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord.

Gospel, Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

***Prepare The Way
Of The Lord***

This day's readings give us visions of what the "promised land" may be. For Isaiah it was a land in which nature was perfect; for Peter it was a land of cosmological perfection; for Mark it was a land attained through repentance and forgiveness.

Isaiah's message is familiar to those of us who have been surrounded by the beauty of Handel's *Messiah*. The valleys are exalted, the mountains are made low; the highways are made straight, the rough places a plain. All these are events that seem to be far beyond our abilities to accomplish. And so it is that this perfection is achieved through the "mouth of the Lord" (40:5). As all creation came into being through the Word of God, so the perfection of the end of time will come also through the Word.

The message of Isaiah was a beacon of hope for a people brought to despair by the Babylonian exile. Isaiah spoke in the midst of desolation; the "chosen people" were without land and Temple and felt that they were therefore without God. Isaiah's words promised that this situation would not endure: Yahweh's steadfast love would rescue the people from the wasteland, and wholeness would be revealed in the perfect ordering of nature. The desert would yield a highway for God. Zion would herald the glad tidings, and Jerusalem would be the center of good news. Yahweh would come with power to bring vindication to the cities of Judah that had been desecrated by the enemy.

Yahweh is likened to the shepherd who gently caresses his ewes, who protects them from all danger, that they may give birth to future generations and bring forth new life to the flock. Through the power of Yahweh's Word, the good of the Lord, the reign of God will be revealed—and nature will proclaim its coming.

A New Creation

Rather than a creative perfecting of nature, the Letter of Peter speaks of a new heaven and a new earth coming on the heels of destruction. "The heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire" (3:10). Out of the desolation will emerge a new creation wherein the justice of God will reside. Again, God's power achieves the coming of the reign of God and cosmological events proclaim its imminence.

Those who received this letter from Peter thought that they were already living in the end times. They were sure that the Second Coming would become real during their lifetime. Many thought that God was "delaying" in keeping the promise of the return of Christ. The writer of Peter justified that delay in order for all to repent and come into the fullness of the reign of God. Such repentance was to manifest itself in acts of human justice that would reflect God's justice in the Promised Land.

Repent and Be Saved

The gospel reading focuses not on natural and cosmological signs of the coming of the reign of God, but upon the messenger, the proclaimer of end times. Whereas the mountains, the valleys, the heavens, and the earth proclaimed the coming of the reign of God in the first two readings, a human person proclaims God's coming in the gospel. Whereas God's Word and power brought forth the reign of God in the first two readings, it is the *Word made flesh* and the repentance of the human family that bring forth God's reign in the gospel.

In Isaiah's reading, the "promised land" was one in which chaos was absent in nature. Everything was perfectly ordered. This idea was in concert with the early Hebrew mindset in which God was present in order but absent in chaos. By the time of the prophets, right ordering was achieved through acts of justice. That thought carried through to the Christian Scriptures, especially in the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Today John the Baptist gives us a prelude to Jesus' message; he calls for repentance that leads to forgiveness of sins, and in turn leads to the coming of the reign of God. Not only will Jesus' action with and through the Holy Spirit bring the *new* "promised land" this day into reality, but the human family is co-creator by virtue of its acts of repentance.

Today's Good News

Today's proclaimers of the reign of God also call for repentance that leads to a right ordering of society. Peoples of color call for a guarantee of basic human rights that will uphold the dignity of the human person. Any discrimination brought against a human being is an indignity to the image of God. The poor cry out for

access to health care, for jobs that provide a just wage, for homes that provide adequate shelter. The children of our world call for stewardship of our resources, which will guarantee that they and their children may simply live. Only human justice can bring about such a society. God can speak to us through the gospels, but God's Word must be proclaimed in action by God's people or the reign of God cannot become a reality in our midst.

Points for Reflection and Discussion

1. What does it mean in your life to be a co-creator with God?

2. Have you ever been treated unjustly by a person, an institution, or a system? Tell about how you felt.

Overarching Lesson: C2, The Sacraments: An Introduction

Themes

Justice

C13, Christian Moral Living

C16, Social Justice

New Creation

Q4, Who is Jesus Christ?

Reconciliation

C6, The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

C7, The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

Reading 1, Isaiah 61:1-2,10-11

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Luke 1:46-48,49-50,53-54

Reading 2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Gospel, John 1:6-8,19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No."

Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

My Soul Rejoices In My God

Jesus of Nazareth chose this reading from the prophet Isaiah to begin his public ministry in the synagogue in his hometown. In this way, Jesus linked not only his ministry but his whole person with the downtrodden, the oppressed, the marginalized of society. John the Baptist preached conversion of self, but Jesus went further. Jesus called for a wholly integrated conversion, one that sought reform of societal injustices as well as individual change.

This section of the Book of Isaiah is thought to have been proclaimed by Third Isaiah during the time when the Jewish people were recovering from the Babylonian oppression. In 587-86 B.C. the southern kingdom had fallen to the Babylonians. In keeping with their custom, the Babylonians had deported all leaders and resettled the land with their own people. The Temple had been destroyed. When the Babylonians were defeated by Cyrus the Great of Persia the people were allowed to return to Jerusalem. They believed Yahweh had sent Cyrus to free them from bondage and they rejoiced in their Lord. Salvation meant release of both spirit and body, and Yahweh's saving power surrounded the entire community.

Free at Last

The people found their return to Jerusalem was a time of re-creation. Cyrus had given them both the permission and the financial assistance needed to rebuild the Temple. Sacrifice could once again be offered to Yahweh. But the covenant demanded more than praise and sacrifice because worship without action was unacceptable to Yahweh. The people were once again reminded that they were responsible for joining with Yahweh in the co-creation of a land in which justice and righteousness were to be realized—a land in which captives were liberated and prisoners released.

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Life in the Spirit

John the Baptist continued the prophetic tradition in calling his followers to repentance and baptism, but his message pointed to one whose baptism would demand a more radical observance of Mosaic Law, a return to Yahweh's call to justice and righteousness. The baptism of water that John practiced was common among some Jewish sects, especially among the Essenes, a group with which scholars believe John may have been associated. This baptism was practiced often, sometimes several times a day, in order to wash away imperfection. The new baptism, which Jesus would herald, would be more than a cleansing for past misdeeds: In addition to self-conversion, baptism in the Spirit would demand solidarity with the marginalized, and it would require action on their behalf.

Paul echoed Isaiah's theme of praise and thanksgiving before God and through Christ Jesus, and he reminded the early Christians of their prophetic heritage. Do not despise the prophecies, said Paul, even though the prophets may challenge you to difficult tasks. The prophets were not known for giving people a "pat on the back." Rather, their message often was one that "comforted the afflicted and afflicted the comfortable." Perhaps the Thesalonians were among the comfortable. Paul challenged them to be on guard to recognize evil in their midst, and to respond to the Spirit in order that they might "be kept... blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:23). Perfection was linked to a preservation of the whole person, "spirit and soul and body" (5:23), and such perfection could not be achieved outside community. Only in community could persons become truly free and reach the perfection to which they were called.

Today's Good News

This day glad tidings are preached to the lowly and brokenhearted; salvation is proclaimed to the captives. But it is not enough to preach and to proclaim such; action must be taken to achieve liberty from all forms of oppression—in society, in church structures, in family. It is easy for North Americans to identify unjust structures in other lands. We can point to governments in South Africa, in Northern Ireland, in Central America that violate human rights through unjust imprisonment or seizure of property. But it is a far more difficult task to identify similar injustices in our own country, in our own cities and towns.

Those who visit the imprisoned are quick to tell us that it is the "lowly" in our midst who are incarcerated. Does that mean that only the poor are judged guilty of crimes? Does it mean that only the poor lack the finances to post bail? What of the forcible relocation of Native

Americans for the sake of corporate profits? Are they not imprisoned on land where they cannot herd their sheep, driven into impoverishment? How many elderly are barely surviving, being forced to choose between food and gas or electric? How many Americans crouch behind "security" bars, prisoners in their own homes? How many have no homes?

Points for Reflection and Discussion

1. Who among your parish community would you describe as marginalized? Why would you describe them as such? What does it mean to be in solidarity with them?

2. Can those who are wealthy be marginalized? Why or why not?

Overarching Lesson: C4, The Sacrament of Confirmation

Themes

Change of Heart

C3, The Sacrament of Baptism

Holiness

C13, Christian Moral Living

C15, A Consistent Ethic of Life

Ministry

C9, The Sacrament of Holy Orders

C10, The People of God