

Breaking Open God's Word the RITE Way

Period 4, Saturday Feb 22, 2020: 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

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Session Outline:

Setting the tone: Peace, peace and more peace

Classroom management: Crowd control with diplomacy

Lectionary: What you need to know

Learning styles: Your preference influences how you teach

Proclamation: The Word of God is Alive!

Commentaries: *Living the Word* (attached)

Typical session: Opening song, proclamation, preach

- sign-of-the-cross, free form, formal prayer

Commentaries: *Living the Word* (attached)

Sample session: Learn by doing

- March 1, 2020, 1st Sunday of Lent, Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7 (attached)

Best Practices: What does your RCIA program have to offer the conversation?

Questions: What are your biggest fears?

Words from the RCIA:

81 During the period of the catechumenate there should be celebrations of the word of God that accord with the liturgical season and that contribute to the instruction of the catechumens and the needs of the community.

82 The special celebrations of the word of God arranged for the benefit of the catechumens have as their primary purpose:

1. to implant in their hearts the teachings they are receiving: for example, the morality characteristic of the New Testament, the forgiving of injuries and insults, a sense of sin and repentance, the duties Christians must carry out in the world;
2. to give them instruction and experience in the different aspects and ways of prayer;
3. to explain to them the signs, celebrations, and seasons of the liturgy;
4. to prepare them gradually to enter the worship assembly of the entire community. ^[106]

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: Study Ed. USCCB, Liturgy Training Publications. (81-82)

<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Rites/RCIA.pdf>

Living the Word: Scripture Reflections and Commentaries
John Barker, OFM (Understanding the Word) Karla Bellinger (Reflecting on the Word)

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Visit booth numbers 131–133 and 230–232

Today's Focus: Called to Be True, March 1, 2020. 1st Sunday of Lent

Another Lent is a new opportunity to examine our relationship with God, and to follow the example of Jesus, who remained true to the end.

Understanding the Word

The Genesis reading relates how an original intimacy between humans and God was damaged by distrust. The serpent's question to the woman implies that God has placed an unreasonable limitation on the couple. Although Eve does not take the bait, she does note that God said they would die if they ate from the tree. Knowing that they will not physically die, the serpent tells a half-truth, suggesting that God does not have their best interest at heart. But once the couple has eaten of the tree, they do experience death in the form of estrangement from God, the source of life. Exile from the Garden, where God and the tree of life reside, symbolizes this rupture of the divine human relationship, the devastating consequences of sin. (Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7)

In his letter to the Romans, Paul articulates the problem to which Christ is the solution—human captivity to sin. He develops this theme by drawing a contrast between the actions of Adam and their consequences and those of Christ. Adam's disobedience brought judgment and death, not only for himself but for all his descendants, such that "death reigned" in the world. Christ's obedience reversed all of this: sinners are made righteous, the condemned are "acquitted," and the reign of death comes to an end. Through the "abundance of grace," a sheer gift of God, the acquitted now "reign in life" through Christ. (Romans 5:12–19)

In Matthew's Gospel Jesus, who represents all of Israel (2:15), recapitulates and perfects Israel's history with God. Now Jesus is led into the wilderness and tested, as Israel was after the Exodus. Whereas in the desert Israel lacked trust and was unfaithful to God, Jesus resists the temptation to use his powers for his own needs, to put God to the test, or to worship anyone other than God. The rest of the Gospel will show Jesus, as Son of God, serving others rather than himself and, even to the Cross, trusting and remaining faithful to the Father. (MT4:1–11)

Reflecting on the Word

In the fourth century A.D., Christianity became legal and then mandatory. To “follow Jesus” grew to be a soft way of life. Anybody and everybody could (and then should) be a Christian. Within one lifetime, the faith that had required its followers to be willing to be torn apart by lions now became “good for business.” What happened as a result? Men and women, turned off to a tamed Christianity, flocked to the Egyptian desert. In the desert, they shed the “fat” of mainstream acceptance. They strove to be pure and obedient and true in their faith. Desert monasticism flourished.

Jesus also was led into the desert. The Judean desert is stark. No trees offer shade. The sun beats down mercilessly. Ninety-five degrees is a cool day in May. For forty days, Jesus’ hunger intensified. If he had any fat on his body, it shriveled up. Three times he was tempted to take the easier path. Three times he stayed true to his mission and to his God: I will love the Lord alone!

Adam and Eve didn’t think that they needed to do what God told them. When found out, they tried to evade the One who sought them in love, like a guilty toddler hiding behind the couch crying out, “Don’t look at me!” They squirmed away from right and wrong.

As you and I move into this season of Lent, what does it mean for us to be true to God? The world around us may tempt us to be soft: lies and posturing and deceit proliferate in our culture and even in our Church. Lent is the season to grow more holy, our time to go to the desert. This is our ascetic season. This is our opportunity to strip away the fat that weighs down our spiritual and moral life.

Consider/Discuss

- King David is called to truth by the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 11—13). He cries out, “O God, create a pure heart in me. Give me a new and steadfast spirit!” What does it mean to you to be true? What tempts you to take a “softer” path?
- As we come before God in prayer, is there some part within us that wants to hide behind the couch and not be seen?

Living and Praying with the Word

Lord, sometimes we squirm away from obedience. You call us to look you straight in the eye and remain steadfast in following you, no matter the cost. But sometimes it is more comfortable to go the softer way. When we are tempted to disregard what our conscience tells us is right, fill us with the strength to stand fast. As we enter into this Lenten season, strip away the fat that encases our spiritual and moral life. Give us the grace to follow you more purely.

First Sunday of Lent, Lectionary: 22

Reading 1 **GN 2:7-9; 3:1-7**

The LORD God formed man out of the clay of the ground
and blew into his nostrils the breath of life,
and so man became a living being.

Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east,
and placed there the man whom he had formed.
Out of the ground the LORD God made various trees grow
that were delightful to look at and good for food,
with the tree of life in the middle of the garden
and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals
that the LORD God had made.

The serpent asked the woman,
“Did God really tell you not to eat
from any of the trees in the garden?”

The woman answered the serpent:
“We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden;
it is only about the fruit of the tree
in the middle of the garden that God said,
‘You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.’”

But the serpent said to the woman:
“You certainly will not die!
No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it
your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods
who know what is good and what is evil.”

The woman saw that the tree was good for food,
pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom.

So she took some of its fruit and ate it;
and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her,
and he ate it.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened,
and they realized that they were naked;
so they sewed fig leaves together
and made loincloths for themselves.