

TALK 1: WORSHIP

“Come, let us climb the mountain of the Lord” (Is 2:3)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

1. How do we cleanse our hands and purify our hearts to make ready to offer God worship? What are you doing to open yourself up to God’s plan for you?
2. When you think about the various challenges to your faith, how many of them are other things that make demands on your time? What changes might you need to make in your schedule to prioritize time to pray and worship?
3. How might you best prepare for Mass so that you can actively worship instead of passively listen?

FROM THE CHURCH

“Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14).

“The rites preceding the Liturgy of the Word, namely the Entrance, Greeting, Act of Penitence, *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, and collect, have the character of a beginning, introduction, and preparation. Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful who come together as one establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God’s word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal* 46).

“Adoration is the first act of the virtue of religion. To adore God is to acknowledge him as God, as the Creator and Savior, the Lord and Master of everything that exists, as infinite and merciful Love. ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve,’ says Jesus, citing *Deuteronomy*. To adore God is to acknowledge, in respect and absolute submission, the ‘nothingness of the creature’ who would not exist but for God. To adore God is to praise and exalt him and to humble oneself, as Mary did in the Magnificat, confessing with gratitude that he has done great things and holy is his name. The worship of the one God sets man free from turning in on himself, from the slavery of sin and the idolatry of the world” (CCC 2096-7).

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

“Who can climb the mountain of the Lord?
Or who can stand in his holy place?
The man with clean hands and pure heart,

Who has not given his soul to useless things” (Ps 24:3-4).

“You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve” (Lk 4:8, Dt 6:13).

“You are ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises’ of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Pt 2:9, cf. Ex 19:6).

“My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit; a contrite, humble heart, O God, you will not scorn” (Ps 51:19).

See also the hymn of praise in Daniel 3:52-90.

TALK 2: WORD

“When I found your words, I devoured them” (Jer 15:16)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

1. Ask yourself: are you planted near the living waters of God? Or are you languishing in the desert? Are you thirsty for what God wants to offer you?
2. How much is the Word of God a part of your prayer life outside of Mass? What ways might you incorporate more scripture into your prayer? What is the difference between studying the Bible and praying with the Bible?
3. What passage or verse in the scriptures have you “devoured?” What in the Bible spoke to you when you needed it most?

FROM THE CHURCH

“[T]he Scriptures are the living waters from which all who seek life and salvation must drink” (*General Instruction of the Lectionary* 5).

“The word of God proclaimed in the celebration of God’s mysteries does not only address present conditions but looks back to past events and forward to what is yet to come. Thus God’s word shows us what we should hope for with such a longing that in this changing world our hearts will be set on the place where our true joy lies” (GIL 7).

“The preaching of the word is necessary for the ministry of the sacraments, for these are sacraments of faith, which is born and nourished by the word” (*Presbyterium Ordinis* 4, qtd. in GIL 10).

“The Church is nourished spiritually at the twofold table of God's word and of the Eucharist: from the one it grows in wisdom and from the other in holiness. In the word of God the divine covenant is announced; in the Eucharist the new and everlasting covenant is renewed. On the one hand the history of salvation is brought to mind by means of human sounds; on the other it is made manifest in the sacramental signs of the Liturgy. It can never be forgotten, therefore, that the divine word read and proclaimed by the Church in the Liturgy has as its one purpose the sacrifice of the New Covenant and the banquet of grace, that is, the Eucharist. The celebration of Mass in which the word is heard and the Eucharist is offered and received forms but one single act of divine worship” (GIL, 10).

“The faithful should be keenly aware of the one presence of Christ in both the word of God -- it is he himself who speaks when the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church -- and above all under the Eucharistic species” (GIL 46).

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the company of scoffers. Rather, the law of the Lord is his joy; and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted near streams of water that yields its fruit in season; its leaves never wither; whatever he does prospers” (Ps 1:1-3).

“When I found your words, I devoured them; they became my joy and the happiness of my heart” (Jer 15:16).

“Desire therefore my words; long for them and you will be instructed” (Wis 6:11).

“One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4).

See also Nehemiah 8:1-12 and Luke 24:13-35.

TALK 3: SACRIFICE

“*God Himself will provide the Lamb*” (Gen 22:8)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

1. The disciples struggled to accept Jesus’ teaching on the Eucharist. Are there teachings of the Church that are difficult to follow, or that seem to demand too high a sacrifice?
2. What offering am I bringing to God? To my neighbor? For my vocation? In what ways is God multiplying my offering?

FROM THE CHURCH

“Be pleased to look upon these offerings with a serene and kindly countenance, and to accept them, as once you were pleased to accept the gifts of your servant Abel the just, the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith, and the offering of your high priest Melchizedek, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim” (*Roman Missal, Eucharistic Prayer I*)

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

The Testing of Abraham: Gen 22:1-13

Passover: Ex 12:1-14

Melchizedek as a type of Christ: Heb 7

Bread of Life discourse: John 6:22-71

TALK 4: COMMUNION

“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him” (Jn 6:56)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean to you to be part of the “Bride of Christ”? How does this image affect how you conceive of your relationship with God?
2. Entering into a marriage requires intentionality and consent. Was there a definite moment when you dedicated yourself to God?
3. What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ and uphold your side of the covenant promise?

FROM THE CHURCH

“The priestly community’s sacred character and organic structure are carried into effect by means of the sacraments and the virtues. The faithful are incorporated into the Church by baptism; they are assigned by its character a place in the worship of the Christian religion; they are reborn as sons of God and obliged to profess before men the faith which they have received from God through the Church. The bond that ties them to the Church is made more complete by the sacrament of confirmation. It enriches them with the special strength of the Holy Spirit and gives them a stricter obligation to act as true witnesses of Christ by spreading and defending the faith by word and deed. When they share the eucharistic sacrifice, the source and culmination of all Christian life, they offer the divine Victim to God and themselves with it. Thus with no confusion, but each in his own way, they all play their own part in the liturgical action at the sacrificial offering and holy communion. Moreover, when they have had Christ’s body for their refreshment at the sacred gathering, they are a concrete demonstration of the unity of God’s People, of which this august sacrament is the appropriate sign and the marvelously effective instrument” (*Lumen Gentium* 11).

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Israel’s infidelity: Ezekiel 16

Marriage & the Church: Eph 5:21-33

“On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you” (Jn 14:20).

TALK 5: MISSION

“Go therefore and make disciples” (Mt 28:19)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

1. What are you “breathing in” from God? From your loved ones? What are you “breathing out” into these relationships and into the world?
2. When you consider the work of evangelization, are you too focused on the “pamphlets” and online debates? Are you nurturing the basics of evangelization in your own heart?
3. It is sent: What will you take from this retreat that you can share with others? What are you taking with you that will draw you closer to God as the Bride and Body of Christ?

FROM THE CHURCH

“Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated: each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power he enjoys, teaches and rules the priestly people; acting in the person of Christ, he makes present the Eucharistic sacrifice, and offers it to God in the name of all the people. But the faithful, in virtue of their royal priesthood, join in the offering of the Eucharist. They likewise exercise that priesthood in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity” (*Lumen Gentium* 10).

“To the concluding rites belong... the dismissal of the people by the Deacon or Priest, so that each may go back to doing good works, praising and blessing God” (GIRM 90).

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:18-20).