



Week Leading up to 3.6.22: Right and Wrong Worship

***{Start with reviewing the previous meeting's challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

Let's Begin: Think about how the challenge went for the last session. What went well? What was difficult?

Opening Prayer:

Begin with a brief moment of silence. Shake off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remember that God is always with us.

Read: **Lk 4:1-13**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

Dear Jesus, You understand our human nature and the temptations we face. Give us the eyes to recognize temptation and evil, especially temptation of the flesh and the sin of pride. Give us the strength to turn away from all sin and center ourselves on You. May we always worship You alone with willing hearts. Amen.

Reflection or Discussion Question:

1. In today's reading we hear how the devil tempts Jesus. Jesus responds to the temptation of being given glory and power with "You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve." Why do you think/feel Jesus responds this way?

Leader Note: Please let your group know that this video especially ties into the 2nd temptation regarding worship that we heard in the Gospel today.

YouTube Video: Bishop Barron on Why Being Good Is Not Enough (10:32 min) <https://youtu.be/vXLZQUhCE3g>

Reflection or Discussion Questions:

2. Bishop Barron talks about three forms of formation found in Exodus: spiritual, moral and liturgical formation. Why do you think that society views moral formation as more important than liturgical formation? What happens when the two are separated?
3. What are your thoughts on the concept of "It doesn't matter what you believe or how you worship if you are a good person"? What are some of the pitfalls of thinking this way?
4. Just as the devil tempted Jesus with power and glory, He tempts us as well. When we sin, we choose power and glory for our own good over God. How has attending specific community rituals (i.e. Mass) helped you to re-align yourself to God will versus sinning? Are there other traditions, sacraments or rituals that help you to stay aligned to Gods will as well?
5. Have you struggled with going back to Mass in person due to fear of Covid-19?
6. Do you know anyone that considers attending Mass online just as good as attending in person? What do you think/feel is the difference between attending Mass online versus in person?
7. Have you focused on growing in each of these three areas in your faith formation (spiritual, moral, liturgical)? If so, what did you specifically do? If not, what can you do differently?

Session Challenges: {Choose one or both}

- Make a specific plan to implement something to help you grow in one of these 3 areas in your faith formation: spiritual, moral or liturgical. Take a small step. Make it something doable, write down your plan, and add a specific step you will take to accomplish this plan.
- To help grow in understanding of the Mass, do some research on your own. A great article to start with is here: <https://stpeter.us/holy-mass-explained/>

Closing Prayer: (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.) *Dear Lord, You are our one and only God. In this broken world, there are so many temptations. Create in us a rightly ordered disposition to properly worship You at Mass. Align our minds and hearts to Your Divine splendor when we touch You both spiritually and physically in the true gift of the Eucharist. Amen.*

{Optional additional Readings} Sunday Reading 1: **Dt 26:4-10**; Sunday Reading 2: **Rom 10:8-13**



Week Leading up to 3.13.22: Entering the Cloud

***{Start with reviewing the previous meeting's challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

Let's Begin: Think about how the challenge went for the last session. What went well? What was difficult?

Opening Prayer:

Begin with a brief moment of silence. Shake off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remember that God is always with us.

Read: **Lk 9:28b-36**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

Dear Jesus, just as You were transformed, You call us also to transform our lives. Help us to set up the tents in our lives to remain ever present with You and to become more like You in this messy world – a light shining forth with a brightness that overcomes the darkness. Amen.

Reflection or Discussion Question:

1. We hear in this reading today that Peter, John, and James went into the cloud with Jesus and were frightened. Would you enter the cloud? How do you think you would respond?

YouTube Video: Raise Your Expectations: How Saints Live Differently with Fr. Mark-Mary (7:42 min)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOpLT_rVtpQ

Reflection or Discussion Questions:

2. Fr. Mark-Mary discusses the struggle with living in this world versus raising our expectations of how to live like Christ. What are some examples of being conformed to this world? Do you think/feel they are always easy to recognize?
3. What are some examples of measuring your life according to how others are doing? Do you think/feel this is good or bad to do?
4. Do you have a favorite saint? What is it that you love about this saint? If you don't currently have a favorite saint, is there one you would like to learn more about?
5. What are your personal expectations of how to live like Christ?
6. Can you think of other ways, in addition to studying the saints, that would help you to reform or raise your expectations of how to live like Christ?
7. Can you think of one thing that you need to do to remove a piece of tape that is currently holding you down?

Session Challenges: {Choose one or both}

- Do this examine at the end of each day this week: What things did I do that kept me focused on earthly pleasures? What did I do to live like Christ today? What will I do better tomorrow?
- Research a saint and create a simple list of characteristics of that saint. From this list select one or two items that resonate with you and write them down somewhere that you can see daily to remind you to focus on them and to live more like Christ.

Closing Prayer: (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

Dear Lord, You call us to be transformed by renewing our minds toward You. Even though we may have fear in removing the tape in our lives that holds us down, our hearts long to be in the cloud with You. Give us the courage and fortitude needed to live like the saints, always keeping our focus on You. Turn our hearts away from the pleasures of this world and grow our desire for eternal joy with You in heaven. Amen.

{Optional additional Readings} Sunday Reading 1: **Gn 15:5-12, 17-18**; Sunday Reading 2: **Phil 3:17—4:1**



Week Leading up to 3.20.22: A Non-Competitive God

***{Start with reviewing the previous meeting's challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

Let's Begin: Think about how the challenge went for the last session. What went well? What was difficult?

Opening Prayer:

Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

1st Reading for Sunday (this is not the Gospel reading): Ex 3:1-8, 13-15

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

Heavenly Father we pray for the gift of humility. We ask that through this gift You help us to better appreciate reality: who You are and who we are. In this way, we receive freedom because we receive truth. Amen.

Reflection or Discussion Question:

1. Does anything about this reading resonate with you? Strike you?
2. How do you think you would have responded to such a phenomena?

YouTube Video: Bishop Barron on the Burning Bush (6:15 min) - <https://youtu.be/7R25QuLyl90>

Reflection or Discussion Questions:

3. Does this video re-shape or change your mentality about God?
4. One of Bishop Barron's biggest teaching themes is the "non-competitive nature of God." Why do you think he finds this so important to share these days? How might this perspective change how a believer and/or a non-believer views God?
5. Bishop Barron points out the philosophers/philosophies that shaped the 20th centuries sought to "kill God" and portray God as a competitor to our freedom and flourishing. How have we seen their philosophies in action? Do you think it's made us more free and flourishing?
6. Bishop Barron quotes St. Irenaeus who stated, "The glory of God is man fully alive." What do you think of this quote? Why is this distinction important? Do you know of anyone who exemplifies this concept?
7. If we have a competitive God mindset there are things we might avoid because it would *seem* like we lose and God wins. For example, when we have big decisions in life (e.g. choosing a vocation, a job, who to marry, making a move). Since God is *NOT* competitive, will this video change how you pray for God's will in your life?

Session Challenges: {Choose one or both}

- Pray the Litany of Humility everyday this next week. You can find a free download here: <https://everydayprayerco.com/blogs/news/the-litany-of-humility-free-pdf-download>
- Do you know someone who would benefit from watching the session video? Consider sharing the video with them through email or text.

Closing Prayer: Leaders: Please make copies of the prayer found on the 2nd page to hand out to your group to pray together. If you prefer to listen to it as a group in music format you can do so here: <https://globalworship.tumblr.com/post/150014175520/fragrance-prayer-cardinal-newmanmother-teresa>

Dear Lord, we know that You are a loving God that desires all good for us. As we gather this evening we would like to offer these personal intentions to You Lord...[pause] ...we lift these prayers to You, dear Father. Those prayers said and left unsaid. We ask that Your will be done for these people. Now let's join together and pray {or listen to} the Fragrance Prayer as we conclude our prayer time.

{Optional additional Readings} Sunday Reading 2: 1 Cor 10: 1-6; Gospel Reading: Lk 13:1-9



"Fragrance Prayer" by Cardinal Newman/Mother Teresa.

<https://globalworship.tumblr.com/post/150014175520/fragrance-prayer-cardinal-newmanmother-teresa>

Dear Jesus, help us to spread your fragrance everywhere we go. Flood our souls with your spirit and life. Penetrate and possess our whole being so utterly, that our lives may only be a radiance of yours.

Shine through us, and be so in us, that every person we should come in contact with may feel your presence in our soul. Let them look up and see no longer us, but only Jesus.

Stay with us, and then we shall begin to shine as you shine; so to shine as to be a light to others; the light, Jesus, will be all from you. None of it will be ours. It will be you shining on others through us.

Let us thus praise you in the way you love best, by shining on those around us. Let us preach you without preaching: not by words, but by our example, by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what we do, the evident fullness of the love our hearts bear for you. Amen.

"Fragrance Prayer" by Cardinal Newman/Mother Teresa.

<https://globalworship.tumblr.com/post/150014175520/fragrance-prayer-cardinal-newmanmother-teresa>

Dear Jesus, help us to spread your fragrance everywhere we go. Flood our souls with your spirit and life. Penetrate and possess our whole being so utterly, that our lives may only be a radiance of yours.

Shine through us, and be so in us, that every person we should come in contact with may feel your presence in our soul. Let them look up and see no longer us, but only Jesus.

Stay with us, and then we shall begin to shine as you shine; so to shine as to be a light to others; the light, Jesus, will be all from you. None of it will be ours. It will be you shining on others through us.

Let us thus praise you in the way you love best, by shining on those around us. Let us preach you without preaching: not by words, but by our example, by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what we do, the evident fullness of the love our hearts bear for you. Amen.



Week Leading up to 3.27.22: The “Faithful” Son

***{Start with reviewing the previous meeting’s challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week’s challenge.}**

Let’s Begin: Think about how the challenge went for the last session. What went well? What was difficult?

Opening Prayer:

Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

Read: **Lk 15:1-3, 11-32**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

Heavenly Father, may we have hearts that beat with Your heart. May we have minds that think as You do. May we have ears that hear what You hear, eyes that see what You see and tongues that speak Your mercy. Amen.

Reflection or Discussion Question:

1. What are some of your initial reactions to this reading? Is there something in particular that sticks out to you?

YouTube Video: The Prodigal Son’s Older Brother with Dr. Brant Pitre (7:39 min) - <https://youtu.be/r3ZzHnU4RCI>

Reflection or Discussion Questions:

2. When hearing or reading the story of the prodigal son previously, have you reflected on the older brother? In Jesus’ depiction of the older brother, what spiritual lessons is He conveying?
3. Dr. Pitre says about the older brother that, “Even though he’s a son, he sees himself as a slave.” Do you find this easy to relate to when considering our relationship to God? Difficult to relate to? Why or why not?
4. How do you envision your relationship to God (e.g., slave, servant, son/daughter)?
5. Do you perceive your relationship to God the Father or God the Son or God the Holy Spirit differently? In what ways?
6. This is an extreme example, but imagine you die and are just outside the gates of heaven and you peer in to see someone who has deeply wounded you or someone that did truly evil things on earth like Hitler. How would you react to seeing them in heaven? Why?
7. Will the lesson from this parable change how you relate to those not practicing the faith in any way? How about how you relate to God?

Session Challenges: {Choose one or both}

- Pray for an increase in mercy and compassion in your own heart.
- Consider reaching out to a “younger brother” - anyone with whom you are cut off from (at minimum spend the week intentionally praying for them).

Closing Prayer: (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

Lord God, in this season of Lent, convict us of our own personal wounds and errors. Stir in us the grace to be people of mercy and compassion, especially when we want justice and vengeance. Trusting in Your mercy and compassion, we offer You our personnel intentions... {pause}...Dear Jesus, we offer these intentions and all that remain silent in our hearts. We trust in Your love for these people and us. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

{Optional additional Readings} Sunday Reading 1: **Josh 5:9a,10-12**; Reading 2: **2 Cor 5:17-21**



Week Leading up to 4.3.22: The Scapegoat

***{Start with reviewing the previous meeting's challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

Let's Begin: Think about how the challenge went for the last session. What went well? What was difficult?

Opening Prayer:

Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

Read: **John 8:1-11**

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

Heavenly Father, in a time that is so busy and confusing, it is easy to be distracted and set off course. Help us to see and know our true enemy so that we might never be separated from You. Amen.

Reflection or Discussion Question:

1. What are some of your initial reactions to this reading? Is there something in particular that sticks out to you?
2. Do you think it's true that every time we gossip or slander another we are acting like the Pharisees and scribes in today's reading (killing/stoning another's character and good name)?

YouTube Video: Bishop Barron on Rene Girard (9:43 min) - <https://youtu.be/LSzF2OG2ejI>

Reflection or Discussion Questions:

3. Had you ever really considered the role of scapegoating in our cultural and religious mindset before this video?
4. Where do you see scapegoating on display in our modern cultural landscape?
5. Have you ever been part of a scapegoating discussion, either willingly or reluctantly, where others are blamed for some problem or ill?
6. Have you ever been on the receiving end of the scapegoating mechanism (i.e. in your family, at work, etc.)?
7. What are some practical things we can do to act like Jesus in today's reading and stand in the way of people scapegoating?
8. Through this video, Bishop Barron reminds us that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection EXPOSES scapegoating as an evil. Scapegoating is a byproduct of the Fall that sets up an unhealthy "us versus them" mindset. In effect, it's never us vs. them, it's always us vs. sin/the flesh/the devil. Jesus is always trying to point out our TRUE enemy because we keep mistaking our enemy. What do you think about this revelation?

Session Challenges: {Choose one or both}

- Go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation during this season of Lent.
- Invite another person to go with you to Confession (not in the same confessional at the same time of course. Lol)

Closing Prayer: (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

Lord God, help us to see evil and how we cooperate with it. Holy Spirit, create in us a great desire to be truly accountable for our actions and turn away from sin. Jesus, we thank You for Your example and ask for Your divine guidance in every aspect of our lives. In Your Mighty Name, Amen.

{Optional additional Readings} Sunday Reading 1: **Is 43: 16-21**; Reading 2: **Phil 3:6-14**



Week Leading up to 04.10.22: What does Surrender Look Like

Leaders: If using Option 1 below, let the group know that you will be reading/listening only to a section of the Gospel reading today that centers around the crucifixion. The audio is from Fr. Mike Schmitz, Day 321 Bible in a Year.

**{Start with reviewing the previous meeting's challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}*

Let's Begin: Think about how the challenge went for the last session. What went well? What was difficult?

Opening Prayer:

Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

Option 1: Read or listen to a section of the Gospel: **Lk 23:13-56**; audio can be found at link below (from 7:01-11:19 minutes)

Option 2: Read or listen to the entire reading **Lk 22:14—23:56**; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeOqtYjaUUE> (start at 2:19 to 11:19 minutes) be sure to allow extra time for this since it is so long.

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer: Dear God, because You love us so dearly, You allowed Your Son to come to us and be put to death for our salvation. Jesus, You willingly sacrificed Yourself for us. This is utterly beyond our understanding! Help us to never forget the depth of Your sacrifice and what total surrender looks like so that we, too, may surrender fully to Your call. In Your name, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reflection or Discussion Question:

1. On Palm Sunday we hear the story of Jesus' death and total sacrifice for us. Does Jesus' sacrifice cause you any discomfort? How so?
2. Does His sacrifice offer you comfort? How so?

YouTube Video: What Does Surrender Actually Look Like with Fr. Schmitz (8:18 min) <https://youtu.be/aabwei87sQM>

Reflection or Discussion Questions:

3. Did the video change your perception of Jesus as Lord - a Lord to give dominion over everything in your life, granting Him full access to your heart? What do you find helps you to surrender more fully to God?
4. When we offer something to God, it gives God access to it. Allowing access says we trust in God's love for us and for those whom we love. Have you ever placed anyone you love or a relationship under the dominion of God? Did this change anything? How so?
5. Have you thought of asking God to have dominion over a particular sin in your life? When we turn something over to God, does that mean we no longer need to worry or work to overcome it?
6. Have you ever offered something to God wanting Him to take it away and He did not? Did this make you doubt Him or your relationship with Him?
7. In the video, Fr. Mike Schmitz says, "Nothing given to God is ever wasted." What do you think/feel this means?

Session Challenges: {Choose one or both}

- In prayer consider what you may be holding back from God. Offer God full access to what you are holding back, even if nothing comes to mind. Let him know that you wish Him to enter all aspects of your life and heart. Be mindful in the days that follow...pay attention to what happens when you hold nothing back from Him.
- Ask God to have dominion over a particular sin in your life. Ask Him to give you the perseverance to overcome this sin and go to confession.

Closing Prayer: *Dear Jesus, there are so many areas in our lives that we still hold back from you. Help identify these areas and our sins so that we can more fully surrender to Your will. We beg for Your mercy that You so willingly wish to give us. Shower us with Your eternal grace to have the humility to fully offer all those who we love, our gifts, and our sins to You. Please offer your personal intentions for those you would like to pray for now...Individual prayer intentions are offered here...Lord, we raise these intentions to Your merciful heart, all those said and those left unsaid. We truly wish to give You full dominion over our lives and grow in an ever-deeper relationship with You! Help us to walk with You this week, this most Holy week, slowly and intentionally. Teach us Your understanding of true sacrifice and the vastness of Your love for us. May Your example remain forever in the very depth of our souls. In gratitude. Amen.*

{Optional additional Readings} Sunday Reading 1: **Is 50:4-7** Sunday Reading 2: **Phil 2:6-11**