**LENT 2021 - RCIA ideas for a parish retreat**

**AS WE SIGN MEMBERS OF OUR HOUSEHOLD ON ASH WEDNESDAY  WITH ASHES WE COULD EXPAND MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN  THIS WAY WHICH COMES TO US FROM THE RCIA RITUAL – WITHOUT  THE NEED FOR ANY BODILY TOUCH. THERE IS AN OPTIONAL RESPONSE  GIVEN HERE – OR IT COULD SIMPLY BE RECEIVED IN SILENCE.**

**SIGNING OF THE SENSES *One person stands in front of the other. As the  leader says each prayer, the cross is traced over the person as indicated.* Leader: Receive the sign of the cross on your forehead.**

**It is Christ himself who now strengthens you with  this sign of his love. Learn to know and follow him. *Optional response***: *Christ will be your strength!*

*Learn to know and follow him!*

**Receive the sign of the cross on your ears,**

**that you may hear the voice of the Lord.**

*Christ will be your …*

**Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes,**

**that you may see the glory of God.**

*Christ will be your…*

**Receive the sign of the cross on your lips,**

**that you may respond to the word of God.**

*Christ will be your…*

**Receive the sign of the cross over your heart,**

**that Christ may dwell there by faith.**

*Christ will be your…*

**Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders,  that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ.**

*Christ will be your…*

**Receive the sign of the cross on your hands,**

**that Christ may be known in the work which you do.** *Christ will be your…*

**Receive the sign of the cross on your feet,**

**that you may walk in the way of Christ.**

*Christ will be your…*

**We entrust ourselves to the sign of eternal life, in the name  of the Father, + and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.** Amen.

**A simple form of Gospel Reflection**

Offer a brief prayer to the Holy Spirit that we may be receptive  and open to the Spirit’s promptings..

One person reads the Gospel text aloud slowly,  in its entirety.

Pause for at least one full minute’s silence

Read the text aloud again, slowly. . .

Ask everyone to focus on the one word or phrase that struck  them, a particular word from this Gospel that impacted on  them.

Each person in the group speaks aloud in turn that word or  phrase of the Gospel that struck them **without adding any  comment, explanation or discussion.** Just speak the word of  God that impacted upon you.

Read the Gospel text aloud, slowly, again.

Now we give each person in the group the opportunity to  comment on the word or phrase that impacted upon them: **What struck them about it?**

**Why / how is it speaking to them?**

*As the discussion continues the following questions may be helpful:* What images of God emerge for me here?

What impact is this text going to have on my life in the coming  week?

*Make sure that participants keep the discussion focused on what  impact this will have on them personally and do not start talking  about people or situations outside of themselves.*

**The third week of Lent: 7th March 2021 AN ADAPTATION OF THE FIRST SCRUTINY  *(THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT)***

***What are the scrutinies about?***

***“Search me God and know my heart” Psalm 139:23***

**RCIA Rite # 128 &129**

“The scrutinies… have above all a spiritual purpose. The scrutinies are meant to  uncover, then heal, all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect;  to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong and good… “

**They can help us** to progress in genuine self-knowledge through serious  examination of our lives and true repentance.

Or as St Augustine put it, and repeated for us in one of the chants of Taizé: ***“Lord Jesus Christ, your light shines within us.***

***Let not my doubts or my darkness speak to me.***

***Let my heart always welcome your love.”***

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**THE GOSPEL OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN:**

**from the Gospel according to John 4:5-30, 39-42**

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his  son Joseph. Jacob’s well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by  the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water,  Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ His disciples had gone into the town to buy  food. The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a  Samaritan, for a drink?’ – Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus  replied:

‘If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you: Give me a drink, you would have been the one to ask,

and he would have given you living water.’

‘You have no bucket, sir,’ she answered ‘and the well is deep: how could you get this  living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and  drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?’ Jesus replied:

‘Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again;

but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside them,

welling up to eternal life.’

‘Sir,’ said the woman ‘give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and  never have to come here again to draw water.’ ‘Go and call your husband’ said Jesus  to her ‘and come back here.’ The woman answered, ‘I have no husband.’ He said to  her, ‘You are right to say, “I have no husband”; for although you have had five, the  one you have now is not your husband. You spoke the truth there.’ ‘I see you are a  prophet, sir’ said the woman. ‘Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, while you  say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.’ Jesus said:

‘Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

You worship what you do not know;

we worship what we do know: for salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour will come – in fact it is here already –

when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants.

God is spirit, and those who worship

must worship in spirit and truth.’

The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah – that is, Christ – is coming; and when  he comes he will tell us everything.’ ‘I who am speaking to you,’ said Jesus ‘I am he.’ At this point his disciples returned, and were surprised to find him speaking to a  woman, though none of them asked, ‘What do you want from her?’ or, ‘Why are you  talking to her?’ The woman put down her water jar and hurried back to the town to  tell the people. ‘Come and see a man who has told me everything I ever did; I  wonder if he is the Christ?’ This brought people out of the town and they started  walking towards him.

Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the woman’s  testimony when she said, ‘He told me all I have ever done’, so, when the Samaritans  came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, and  when he spoke to them many more came to believe; and they said to the woman,  ‘Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him  ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.’

SHARED REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL

Some questions that might help:

What are the thirsting areas of my life that need ‘living water’?

What do you think it meant for the woman to tell others:  “Come and see a man who has told me everything I ever did”?

**Invitation to Silent Prayer**

***The celebrant invites all participating to pray in silence and suggesting  that as a sign of their inner spirit of repentance they bow their heads or  kneel…***

**Presider: Beloved of God, bow your heads and pray.**

***All pray for some time in silence. After the period of silent prayer,  we stand for the intercessions.***

**Intercessions:**

**1: That we may ponder the word of God in our hearts  and savour its meaning more fully day by day,  let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**2: That, like the woman of Samaria, we may review our lives  before the face of Jesus and acknowledge our weaknesses,  let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**3: That we may welcome anew the living water of the  spirit of Christ welling up within us to eternal life,  let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**4: That together with Christ we may be worshipers  of the Father in spirit and in truth,**

**let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**5: That we may share with our friends and neighbours  the wonder and joy of knowing Christ,**

**let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer. *other local intentions….*

**Prayer with outstretched hands**

***After the intercessions, the rite continues with this prayer:***

**Presider: All-merciful Father, your Son revealed himself  beautifully to the woman of Samaria with great mercy. Moved by that encounter we desire to welcome anew  the wonder of our being your adopted children  through the power of your sacraments.**

**In these Lenten days, free us anew from the slavery to sin,  and help us welcome the gentle yoke of Jesus.  Protect us in every danger,**

**that we may serve you faithfully in peace and joy  and give you thanks for ever and ever.**

*All:* Amen.

**Let us bless the Lord** *All:* Thanks be to God.

**AN ADAPTATION OF THE SECOND SCRUTINY  (FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT) 14th March 2021**

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**The Gospel of the Man born blind: John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38**

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. He spat on the  ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man, and  said to him, ‘Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam’ (a name that means ‘sent’). So the  blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, ‘Isn’t this the  man who used to sit and beg?’ Some said, ‘Yes, it is the same one.’ Others said, ‘No,  he only looks like him.’ The man himself said, ‘I am the man.’

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath  day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man’s eyes, so when the Pharisees  asked him how he had come to see, he said, ‘He put a paste on my eyes, and I  washed, and I can see.’ Then some of the Pharisees said, ‘This man cannot be from  God: he does not keep the sabbath.’ Others said, ‘How could a sinner produce signs  like this?’ And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man  again, ‘What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your  eyes?’ ‘He is a prophet’ replied the man.

‘Are you trying to teach us,’ they replied ‘and you a sinner through and through,  since you were born!’ And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him,  ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ ‘Sir,’ the man replied ‘tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.’ Jesus said, ‘You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.’ The  man said, ‘Lord, I believe’, and worshipped him.

SHARED REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL

*Some questions that may help:*

In the face of innocent suffering, where do we see God at work? Of what blindness do I need to be cured?

**Invitation to Silent Prayer**

***The celebrant invites all participating to pray in silence and suggesting  that as a sign of their inner spirit of repentance they bow their heads or  kneel…***

**Presider: Beloved of God, bow your heads and pray.**

***All pray for some time in silence. After the period of silent prayer,  we stand for the intercessions.***

**Intercessions:**

**1:That God may gently lead all who are seeking His face  to Christ, the light of the world,**

**let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**2: That we may remember in times of deep suffering  that all God can do is give love,**

**let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**3: That freed by the power of the Spirit, we may put fear  behind us and press forward with confidence,  let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**4: That all who suffer persecution for Christ’s name  may find their strength in him,**

**let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**5: That all of us, by the example of our lives may become through our friendship with Christ, a light to others,  let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

***other local intentions…***

**Concluding Prayer:**

***The celebrant prays:***

**Presider: Lord God, source of unfailing light,  by the death and resurrection of Christ**

**you have cast out the darkness of hatred and lies  and poured forth the light of your truth and love  upon the human family.**

**Look with continued kindness upon your adopted children.  Help us to keep passing**

**from darkness to your wonderful light.**

**Help us to walk always as children of the light.  We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

*All:* Amen.

**Let us bless the Lord** *All:* Thanks be to God.

**AN ADAPTATION OF THE THIRD SCRUTINY  (FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT) 21st March 2021**

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**Gospel: John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33-45**

Mary and Martha sent this message to Jesus, ‘Lord, the man you love is ill.’ On  receiving the message, Jesus said, ‘This sickness will end not in death but in God’s  glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.’

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus  was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, ‘Let  us go to Judaea.’

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already.  Bethany is only about two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to  Martha and Mary to sympathise with them over their brother. When Martha heard  that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house.  Martha said to Jesus, ‘If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I  know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.’ ‘Your brother’  said Jesus to her ‘will rise again.’ Martha said, ‘I know he will rise again at the  resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus said:

‘I am the resurrection and the life.

If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live,

and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this?’

‘Yes, Lord,’ she said ‘I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who  was to come into this world.’

Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, ‘Where  have you put him?’ They said, ‘Lord, come and see.’ Jesus wept; and the Jews said,  ‘See how much he loved him!’ But there were some who remarked, ‘He opened the  eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man’s death?’ Still sighing,  Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said,  ‘Take the stone away.’ Martha said to him, ‘Lord, by now he will smell; this is the  fourth day.’ Jesus replied, ‘Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the  glory of God?’ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said:

‘Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.

I knew indeed that you always hear me,

but I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me,

so that they may believe it was you who sent me.’

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, here! Come out!’ The dead  man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his  face. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, let him go free.’

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed  in him.

SHARED REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL

***Some questions that may help:***

What do I think is dead or entombed within me that Christ can call to  new life?

“Jesus wept.” What does that mean to us?

**Invitation to Silent Prayer**

***The celebrant invites all participating to pray in silence and suggesting  that as a sign of their inner spirit of repentance they bow their heads or  kneel…***

**Presider: Beloved of God, bow your heads and pray.**

***All pray for some time in silence. After the period of silent prayer,  we stand for the intercessions.***

**Intercessions:**

**1: That the words of Christ Jesus in the Gospel may continually call our souls to life,**

**we pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**2: That those who are brokenhearted by the death of a loved  one or friend may find consolation in God and in our care,  let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**3: That at Easter we may again be confirmed in our hope  of rising to life with Christ,**

**let us pray to the Lord.** All: Lord, hear our prayer.

**4: That the whole world, which God has created in love,  may flower in faith, hope and love and so receive new life,  let us pray to the Lord.** *All:* Lord, hear our prayer.

*other local intentions…*

**Concluding Prayer:**

***The celebrant prays:***

**Lord Jesus Christ,**

**you commanded Lazarus to come out from his tomb. By your own resurrection you freed all people from death. You have the words that call our souls to life. You will not allow death to have the last word over us. You call us to share in your joy.**

**Help us to advance in your footsteps,**

**looking forward to Easter**

**when we will delight in the triumph of your Resurrection,  for you live and reign for ever and ever.**

*All:* Amen.

**Let us bless the Lord**

*All:* Thanks be to God.