

SIGNS REFLECTION

SPEAKER PREPARATION MATERIAL

Speaker: Mature Adult Team Member

Time: Fourth reflection of Rise Day

Length: 20 minutes

Scripture: Luke 24: 30-36

Previous Reflection: Christian Life

Following Reflection: Discipleship (on Go Day)

Setting:

The Christian Life reflection reminded us how deeply we are rooted in the paschal mystery and depend on Jesus' loving presence and compassion to show us the path to fulfillment. The flow of the day's activities, including the Covenant Rite, adoration, and a prayerful reflection on signs helps prepare the participants for the Eucharist.

Progression:

Participants have been moving from thinking about and knowing about Jesus to encountering him and his self-giving love. They are aware now that all paths go through Jesus to the Father, and thus pull us into the paschal mystery, through the power of the Holy Spirit. We begin to understand that Jesus wants to be with us, to encounter us, to touch us with his love, conveying his comfort, forgiveness, mercy, and compassion.

Purpose:

Jesus comes to us as we celebrate with sacred signs, symbols, ritual action, and joyful sounds. As members of the People of God, the Church, we are invited to be part of these celebrations. Our community is strengthened when Christ meets us in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, our thanksgiving meal. The paschal mystery lives at the heart of the Eucharist and fills our sacred encounter with the living, loving, saving Jesus, whose dynamism transforms us into him. Though Jesus died only once, we recall his self-giving love, to the point of suffering and dying for us. Here he is, truly present with us in the timeless sacrifice at the altar. During the Eucharistic celebration, we give thanks as Jesus becomes present and transforms us into bread for the world.

Faith Awareness:

The centrality of the Eucharist to our faith and life becomes more apparent as we contemplate Christ's presence in the midst of our celebration of this sacrament. These encounters are both personal and communal. We move beyond obligation to desiring this graced encounter.

Response:

The rich symbols, the sacred words and actions, the special and individual meanings brought to mind during mass, invite each and all to say Yes, Amen, to a deeper relationship with Jesus. All this culminates when we participate in the Eucharist. We are a Eucharistic people intending to live with a Eucharistic faith.

Scripture for further reflection:

Gen 9:13

Ex 3:1-6

John 6:35-40

Acts 2: 43-47

Luke 22:14-19

Acts 2:42

SIGNS REFLECTION

OUTLINE

After reading and praying with the scripture for this reflection, please study the outline carefully. Time constraints may require you to be selective. As you develop your stories and examples, consider the points in bold as most essential to the purpose of your sharing and the continuity of the weekend.

Scripture: Make sure to read Luke 24:30-36 from the enthroned Bible at the point in your reflection where you feel it is most apropos.

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. (Luke 24:30-36)

Introduction: Share a story of a sign in your life that has special meaning.

I. Like human beings, God communicates with us in a variety of ways.

- A. All communication, even between God and humans, requires a sender, a receiver, and a message; we need all three if communication is to serve a relationship.
 - 1. The sender must express the message in language or non-verbal signs.
 - 2. The receiver must understand the message to complete the communication.
- B. Share an example of a well-communicated message you have received OR share an example of miscommunication and its effects.

II. Catholics are a sacramental people; signs and symbols enrich both life and faith.

- A. God sent his people a great sign, the rainbow after the flood, as a promise that he would never destroy humanity again. Signs include objects, actions, and sounds that communicate meaning beyond what we see or hear; the entire world, all of creation, is a sign of God's great love.
- B. Symbols convey meaning, drawing us out of our everyday activities, transporting us to a richer, more meaningful world.

- C. Catholics are a sacramental people, drawn to ceremonies, rites, rituals, initiations, and memorials, employing signs and symbols to point to ideas of importance which we wish to remember and contemplate.
- D. Our seven sacraments are primary ways Catholic Christians communicate our life in Christ and Christ's activity in drawing us into the paschal mystery.

III. The Eucharist is the sacrament which is the "source and summit" of our faith.

- A. Share a story of a special experience at Mass or in prayer that has meant a lot to you and deepened your faith.
- B. Mass is a beautiful gift of grace that requires our participation and openness. Use these five points listed below to talk about your personal experience with Mass:
 - 1. Participation that is full, conscious, and active requires some effort.
 - 2. It helps to Prepare with prayer, Reconciliation, and anticipation of the community and the goodness that will come from the celebration.
 - 3. We can be Present to the experience as the Mass moves from the liturgy of the Word through the liturgy of the Eucharist. Yes, you and I can get distracted, or feel bored, but when that happens, try to center on the gift and specialness of what is happening.
 - 4. Products (the spiritual kind) are being added to our lives as we participate. After each Mass, what can we "take away" from this celebration? Don't go home empty when so much is being offered.
 - 5. Did a word, phrase, or image from Mass capture your attention in a special way? Repeat your catchphrase in your mind; commit it to memory.
- C. The paschal banquet, our Mass, is an instruction that Christ expressly placed on his followers: "Do this in memory of me."
 - 1. In the Upper Room, the night before his death, Jesus transformed the bread into his body and the wine into his blood, demonstrating his real presence.
 - 2. Early Christians made tremendous sacrifices to insure their presence at the celebration; and so it is more than two thousand years later:
 - a. Like the apostles, we draw strength from Christ's presence.
 - b. The apostles offered themselves to God, receiving Christ for the journey.
 - c. During the Offertory Rite and Procession, we symbolically bring all we have and offer it to Christ, through our fully active and conscious participation.

III. In a few moments, we will move from the conference room to the chapel to celebrate the Mass together. Let us participate as fully as possible to experience Christ's presence among us.