



Session liturgique diocésaine sur le temps du Mystère Pascal
Diocesan Liturgical Session for the Season of the Paschal Mystery
2022(C)

- **PRAYER**

O Lord, send us your Spirit.
Let Him renew the face of the earth.
You see into the heart of every person, Lord;
And you know each one's desires.
Send the light of the Holy Spirit into our hearts;
Purify our wants and our desires
So that our love may be perfect,
And our praise be worthy of you.
Amen.

- **INTRODUCTION**

- This is our first session and our first meeting of 2022. Happy New Year to all, and thank you for accepting our invitation.
- What questions do we have about the session? Formulate and articulate them. What are our challenges? What are our expectations?

I. INTRODUCTION OF THE THEME

A. THEME OF LENT

AVEC JÉSUS, SE LAISSER TRANSFORMER / WITH JESUS, LET YOURSELF BE TRANSFORMED
(Slide 2)

My nourishment is doing the will of Him who sent me. It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me. Emptying myself so that the Other may exist in me.

- **REDISCOVERING AND RECLAIMING OUR IDENTITY**

What does it mean to be a Christian?

It means allowing oneself to be transformed by God and wanting to be as much like Jesus as possible. Isn't that what Lent is all about?

Textual reference

AELF / Romans 12:1-2

"Ne prenez pas pour modèle le monde présent, mais **transformez-vous** en renouvelant votre façon de penser pour discerner quelle est la volonté de Dieu : ce qui est bon, ce qui est capable de lui plaire, ce qui est parfait."

Jerusalem Bible:

"Ne vous conformez pas au siècle présent, **mais soyez transformés** par le renouvellement de l'intelligence, afin que vous discerniez quelle est la volonté de Dieu, ce qui est bon, agréable et parfait."

New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition:

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect."

To allow oneself to be transformed with Jesus means accepting the fact that we do not fit the mould of everyone around us, and that our lives do not conform to the principles that govern the present age. Christians allow themselves to be completely transformed through the renewing of our minds and of our whole being.

- **LETTING YOURSELF BE TRANSFORMED, A PROJECT FOR AN ENTIRE LIFETIME!**

Letting ourselves be transformed is living in accordance with the new mission, the new perspective that Jesus brings to our lives.

Every one of us is a miracle in the eyes of God (Isaiah 43:4). Knowing this, Jesus respects who we are with great gentleness. He does not transform us into someone else, but he radically changes our lives, giving us a new perspective. The Gospel speaks of this transformation in very simple terms: "From now on you will be a fisher of men. I will make you fishers of men." The disciples were still known as fishermen. But they were no longer fishing for the same thing. Instead of fish, from then on they were fishing for men!

Our qualities, our talents, our desires and everything that makes us who we are, all these things are called to work together and to participate in this new mission that Jesus entrusts to us.

- **ABOUT LENT**

A period of grace for us to invest in appropriating the strategies recommended by the Church.

Lent begins with the celebration we call Ash Wednesday. It is a liturgical time dedicated to prayer, penance and service to our fellow human beings. It is a time of preparation, as we approach Easter. A few guidelines may be useful to help us experience a fruitful Lent.

"Lord our God, You who love to forgive those who humble themselves and desire to make amends for their errors, listen to our prayers; in your goodness, pour out the grace of

your blessing on your servants who are about to receive the Ashes: through their faithfulness in this time of penance, let them arrive with purified souls at the celebration of the Easter of your Son. (Blessing of the ashes).

To strengthen faithfulness during this time of grace, the faithful are urged to undertake a spiritual struggle and invite Christ to make his dwelling in them, preparing them to do his will. In this, we cannot rely merely on our own human strength, but rather we must allow the grace of the Spirit to work in us.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENRICHING OUR LENTEN EXPERIENCE**

- **PRAYER**

"Praying is turning our eyes to our Father and every day allowing Him to transform a little more of what is "grey" within us: the darkness, the despair, the need. And then, through this, finding the strength to turn our attention towards others."

We live in a frenzied world. Re-learn how to enter into a dialogue of love with the Father and meditate silently on the Word.

- **FASTING**

Doing penance and performing meaningful acts of penitence: eating less on Fridays, fasting (for at least one meal) on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, controlling our instincts.

- **SHARING**

A pathway to break free of our individualism

The goal is quite simple: sharing with others what we have deprived ourselves of. Through these actions, by putting ourselves at the service of those less fortunate, we can free ourselves from our individualism and develop a greater sense of solidarity.

- **PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION**

Lent is a time for conversion. Christians are encouraged to open themselves to the Lord's forgiveness by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In doing so, they bear witness to the mercy of the God of Jesus Christ. His forgiveness is offered to all persons of good will. His love is greater than our hearts.

B. THEME FOR EASTER

AVEC JÉSUS, TRANSFORMER LE MONDE / WITH JESUS, TRANSFORM THE WORLD

(Slide 2)

-TRANSFORM THE WORLD - YES, BUT WITH JESUS AND ACCORDING TO HIS VISION

- **MATTHEW 5:1-16**

"The beatitudes (...) contain the "identity card" of the Christian (...) In order to give himself to us, God often chooses unthinkable paths, perhaps those (paths) of our limitations, our tears, our defeats." Pope Francis.

"When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

It is not my intention to give an analysis or an exegetical commentary on this passage from Matthew 5:1-16. However, I would like to respond to the following question: Is it possible to use the passage to talk about our theme? For me, it seems clear, but I don't know if it may be the same for you.

- **METAPHOR OF SALT AND LIGHT**

Having presented his teaching with a number of aphorisms, Jesus concludes the sermon by posing a real challenge. Beware, he tells them, you are the salt of the earth. Do not lose your strength! You are the light of the world. Do not hide your light under a bushel! You are a city on a hill. Let your lights shine so that when people see your good deeds they may give glory to your Father in heaven.

- **EXPLICATION**

Jesus enjoins the disciples collectively to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (note the use of the plural, "you"). First, let's look at salt. The Old Testament often associates it with the covenant (Lev 2:13; Num 18:19; 2 Chr 13:5). By using this term, Jesus suggests that his disciples should become signs of God's covenant in the world. But let's remember that salt is also used in cooking. It is invisible in food and can only be sensed by taste. Give the world back its flavour, yes; but we must use it with a certain balance and a certain discretion.

Unlike salt, which is concealed in the earth and in our food, light is visible. It allows us to see. Christians, being the light of the world, are compared to the sun. Their mission is to illuminate the world. As their reference, they have Jesus, who defined himself as the light of the world - "I am the light of the world" (Jn 8:12). What conclusions can we draw?

Using the metaphor of salt and light, Jesus explains that the Christian life has more than the unseen dimension which is the individual relationship with God in Jesus. The Christian life also has the societal dimension involving its visibility in the world, requiring it to be seen. The Christian is invited to be a sign to the world and an instrument of transformation in accordance with the values of the Gospel. This transformation of the world begins here and now and, most importantly, with the individual, in his or her individual attitude, desires and priorities.

II. MEANING OF THE APPROACH AND PRESENTATION OF THE VISUAL (Slide 30)

We suggest that you conduct the Lenten ceremony in the manner that seems best to you according to your particular circumstances, whether following the Gospel and before the homily or at the beginning following the entrance procession.

During the celebration of Good Friday, just before the adoration of the Cross, a voice breaks the silence surrounding the faithful and repeats three times, "Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world." To this we respond, "O Come, let us adore." In this manner, the liturgy helps us understand that the mystery of salvation is accomplished in the sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus. The cross of Good Friday has a salvific meaning.

Thus, in our visual, we recommend fixing five small crosses (one for each Sunday of Lent) of various sizes in a base prepared for this purpose. This is a special way to represent both our gradual ascent towards Easter and our desire to share and offer to the Lord the crosses and troubles of our sisters and brothers in humanity! The large cross, representing the gift that God gives us in Jesus, can be lit with lamps.

III. IDEAS /FOR WALKING TOGETHER

A. TOWARDS EASTER

(Slides 3 - 18)

Lent is a special time to contemplate the Scriptures and allow them to enlighten our souls and our common path. In tracing your path towards Easter, we suggest that you choose a Word of the week (a verse, part of a verse, a theme or an image that summarizes the reading). You can choose the Word from any of the texts in the liturgy. The Word selected can be written in large letters and attached to a support of your choice, and this can then be set up where it will be most visible and easy to read. If possible, it can also be illustrated with an image or a symbol. Projection screens may be used. But let us not forget to explain the meaning and the significance of the Word chosen for the community with its reference to the liturgical season.

- **ASH WEDNESDAY (Slide 3)**

Be reconciled to yourself and to God

(2 Corinthians 5:20 - 6:2).

"In walking this path of conversion and penance, let us look to the initiator of our faith and learn from Him how to be more open to the generous love of the One who desired that all things should be reconciled in his Son.

Lent is a season of grace and self-transformation initiated by God. John Littleton put it so well in his well-known song:

Laissez-vous réconcilier avec Dieu, votre père
Laissez-vous réconcilier avec le Christ, votre frère
Acceptez-vous de prendre la main qu'il vous tend

Et de vous déclarez comme témoin en suivant son chemin?
Réconciliez-vous, réconcilions-nous maintenant
Laissez-vous réconcilier avec Dieu qui est lumière
Laissez-vous réconcilier avec la vie toute entière..."

Translation:

Be reconciled to God, your Father.

Be reconciled to Christ, your Brother.

Will you take the hand He offers you

And, by following his path, proclaim yourself a witness?

Be reconciled. Let us be reconciled now.

Be reconciled with God who is Light.

Be reconciled with all of life..."

- **FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT (Slide 4)**

"With our eyes turned towards God's faithfulness, let us re-read our holy history with Him."

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Israel re-read its history as a way of rediscovering and reaffirming the faithfulness of its God throughout the ages, and also as a way of teaching younger generations, who had not known Moses, to know that God is faithful. Having been faithful in the past, He will be faithful also with us and for us. Thus, it is a call to have faith in God's constancy, in his unwavering love and devotion.

- **SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT (Slide 5)**

"Allowing yourself to be transfigured by the presence of God."

Luke 9:28 - 36

"Let us find in your Word the nourishment that our faith needs, and we will be able to perceive your glory with cleansed eyes."

Caution: while Jesus is transfigured, there are some among and around us who are deluded and others who are disfigured.

- **THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT (Slide 6)**

"Taking up the cause of humanity in need."

Exodus 3:1-15

"Faith which is true involves serious engagement with history in our time. This allows those who share that history with us, as well as those who are outside it, to know that Emmanuel walks with us."

The God of Israel, the God of Jesus Christ, is not an indifferent God. He takes up the cause of his people, comes to their aid and does not abandon them in the byways of evil and death.

- **FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Slide 7)**

"Together, taking part in the banquet of mercy."

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

"This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them!"

Walking together, taking part in the Eucharistic banquet means accepting the renewal of our relationships in the cleansing water of forgiveness and in the merciful Love that is offered at the table of sinners.

All of us are invited to contemplate the figure of the Father. He holds a feast to celebrate the return of his youngest son. He invites his eldest son to rejoice in the return of the one who was lost, to recognize him as his brother and to join with his father in re-forging their familial relations.

- **FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Slide 8)**

"Jesus, the axis of our existence."

Philippians 3:8-14

"And it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20

The time has come for us to realize, as Paul did, that Christ alone is the one necessity in our lives. This being true, then everything in our lives can have value only through Him. He is the axis of our existence.

- **PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD (Slide 10)**

Palm Sunday is the entry into Holy Week. It honours the days when Jesus, acclaimed as king by the people of Jerusalem, was greeted with palms, before being condemned to death as a criminal. Blessed by the priest, the fronds of the evergreen palm remind us that life does not end.

- **SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM**

Three days during which we are immersed in the events that trace Jesus' journey to his Father, his Passover.

- **Thursday of the Lord's Supper** is the celebration of the last meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his Passion. On that evening, he instituted the Holy Eucharist. On that evening he also washed his disciples' feet and gave them a new commandment, teaching that Christians should live in charity and service. **(Slide 11)**
- **Good Friday** is a time of fasting and abstinence, a day of meditation and prayer during which we recall the sufferings, the Passion and Death through which the Lord offered his life for the salvation of the world. **(Slide 12)**
- **Holy Saturday** is the day of great silence in the tomb, of mourning, of solitude and of deep meditation. No liturgical celebrations are scheduled this day. Jesus joins in death all the dead, of the past, the present and the future, bringing to them his salvation.
- **Saturday evening** is the Easter Vigil, awaiting the resurrection of Christ. As the Adam of a new era, Jesus passes from death to life; he inaugurates a new life. Scriptural texts unfold the entire history of the Covenant between God and his people. **(Slides 13-16)**

B. DURING THE EASTER SEASON

(Slides 20 - 29)

- **EASTER SUNDAY (Slide 20)**

"So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above."

Colossians 3:1-4

Easter Sunday is the greatest Christian feast. The arrest of Jesus, his unjust condemnation to the torture of the cross and his ignominious death can leave no disciple indifferent. Indeed, commemorating the painful events of Good Friday breaks the heart. The disciples feel that everything has been taken from them; to understand this, we need only reread the exchange among them on the road to Emmaus.

But like Mary Magdalene's and ours, the spirit of the disciples is tormented by one question: "This man who did good wherever he went, as well as in our own lives, whom God consecrated by the Holy Spirit and filled with his strength, how could he fall asleep forever in death, never to rise again?" This is the question that impels us, every Sunday, to come early in the morning to the tomb, hoping against hope that we may grow in faith.

Cultivating faith is the goal that the Paschal liturgy sets out to accomplish. It is *the* special time for believing in the resurrection of Jesus, for believing in our own resurrection, as well. This is the faith that will inspire our actions, foster our attentiveness to others and strengthen our commitment to the Church and to society, the society we are called on to transform in the Spirit of the Risen One.

The liturgy calls us not to bury the talent, the grace we received on Easter morning as on the day of our baptism. We should live this grace fully as we reach for the heavenly truths. So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the truths that are above.

- **SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (Slide 21)**

- *"Sunday of Divine Mercy"*

- John Paul II: *"Christ has taught us that man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but is also called to practise mercy towards others: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy (Mt 5:7)"*

John 20:19-31

On the first Sunday after Easter, the Church invites the faithful to study the mystery of Divine Mercy. We speak of Mercy, and yet the texts recommended for our reflection do not say a word about it! The Gospel of the day presents Thomas doubting the resurrection of the Lord. He wants to have concrete proof, a certain minimum of assurances.

In response to Thomas' well-known pragmatism, Jesus does not simply ask Thomas to stretch put his hand and touch his side. He requires him to go to another level: a level that consists of "overcoming a doubt that is not about the fact of the resurrection but about its interpretation." With Jesus, let us learn not to limit ourselves exclusively to the material, but to acquire a new perception of things, one that is the Holy Spirit acting on the believer.

- **THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (Slide 22)**

- *"Do you love me? Be the shepherd of my sheep."*

John 21:1-19

"This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

God is love. Love incarnate reaffirms Peter in his vocation: "Simon, son of John, do you love me? Be the shepherd of my sheep."

- **FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (Slide 23)**

"Learning from the Good Shepherd. To Cain's astonishing question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" the new Adam responds, proposing a way of being that will transform the world: "Be the shepherd of my sheep."

John 10:27-30

The metaphor of the shepherd

The fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Sunday of the Good Shepherd. The readings for this Sunday speak about this figure. Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd," and chapter 10 of St. John, which speaks of "shepherd," "sheep," "sheepfold" and "pasture", invite us to examine closely the message presented.

The Holy Scriptures describe God as the Shepherd of his people, who freed them from slavery in Egypt, later guiding them through the ordeals of the desert, feeding them with manna and quenching their thirst with water from a rock, before leading them into the Promised Land. The God of Israel is a god who feeds his flock, gathering them together, carrying the lambs in his bosom and leading the mother sheep to water (Isaiah).

Psalm 23 expresses this same dynamic. It too describes this same figure and invites us to place our modern-day belief in the "Lord shepherd" of all humanity. A God who is a comforting, reassuring and **enlightening** presence. As the shepherd figure, He leads us through the many vicissitudes of history in our own day.

This same God, the psalmist emphasizes, makes himself accessible to us as the one who "prepare(s) a table before me." We are his guests, invited to sit at the table He has set for us. This is precisely the meaning of our Eucharist. We are not alone; accompanied by the Shepherd, we are part of his flock, advancing together with the others, as we are in these days of the synod on synodality.

Let our communities become places in which that voice can be heard that others may attempt to mute: "It is the Lord!"

- **FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (Slide 24)**

"Filled with the Spirit, let us proclaim the Kingdom of God"

Psalm 145:12

*Proclaiming **the Kingdom** will transform the world. It is the work of people filled with the Holy Spirit and ready to rise to all challenges*

One verse taken from the psalm for meditation sums up concisely the essential message presented in the texts: "They shall (...) make known to all people your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendour of your kingdom."

The invitation is clear: Go, proclaim and make known the Kingdom! The phrases sending forth the faithful at the conclusion of the Eucharistic celebration echo that invitation: "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."

Paul and Barnabas were not backward about taking up this invitation. The excerpt from Revelation celebrates the glorious newness and fulfilment of this Kingdom. In the Gospel for this Sunday, Jesus shows us the path by which we can make the Kingdom reality: Love one another. It is only possible to make the Kingdom manifest if we ourselves have met the Risen One, are filled with the Holy Spirit, and desire to bear witness to him by proclaiming the Word of Grace.

Through the image of the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God, which is a kingdom yet to come, is presented as God's dwelling-place among the human family. They will be his people, and He himself, God with them, will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more, and mourning and crying and pain will be no more. The image of the New Jerusalem sustains and comforts our hope as we face any kind of trial.

- **SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (Slide 25)**

"Descending into the depths of ourselves!"

John 14, 23-29

On this Sunday, Jesus leads us into the depths of ourselves, where we are overcome with anguish and fears of all kinds. And it is here that he says to us: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives."

- **SUNDAY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD (Slide 26)**

"Why do you stand looking up toward heaven?"

Acts 1:1-11

The mystery of the Ascension of Jesus directs our attention towards the reality of everyday life, towards commitments that must be accepted in order to respond to the Lord's injunction: You will be my witnesses (...) to the ends of the earth. Jesus leaves; it is now for us, his disciples, to set to work and to be the signs of his presence.

- **PENTECOST SUNDAY (Slide 27)**

"Witnesses to the Word of Grace.

May each of our Eucharists be the place of a new Pentecost!"

Acts of the Apostles 2, 1-11

- **Let's not forget!**

There is more than one Pentecost in the New Testament.

The first Pentecost (Acts 2), the Pentecost in Caesarea where those listening to Peter's preaching were filled with the Holy Spirit even before being baptized.

The gift of the Spirit occurs in an atmosphere of prayer in response to a fervent anticipation or request. "All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer." (Acts 1:14).

The gift of the Holy Spirit comes suddenly and with a crash 'as of a rushing mighty wind,' says St. Luke. The Holy Spirit, to express it less sensationally, disrupts our certainties and habits.

The gift of the Spirit is always accompanied by signs and witnesses that testify to His presence (glossolalia).

- **Still at work!**

The Holy Spirit is still at work in our time. We need only reread the lives of St. Francis of Assisi, Padre Pio, Mother Teresa and many other saints of our day to realize this!

The action of the Spirit is not limited to the Church alone. The Spirit goes where He pleases. He is at work in every person, as St. Paul says in the second reading: "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

IV. RESOURCES

- A. **THEME SONG FOR LENT 2022 (Slide 19)**
- B. **RECOMMENDED SONGS FOR LENT (Slide 9.17-18) AND EASTER (Slides 28-29).**
- v. ***DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE* (Slides 31-33)**

• CONCLUSION

"Come, O Holy Spirit,
And grant us a heart that is great,
Open to your quiet and inspiring word,
But closed to all mean ambitions,
A heart that is strong and great,
To love, to serve and to suffer in solidarity,
A heart strong and great, beating as one
With the heart of the one God."

