

# HANDOUT *"From Ritual to Relationship"* DAY ONE

## WHY RITUALS? RITUALS ARE HUMAN

\*OPTIONAL HYMNS: (a seasonal hymn) / Praise to the Lord (the Almighty the King of Creation) / Father We Thank Thee (Who Has Planted) / All Hail, Adored Trinity / For the Beauty of the Earth | *\*can be recited!*

OPENING PRAYER *(or Opening Prayer of the Mass of the Day can be used)*

"Heavenly Father, You created all that is authentically human, especially our desire to seek truth, to seek You. You always love us, accept us and meet us where we are, and...You take us where we need to be. Let Your power in the gift of Your rites, rituals and Sacraments transform our lives today and always. Amen."

*(See handout: "Some Tips for Discussion Groups")*

PERSONAL REFLECTION or GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: *(choose 1 or 2)*

- Are you the type of person that naturally approaches God through ritual or relationship? Why?
- What are your struggles with the whole concept of rituals?
- What are your struggles with thinking/talking about your "relationship with God"?
- What steps have you taken/could you take to resolve your understanding or lived experience of either rituals or your difficulties with a "relationship with God"?
- Generally speaking, how have rituals (or a specific ritual) helped you in your life?
- In your religious training, what has been insufficient with regard to knowledge of God and His ways: Bible study, rituals/Sacraments/Mass, prayer/devotions, nature of the Church (ecclesiology), Church history, doctrines, theology, morality/ethics, the spiritual and corporal works of mercy? How will you grow deeper now?
- Was there something else in the presentation that struck you?

CLOSING PRAYER: *(or Closing Prayer of the Mass of the Day can be used)*

"Lord, we thank you for all You have revealed to us about Yourself and Your ways. Help us to keep Your Word and meditate on it daily in our minds and hearts. Let us always have the joy of loving and worshipping You the way You have shown us. May we stay faithfully on the narrow path that leads to You, our everlasting Fulfillment. Amen."

*Bible quotes pertinent to this talk:* "These people pay Me lip service, but their hearts are far from Me." "What is true religion? Taking care of widows and orphans." "Love the Lord your God with your whole heart." "Not those who say: 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my Father." "I never knew you." "Ut cognoscant Te." "Do this in memory of me." Books of Leviticus & Deuteronomy. "God has not dealt thus with other nations, he has not taught them his decrees." Psalm 119. Isaiah 1:11-20. "All things were created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the Church." "You cannot love the God you can't see without loving the brother you can see." "If you love Me, keep My commands." "Lead me in Your ways, O God." 1 John 2:4 "When you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for trials." "Take up your cross." "They will hate you as they hated Me."

RECOMMENDED READING & RESOURCES:

- The Lamb's Supper by Scott Hahn
- catholic.com (Catholic Answers, San Diego, CA)
- Imitation of Christ (Pauline Books & Media)
- Where Is That in the Bible? / Why Is That in Tradition? by Patrick Madrid

# HANDOUT *"From Ritual to Relationship"* DAY TWO

## WHICH RITUALS? CATHOLIC RITUALS

\*OPTIONAL HYMNS: (a seasonal hymn) / Come, Thou Almighty King / Holy God, We Praise Thy Name / Faith of Our Fathers / Hail, True Body of the Saviour (Ave Verum Corpus) / Te Deum | *\*can be recited!*

OPENING PRAYER *(or Opening Prayer of the Mass of the Day can be used)*

"Heavenly Father, You created all that is authentically human, especially our desire to seek truth, to seek You. You always love us, accept us and meet us where we are, and...You take us where we need to be. Let Your power in the gift of Your rites, rituals and Sacraments transform our lives today and always. Amen."

*(See handout: "Some Tips for Discussion Groups")*

PERSONAL REFLECTION or GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: *(choose 1 or 2)*

--How would you sum up "God's system," what "salvation history" is if someone asked you "what you believe" or "what Catholic Christianity is all about"?

--In one sentence (or a 30-second "elevator speech")—What is your personal "salvation history"? What would it be in a paragraph (or 3 minutes)?

--Have you always understood that our Catholic Christian Faith consists of the unchanging "deposit of faith," of "Revelation" that must be put into practice, transmitted and guarded with fidelity? If not, what was your understanding of the Catholic Church's teachings? How is this new understanding a gift?

--Have you or someone you know had a powerful experience of God through one of the Sacraments, prayer or devotions? If so, what happened? (Sometimes the most powerful experiences are very interior and quiet.)

--Which public Catholic devotions or private prayers do you "lean on" the most? Why?

--Was there something else in the presentation that struck you?

CLOSING PRAYER: *(or Closing Prayer of the Mass of the Day can be used)*

"Lord, we thank you for all You have revealed to us about yourself and Your ways. Help us to keep Your Word and meditate on it daily in our minds and hearts. Let us always have the joy of loving and worshipping You the way You have shown us. May we stay faithfully on the narrow path that leads to You, our Redeemer and everlasting Fulfillment. Amen."

*Bible quotes pertinent to this talk: "God has given us the wisdom to understand fully the plan He was pleased to reveal in Christ." "Proclaim the mighty acts of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." "If anyone is so progressive that he does not remain rooted in the teaching of Christ, he does not possess God." "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." "The Church of the living God is the pillar and foundation of truth." "Preach the Word in season and out of season." "Woe to him through whom scandals come." "I will be with you until the end of time." "Put not your trust in princes, in mortal man in whom there is no help." "He who hears you hears me." "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." "I came that they may have life." "Unless you eat My body and drink My blood, you will not have life within you."*

RECOMMENDED READING & RESOURCES:

--The Great Adventure Bible Series (Jeff Cavins) videos & workbooks

--Bible Stories for Kids (simplified Bibles for all ages: [pauline.com](http://pauline.com) / [pauline.ca](http://pauline.ca))

--A Father Who Keeps His Promises by Scott Hahn (just the narrative/storyline of the Bible)

--A Daily Missal

--Queen of Apostles Prayerbook (PBM) / Handbook of Prayers (MTF) (general Catholic prayerbooks)

HANDOUT *“From Ritual to Relationship”* DAY THREE

WHOSE RITUALS? FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

\*OPTIONAL HYMNS: (a seasonal hymn) / What a Friend We Have in Jesus / Amazing Grace / Be Thou My Vision / Crown Him with Many Crowns / Praise Ye the Lord (Let Joyful Anthems Ring) | *\*can be recited!*

OPENING PRAYER (or *Opening Prayer of the Mass of the Day can be used*)

“Heavenly Father, You created all that is authentically human, especially our desire to seek truth, to seek You. You always love us, accept us and meet us where we are, and...You take us where we need to be. Let Your power in the gift of Your rites, rituals and Sacraments transform our lives today and always. Amen.”

(See handout: *“Some Tips for Discussion Groups”*)

PERSONAL REFLECTION or GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (choose 1 or 2)

--How can the Mass and the Sacraments help keep us grounded in God’s actual reality, when we are spending more and more time with screens and immersive environments? What other ways can our Faith keep us more in touch with each other, face to face, more in touch with God’s Creation?

--Would you say you have a “sacramental worldview”? Explain.

--How can parishes or Catholic groups and organizations be better at fellowship--especially when people (including young people) are often so busy, lonely, isolated, fearful, discouraged, or “living” in virtual reality?

--Would you say you are consciously striving for holiness? Do you want to become “a saint”? How are you letting the Holy Spirit transform you? How are you cooperating with God’s grace?

--Do you find God and your Faith comforting or challenging...or both? Explain.

--What is the place of silence in your life, in your relationship with God?

--Is the Father “very fond of you”? How would you describe your friendship with Jesus?

--Was there something else in the presentation that struck you?

CLOSING PRAYER: (or *Closing Prayer of the Mass of the Day can be used*)

“Lord, we thank you for all You have revealed to us about yourself and Your ways. Help us to keep Your Word and meditate on it daily in our minds and hearts. Let us always have the joy of loving and worshipping You the way You have shown us. May we stay faithfully on the narrow path that leads to You, our Friend, Redeemer and everlasting Fulfillment. Amen.”

*Bible quotes pertinent to this talk:* “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is about. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.” “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” “Neither life nor death will ever separate us from Christ’s love.” “All glory be to Him who can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.” “We love because He first loved us.” “Do good, avoid every form of evil.” “We are sharers in the divine nature.” “Pray always and never lose heart.” “...that you may become partakers in the divine nature.” “You have not drawn near to darkness, gloom and storm...but to myriads of angels in festal gathering.” *Jude 1:24-25. Matthew 7:7. Jeremiah 29:13. Matthew 16:19. Ezekiel 18:21-32. Wisdom 6:10. Hebrews 12.*

RECOMMENDED READING & RESOURCES:

--Mysterion: The Revelatory Power of the Sacramental Worldview

--Hallow (Catholic prayer app, especially for *lectio divina*)

--Give Peace to My Soul (St. Elizabeth of the Trinity) / Soul of Christ by Sr. Marie-Paul Curley

--Miracles of Grace (true stories of the 7 Sacraments--St. Augustine Institute)

--In Caelo et in Terra: 365 Days with the Saints / youth: Our Friends in Heaven vol. 1 & 2

--Hail Holy Queen by Scott Hahn / Queen Mother: Biblical Theology of Mary’s Queenship by Edward Sri

--any Scriptural Rosary book / The World’s First Love: Mary, Mother of God by Fulton Sheen

--The Sanctifier (classic on the Holy Spirit) by Archbishop Luis Martinez