

**Catholic Education Week 2019**  
*Prayer Services and Reflection Activities for 2018-2019*

**ADVANCE KIT**



*“Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy.” 1 Peter 1:8*

*<<Lui, vous l’aimez sans l’avoir vu; en lui, sans le voir encore, vous mettez votre foi, vous exultez d’une joie inexprimable et remplie de gloire.>> 1 Pierre 1, 8*



**Catholic Education Week**  
**May 5 – May 10, 2019**  
[www.goodnewsforall.ca](http://www.goodnewsforall.ca)



# **Catholic Education Week 2019**

**Catholic Education: *Living as Joyful Disciples***  
**L'éducation catholique: *Vivre en disciples joyeux***  
**May 5 – May 10, 2019**

## **Guidelines for Using the Advance Kit**

### *What is Catholic Education Week?*

Each year the Catholic community of Ontario engages in a week-long celebration of the unique identity and distinctive contributions of Catholic education during Catholic Education Week.

### *What is the theme of Catholic Education Week?*

This year's celebration entitled, "**Catholic Education: *Living as Joyful Disciples***" is scheduled for the week of May 5 – May 10, 2019. The scriptural passage that guides our theme is, "*Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy.*" 1 Peter 1:8

### *What is the Catholic Education Week Resource Kit?*

For a number of years OCSTA has developed and distributed a school-based Resource Kit of activities, prayer services and suggested resources based on the theme of the particular year. The Resource Kit is sent to Catholic school communities early in the new year to assist them in their Catholic Education Week activities.

### *What is the Catholic Education Week Advance Kit?*

In order to help all Catholic educational partners engage in prayer and dialogue in preparation for Catholic Education Week 2019, OCSTA has prepared an Advance Kit of prayer services and reflection activities. Unlike the Resource Kit that is designed for students, the Advance Kit, sent early in the school year, is designed to help adult groups (trustees, school board staff, school staff groups, parent groups, parish groups, associations, etc.) reflect on the theme of Catholic Education Week with prayer services and reflection activities beginning in Advent and concluding in the month before Catholic Education Week.

### *What are the sub-themes of Catholic Education Week?*

The Advance Kit has five prayer and reflection activities for the five months preceding Catholic Education Week, each activity reflecting one of the five sub-themes of Catholic Education Week:

<b>Advent:</b>	<b><i>Rooted in Prayer ... Enracinés dans la prière</i></b>
<b>January:</b>	<b><i>Living in Community ... Vivre au coeur de la communauté</i></b>
<b>February:</b>	<b><i>Doing Justice &amp; Creating Hope ... Semer la justice et inspirer l'espérance</i></b>
<b>March:</b>	<b><i>Journeying Together in Faith ... Cheminer ensemble dans la foi</i></b>
<b>April:</b>	<b><i>Sharing the Good News ... Partager la bonne nouvelle</i></b>

*How can the Advance Kit be used in a local Catholic educational community?*

Each service may be used to begin a meeting or gathering, or to provide an opportunity for the adult partners in a local Catholic education community to discuss the themes. Each prayer service includes:

- Prayers that reflect the theme
- A scripture reading that connects with the theme\*
- A personal reflection related to the scripture reading
- A theme-related reading taken from the contemporary Catholic spiritual writings
- Questions for discussion or reflection based on that reading

*Does the format of these prayer services always have to be followed?*

The Advance Kit is a gift to be adapted and utilized in whatever way suits the needs of your local community. Feel free to use all, or any part of the kit, in the five months prior to Catholic Education Week 2019, beginning in Advent 2018.

*What approach should be taken to the discussion?*

The Advance Kit is designed in Catholic education to help adult groups to sit down together to pray and reflect. In discussing the reflection questions found in this Advance Kit, it is important to allow for the divergent views and experiences that may emerge. Reflection sharing or discussions should be conducted in a gospel atmosphere of respect. Conflicting points of view should be heard and accepted without feeling the need for them to be resolved.

*How can we help prepare for future Catholic Education Week activities?*

OCSTA encourages all its partners to let us know about your group's use of this Advance Kit by sending an email to OCSTA at the following email address: [ocsta@ocsta.on.ca](mailto:ocsta@ocsta.on.ca).

The Catholic Education Week Committee would also be pleased to receive your feedback on this Advance Kit as well as suggestions to improve its value to our partners in Catholic education. These and all other Catholic Education Week materials are available on the OCSTA website at: [www.goodnewsforall.ca](http://www.goodnewsforall.ca).

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\*Note that the scriptural reading has been provided for your convenience, however, scripture should normally be read from a Bible or Lectionary.



## Advent 2018

### *“Rooted in Prayer”*

#### SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS

- *People Look East* ~ © 2000, Kevin Mayhew Limited. Reproduced by Permission of Kevin Mayhew Limited ([www.kevinmayhew.com](http://www.kevinmayhew.com)). License no. KM600006/1.
- *On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist Cry* ~ Jordanis oras praevia Charles Coffin (1676-1749). Translated by John Chandler (1806-1876). Adapted by Michael Perry (Word & Music) (1942-1996). © Word & Music/Jubilate Hymns Ltd. 8 8 8 8
- *Jesus Come to Us* ~ David Haas, Journeysongs Third Edition: Volume 21, © 2012 OCP. All rights reserved. All selections BMI. Released on 2012-05-01. Music Publisher: OCP.

#### OPENING PRAYER

Loving God,

We come before you in this season of Advent, and always,

to pray for the gift of patience as we wait for you to come to us anew.

Fill our hearts with steadfast knowledge that you will be available to us in our need, that all we have to do is call upon you, and you are there.

May we witness your faithful love to everyone we encounter this day.

We ask for the grace to “bear with one another” (Colossians 3:13)

as we wait for Jesus to be made visible in our hearts and in our lives.

Amen. +

#### READING: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (Luke 3:1-6)

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Prepare the word of the Lord, make his path straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

Jesus is on his way. Soon he will be born, a child, unto us. We are called to make his way straight and his journey simple.

During Advent, God calls us to search our lives, our habits, for obstacles to the coming of Christ in our midst. This is an opportune moment to reflect on our habits and priorities, to consider how much we work, how we spend our time and what we are striving for.

In short, Advent is the time to examine our conscience and consider making some small personal promises to the Lord, for example, setting aside time for prayer, volunteering or making time for family.

Now is the time to consider how we can better allow Christ to work in our lives.

*“Jesus, help me to welcome you into my life.”*

(Johnson, Gabriel. *Word Made Flesh: Daily Reflections for Advent*. Editions Novalis, 2018)

## **GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

What causes us to lack joy in our lives?

How do we become disconnected from prayer?

How can we become more grateful and appreciative disciples of Christ?

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Remind us, Lord, that what you have in store for us  
will be more than what we have dreamed of ourselves.

Help us to surrender ourselves to your time table  
for we know that your ways are not our ways.

Grow in us, the ability to also be patient with ourselves, Lord,  
knowing that we have to be ready for you to do your work through us.

We ask for the ability to trust in our plan for us,  
to bring us closer to you.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus,  
who is with us now and for ever.

Amen. +

(Macke, Sally. *Let's Begin With a Prayer: 101 Prayers for Meetings*. Liguori 2014)

## **SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS**

- *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* ~ Latin antiphons, 12 century, Latin Hymn, 1710, Tr. by John Mason Neale, 1851; alt. 1961. VENIE EMMANUEL. L. M. ref .Plainsong. 13<sup>th</sup> century, Arr. by Thomas Helmore, 1856.
- *O Come, Devine Messiah* ~ Venez, divin Messie. M. l'abbe Pellegrin, Sister Mary of St. Philip (1877), 7.8.7.6 with refrain, English.



## January 2019

### *“Living in Community”*

#### **SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS**

- *Come as You Are* ~ David Crowder (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjgioXrnEME>)
- *Companions on the Journey* ~ Carey Landry (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfYZCQXFm0Q>)

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

Lord our God,

You have created us to live in community and to share the love and compassion that comes from you with each other.

Help us to overcome the many distractions that take us away from community.

Keep us ever mindful of the joy that we receive from you through our interaction with others in community.

We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen. +

#### **READING: A Reading from Paul’s Letter to the Romans (Romans 12:2-8)**

The New Life in Christ.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 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.

For by the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body, we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

The Word of the Lord. **R. Thanks be to God.**

## QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

This reading from Paul's letter to the Romans invites us to reflect on the many gifts that we are able to share in community. It says that we are members of one another, all united. This is indeed a wonderful vision for faith community and for humanity.

How do you see the spirit of community lived out in your school?

In your life, where do you find joy in community?

Where do you see challenges to community today?

### Quote:

*"The greatness of community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."* (Coretta Scott King)

This quote by Coretta Scott King, wife of Martin Luther King, speaks to the power of community to support individuals. The Civil Rights movement in the United States, as well as the awareness of the rights of our First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities here in Canada, both call for the response of community.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

The following quote from Pope Francis is from the Apostolic Exhortation, *"On the Call to Holiness in Today's World."* After reading this quote, consider the benefits of a strong community. Why do you think that this is very important for society?

Signs of Holiness in Today's World

*"This is not the joy held out by today's individualistic and consumerist culture. Consumerism only bloats the heart. It can offer occasional and passing pleasures, but not joy. Here I am, speaking of a joy lived in communion which shares and is shared, since 'there is more happiness in giving than in receiving.'"*

What do you think are signs of a healthy community?

## CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God,

You have given us the gift of community.

It is here that we find your love.

Help us to deepen our awareness of your presence in others.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. +

## SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS

- *Kindness* ~ Steve Bell
- *Love Will Hold Us Together* ~ Matt Maher



## February 2019

### *“Doing Justice & Creating Hope”*

#### **SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS**

- *All are Welcome* ~ Marty Haugen (Gather Hymnal #753)
- *God is Alive* ~ David Haas (Catholic Book of Worship III #591)
- *God is Love* ~ David Haas (Catholic Book of Worship III #473)
- *They’ll Know We are Christians* ~ Peter Scholtes (Gather #735)
- *Open the Eyes of My Heart* ~ Paul Baloche (Spirit & Song, Volume 8)

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

God of hope and justice,  
We pray today for your loving guidance.  
Help us to live as the joyful disciples you call us to be.  
Open our eyes so that we may recognize Christ in every person.  
Fill our hearts so that we may continue to spread your love  
in word and action.  
Sustain us as we work to build your kingdom here on earth.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen. +

#### **READING: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (Luke 4:16-21)**

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath Day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

In this passage, Jesus provides us with clear instructions on what it means to “do justice.” We are called to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, restore sight to the blind, let the oppressed go free, and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour. With these instructions, Jesus defines his mission on earth and entrusts us to do the same. How can I bring these instructions to life in my current role in Catholic education? Which “instruction” resonates with me the most? Which is the most challenging?

### *Bringing Good News to the Poor*

How do we reflect God’s light and love to those around us? How do we, as a school community contribute to local and global initiatives to assist those who are in poverty? What are some of the ways in which I am a source of “good news” to others in my community? Do I try to provide encouragement to those who may be discouraged or feeling “poor in spirit?”

### *Proclaiming Release to Captives / Letting the Oppressed Go Free*

How do we provide safe and welcoming spaces in our school communities in which others feel free to share concerns or worries that may be weighing on them? Who are the oppressed in our schools and communities, and how can we help to remove the obstacles that may be in their path? How do I help to uphold the dignity and rights of all people as children of God? Do I listen to others without judgement or interruption?

### *Restoring Sight to the Blind*

In times of spiritual blindness, we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help reveal truths that may not be visible to our human eyes. How can we remind ourselves to humbly ask for God’s help in guiding us to find solutions in challenging situations? How can we be sources of truth to one another? Do I sometimes tell people what they want to hear instead of what may need to be said? And are there ways in which I can improve my own “vision” so that I am able to see and recognize Christ in everyone?

### *Proclaiming the Year of the Lord’s Favour*

Pope Francis has said that a good Catholic proclaims the gospel and announces Christ. (<https://www.catholicregister.org/faith/item/27682-a-good-catholic-proclaims-the-gospel-announces-christ-pope-francis-says>)

The gift of the Lord’s favour or of God’s grace has been freely extended to us. We are called to celebrate this gift with joy. How do we celebrate our faith and proclaim this hopeful message in our school communities? How do I contribute to creating hope in my work in Catholic education?

## GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The story of Emmaus recounts a very human experience. The disappointment and despair experienced by the two disciples on the road is not unlike the challenges frequently faced by young people today. The message is clear: hope, courage and resolve can be found through a loving encounter with Jesus... The more we foster Catholic identity, the more we promote the expression of that identity in service and witness to the world. Our faith calls us to be engaged with the world around us, to have hope, and to inspire it in others.

(Renewing the Promise: A Pastoral Letter for Catholic Education, 2018, pages 10-11)

“Young people should love, believe and follow their dreams, never despairing because Jesus is always with them... When life hits hard, they should try to get up again, letting others help them, and if they are bored, they should concentrate on doing good things for others. No matter where God has planted you, hope. Always hope... Believe in the existence of the most noble and beautiful truths and trust that God, through the Holy Spirit, is ushering everything toward the good, toward Christ’s embrace.

(Pope Francis, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/how-have-hope-pope-francis-gives-point-point-guide>)

What implications do these readings have for us and our work in Catholic education? What are some ways that we foster Catholic identity in students? How does my work as a Catholic educator reflect the messages shared in the above readings? Am I a source of hope to others?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

O God,

Who gave one origin to all peoples  
and willed to gather from them, one family for yourself,  
fill all hearts, we pray,  
with the fire of your love and kindle in them a desire  
for the just advancement of their neighbour.

That through the good things which you richly bestow upon all,  
each human person may be brought to perfection,  
every division may be removed,  
and equity and justice may be established in human society.

Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen. +

### **SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS**

- *You are the Voice* ~ David Haas (Catholic Book of Worship #576)
- *We are Called* ~David Haas (Gather Hymnal #710)
- *Send Down the Fire* ~Marty Haugen (Gather Hymnal #466)
- *Christ be Our Light* ~Bernadette Farrell (Gather Hymnal #590)
- *Your Grace is Enough* ~Matt Maher (Spirit & Song, Volume 9)



## March 2019

### *“Journeying Together in Faith”*

#### **SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS**

- [\*We are Companions on the Journey\*](#)
  - Come and Journey with a Saviour (CBW III #476)
  - To Abraham and Sarah (CBW III #519)
- [\*Faith has Set Us On a Journey\*](#)
  - Pescador de Hombres (Lord, You have Come to the Seashore)  
[Original Spanish Version](#)  
[English Version](#) (lyrics below)

*Lord, you have come to the seashore,  
neither searching for the rich nor the wise,  
desiring only that I should follow.*

#### **REFRAIN:**

*O Lord, with your eyes set upon me,  
gently smiling, you have spoken my name;  
All I longed for, I have found by the water.  
At your side, I will seek other shores.*

*Lord, see my goods, my possessions;  
In my boat you find no power, no wealth.  
Will you accept then, my nets and labour? **REFRAIN***

*Lord, take my hands and direct them.  
Help me spend myself in seeking the lost,  
returning love for the love you gave me. **REFRAIN***

*Lord, as I drift on the waters,  
be the resting place on my restful heart,  
my life's companion, my friend and refuge. **REFRAIN***

## **OPENING PRAYER**

God, our companion on every journey of our lives,  
be with us today as we embark once more on the pilgrimage of living as your disciples.  
Give us clear vision and courage,  
wisdom and compassion,  
as we set out on the road that stretches before us.  
Even when we are uncertain of our destination,  
we know that you are always with us  
and that we are never alone.  
May we travel always with confidence and hope,  
in the name of Jesus, our Brother and Lord,  
in whose name we pray.  
Amen. +

## **READING: A Reading from the book of the Prophet Nehemiah (9:19-23)**

Lord our God, you in your great mercies did not forsake our ancestors in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud that led them in the way, did not leave them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, that gave them light on the way by which they should go. You gave your good spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and gave them water for their thirst. For forty years you sustained them in the wilderness so that they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell. And you gave them kingdoms and peoples, and allotted to them every corner, so they took possession of the land of King Sihon of Heshbon and the land of King Og of Bashan. You multiplied their descendants like the stars of heaven, and brought them into the land that you had told their ancestors to enter and possess.

The Word of the Lord. **R. Thanks be to God.**

## **QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION**

Our Jewish sisters and brothers used the verb *halak* (to walk, to journey) to speak about the laws that governed how they lived their religious lives. In its earthiest decades, the Christian religion was known simply as “The Way” (Acts 9:2, 18:25, 19:9, 19:23, 22:4, 24:14 and 24:22). Christians have always talked about their faith as a journey taken together (the term “synod” which we frequently use in the church, is Greek for “walking the path together with”).

In what ways are you sometimes called to “journey to an unknown land” in terms of your faith?  
How do you respond to that call?

If the church is meant to be a community that journeys together, how can we help each other and make the journey easier for our travelling companions?

Is the road generally smooth for you right now? Or is it rocky and full of potholes?

What do you most need from the Lord at this moment to make the journey go smoothly?

## **READING & GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

“Journeying is an art because if we’re always in a hurry, we get tired and don’t arrive at our journey’s goal. If we stop, we don’t go forward and we also miss the goal. Journeying is precisely the art of looking toward the horizon, thinking where I want to go, but also enduring the fatigue of the journey, which is sometimes difficult. There are dark days, even days when we fail, even days when we fall, but always think of this... Don’t be afraid of failures! Don’t be afraid of falling! What matters in the art of journeying isn’t not falling, but not staying down. Get up right away and continue going forward. This is what’s beautiful... This is working every day... This is journeying as humans. But also, it’s bad walking alone... It’s bad and boring. Walking in community, with friends, with those who love us, that helps us... It helps us to arrive precisely at that goal, that “there” that we’re supposed to arrive at.”

(Pope Francis speaking to a group of students from Italian Jesuit schools, June 7, 2013)

In this speech, Pope Francis reminds us that the essence of Christian living is to be able to get back up again, even after our mistakes, our sins, and our failures. He reminds us to keep our eyes on our goal, and not to become discouraged.

How does God’s mercy in our lives give us the ability not to give up? How can we “lift up” those who have been “beaten down” by society, or by the circumstances of their lives? How can we be living signs of hope and encouragement for others?

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Lord Jesus,

We know from the Gospels that you journeyed from village to village to share the good news of God’s love and forgiveness, with those who most needed to hear it.

The road may have been dusty and the sun may have been hot, but you were constantly travelling, to bring healing and hope, renewal and transformation.

Guide our feet to go where you want us to go, to bring your presence to the people around us, and to discover the beauty of this world you have made.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus, now and for ever!

Amen. +

## **SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS**

- *Lord, You Search Me and You Know Me* ~ CBW III #474
- *We Will Walk with God* ~ Gather Comprehensive #635
- *Bring Forth the Kingdom* ~ Gather Comprehensive #640
- *Go Make a Difference* ~ Gather Comprehensive #664



## April 2019

### *“Sharing the Good News”*

#### **SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS**

- *God is Alive* ~ David Haas (CBW III #591)
- *You Have Anointed Me* ~Mike Balhoff, Gary Daigle, Darryl Ducote (Gather Hymnal #676)
- *Here I am , Lord* ~Dan Schutte (CBW III #520)
- *Open the Eyes of My Heart* ~Michael Smith, Paul Baloche  
<https://ca.video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-arh-001&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=arh&p=Open+the+Eyes+of+My+Heart+%E2%80%93+Michael+Smith%2C+Paul+Baloche#id=15&vid=f47b6efff65cda204a879b2d4b1c6a67&action=view>

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

Open our eyes, Lord.

Without the gift of your revelation, our eyes are kept from recognizing you.

Appear before us, suddenly, unexpectedly, in all your glory.

So that we, too, may proclaim to a world in despair,  
that we have seen the risen Lord.

We pray in your name.

Amen. +

#### **READING: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (20:11-18)**

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means “teacher”). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

The Gospel of the Lord. **R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

In this reading from the gospel of John, we see Mary Magdalene described as the first witness to the Risen Jesus. What was it that opened Mary's eyes to the presence of Jesus? What is the significance of this?

Mary is also seen to be the first herald of the good news. To whom is she sent? What possible meaning can we glean from this?

## READING & GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS

"The last thing that Jesus asked of us before he ascended, was that we go out to all peoples and nations and preach his presence. However, that must be understood precisely in an incarnational, not theistic way. The challenge is not... to pass out religious tracts, establish religious television networks to make Jesus known, or even to try to baptize everyone into Christianity. The task is to radiate the compassion and love of God, as manifest in Jesus, in our faces and in our actions." (Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*)

Ron Rolheiser talks about sharing the good news in an incarnational, not theistic way. For Christians, the God of Heaven is also physically present on this earth, inside of human beings. The Christian God can be seen, heard, felt, tasted and smelled through the senses. The Christian God, he says, has some skin. What does this mean, concretely, for how we share the gospel with our students, our colleagues, our families and our church communities?

## CLOSING PRAYER

Open my heart to hear the gospel,  
and grant me the confidence to proclaim the good news to others.  
Pour out your spirit, so that we may be strengthened to go forth  
and witness to the gospel in our lives, through our words and actions.  
In moments of hesitation, remind us...  
If not us, then who will proclaim the gospel?  
If not now, then when will the gospel be proclaimed?  
If not the truth of the gospel, then what shall we proclaim?  
God, our Father, we pray that through the Holy Spirit,  
we might hear the call of the New Evangelization,  
to deepen our faith, grow in confidence to proclaim the gospel,  
and boldly witness to the saving grace of your Son, Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen. +  
(Prayer for the New Evangelization from the United States Bishops)

## SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS

- *Go Make a Difference* ~ Spirit & Song #213
- *You are Mine* ~ David Haas (Gather Hymnal #649)
- *Let Heaven Rejoice* ~ Bob Dufford S.J. (CBW #557)
- *Two Were Bound for Emmaus* ~ Bob Hurd  
(<https://ca.video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-arh-001&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=arh&p=two+were+bound+for+emmaus#id=1&vid=623644aab5735720e47b0b8ab9a0bb8c&action=view>)