

OneWith Mass Reflection Guide

"Virtual" Session #12 - April 11, 2021

Attend/View and reflect on a Sunday Mass

For every Catholic the Eucharist is an inexhaustible mystery to be loved and to be lived. It is a sacrament; it is a sacrifice; it is a meal; it is a celebration, a public proclamation of our faith in sign and symbol; it is the "Source and Summit" of our Christian experience! To truly understand who we are as Catholics; to fully participate in the life and mission of the Church; to become the person of faith that God has called us to be, we must encounter God in the sacraments; we must seek Him in the Eucharist.

The goal of our **OneWith** formation is to unlock the meaning and power contained in the Catholic Mass. Please use this guide to help you unpack and reflect on the layers of meaning found in the signs and symbols of the liturgy. My hope (and prayer) is that by intentionally and regularly participating in the "work" of the people, the "*Mass confusion*" that many people have about Catholic liturgy will give way to "*Mass understanding*".

~Barry

The following materials are not intended to be "homework" but a *framework* to help facilitate discussion between youth, their families, and peers.

Name of Catholic Church: _____

Name of Presiding Priest: _____

Date of Mass Attended: _____

Part 1: Liturgical Reflection – Year in Review...

Reflection #1 – Congratulations! You are part of a community that has an ancient and royal pedigree! The main way that we gather and express our faith is so old that the layers of meaning behind the things we say and do... have layers of meaning – mostly forgotten through the centuries. One of the guiding principles of the OneWith formation is that a better understanding of the forms, rites, signs and symbols that are woven throughout the Mass will help our young people (all of us) to participate more fully in this very Catholic form of worship.

The second guiding principle of the OneWith formation is the belief that the Mass is imbued with the living presence of God! And as a result, it does not matter whether you are a relative novice or the Pope, the Catholic Mass is an inexhaustible Mystery worth exploring and contemplating for a lifetime!

- Thinking about your reflections and experiences of the Mass this year, what learning, or rite/part of the Mass or “habit” have you developed that has helped you engage in the experience of worshipping God?

[Optional - Record your reflection notes here]

- The statement that “*the Mass is imbued with the living presence of God!*” is a pretty bold claim. Explain why you think this is true - or not.

[Optional - Record your reflection notes here]

- **Digging Deeper:** Has the practice of “unpacking” different parts of the Mass or Scripture verses helped you better understand your identity as a Catholic Christian? Explain why/why not...

[Optional - Record your reflection notes here]

Part 2: Scripture Reflection

Write reflections on the Scripture and preaching (homily by priest or deacon) and how they connect with your lived experience.

Scripture Readings of the week

[A full copy of the readings for the week can be found on the U.S. Bishop's website: <https://bible.usccb.org/Bible/readings/041121.cfm>]

Reading #1: Acts 4:32-35

Responsorial Psalm: 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Reading #2: I John 5:1-6

Gospel: John 20:19-31

Reflection #2 Historical Context – My Lord and my God

This extraordinarily clear statement of belief about the divinity of Jesus appears nowhere else in any of the four gospels. Why does the Gospel of John make this statement and not any of the other gospels? It must be remembered that the Gospel of John was the last of the four gospels to be written—at least 20 years after the Gospel of Mark and some 60 to 70 years after the death of Jesus. The early Christians had been cast out of the Jewish tradition and were making sense of how their own beliefs could stand apart from Jewish tradition. With the break from Judaism, Christians felt able to express their belief that Jesus was God.

Those who have not seen...

Jesus says to Thomas, "You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe." That's us! Jesus' words in the gospel are meant for people like us living today. We are not in the position of Thomas and the other disciples who were able to see the risen Lord face to face and so convince themselves of his rising. The gospel recognizes that to believe in the resurrection without that physical, personal encounter with Jesus is to be celebrated even more. Happy are we—blessed are we—who have not seen and yet still believe

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Choose and discuss one or more of the following questions:

- Do you think Thomas was doubting the resurrection or his friends? (both?)
- Why might Thomas have been so reluctant to believe without seeing Jesus for himself?
- In what ways can you relate to Thomas' experience?

Digging Deeper: How is Thomas like many people today?

Homily: What was the main point of the Priest/Deacon's homily?

[Optional - Record your reflection notes here]

Part 3: Personal Reflection / Discipleship Challenge

One of the goals of our **OneWith** formation is to help make sense of the unfamiliar language and ritual that IS the Catholic Mass so that we can better appreciate and understand God's loving messages and powerful sacrifice that is being offered to all of us...

Make it Personal:

Looking back on all you've experienced at Mass today (Prayers, music, Scripture readings, homily, etc.) - what is one thing that gave you the most encouragement/inspiration?

[Optional - Record your reflection notes here]

Discipleship Challenge

Another signature component of our **OneWith** formation is the "Discipleship Challenge". Each week participants are challenged to make a specific commitment to make a positive impact on their family, friends, teammates, school, community, etc.

Note: *We are looking for a specific/concrete action for you to commit to. "Being a better person" is too generic. The commitment should also be more interactive than "praying for someone" - We certainly want you to pray, but prayer is a separate practice of discipleship. The point of the **Discipleship Challenge** is to put your faith into action by committing to a tangible action and become an agent of mercy, justice, and love in the lives of your family, friends and in our world.*

Drawing on one of the themes you heard today (Scripture, homily, etc.) - what is one thing that you can do during Lent to help you pray, fast and be *financially* generous to those in need?

(Optional)

Ask Fr. Mike...

Was there something that happened during this liturgy that you did not understand or would like to know more about?
