

The life of God

# CRACKED WIDE OPEN

Diocesan Lent Course 2021

in the paschal mystery

The suffering, death, resurrection  
and glorification of Jesus

Diocese of Chichester Lent Course 2021

**Week Five**  
**Guidance Notes**

## In addition to these Guidance notes you will find the following on the website:

- Study notes for last Sunday's gospel – for a bible study group or use by disciples in their own devotions and as background to the conversation between Bishop Ruth and Bishop Will.
- An outline order of service for use by a larger gathering. This order contains suggestions as to how it might be used.
- A prayer diary. For use liturgically and by people in their daily devotions. Please pray deliberately for the three bishops and their specific prayer requests. In this way we grow in relationship with them and their ministry.
- A video from Bishop Martin for use as a post-communion reflection on Sunday. There is also a sound only file. For those places where it isn't possible to either watch or listen to the bishop, his text is provided so that it can be read aloud in a reflective manner.
- A video of a conversation between Bishop Ruth and Bishop Will. There is also a sound only file.

- Background reading – this can be reproduced for all participants as could these notes.

For use by study groups wherever gathered, real or virtual, and their coordinators.

The filmed conversation for this week is 20 minutes. The suggestion in the timetable below is that you watch it in one sitting. However, if the person leading would like to stop it at any point for group discussion, that is entirely up to them. The use of all material within Cracked Wide Open is entirely at the discretion of the local leadership. You should use it as best suits the needs and opportunities of the people assembled.

Don't forget, you can contact the offices of [Bishop Ruth](#) or [Bishop Will](#) to see if it might be possible for one of them to join your group if you are meeting virtually.

## The trajectory for our Lenten study is as follows:

1. The weekly assembly last Sunday – gathered around the presence of Jesus in Word and Sacrament. The gospel (John 12: 20-33) was read and then proclaimed. We received Jesus in his Word and then in sacrament. Then Bishop Martin reflected with us as we prepared to go out to proclaim the Good News.
2. Now we have a time with Bishop Ruth and Bishop Will in conversation. They take as their starting point the gospel passage from Sunday. Their conversation is open and honest; it is intended to assist us as we seek to grow in unity with Christ and within his Body, the Church.
3. From the conversation between the two bishops we are asked to move onwards and think about, discuss and pray over matters concerning our lives as individual disciples and our common life within the baptized community.
4. How might we be more open to the given unity of this community?
5. This week our group conversation needs to encompass:
  - The centrality of the proclamation of the gospel.
  - What a group of disciples needs to equip, sustain and shape them for this proclamation
  - How common witness with other Christians can build us up towards being One Church
  - the world which God so loves and for The sake of which the gospel is to be proclaimed
  - The difficulties experienced in proclamation into the world we actually inhabit
  - The inevitable clashes between the demands of the Kingdom of God and our lives today – the gospel coming into conflict with the culture; which remains true and lasting?
  - How do we organize the common life of disciples in such a way as to enable engagement with others who are not (yet) Christians? We need worship, nurture, fellowship etc. However, time in today's society is really at a premium.

## Suggested timetable:

Gather and pray	5 minutes (5)
Read the gospel passage (John 12.20-33)	3 minutes (8)
Play video of conversation	20 minutes (28)
Group conversation	45 minutes (73)
See below for topics and questions	
Time for silent reflection and closing prayer	15 minutes (88)

## Reminders

(details in the introductory material):

Essentials for the Church – bold indicates sub-theme for this week

a) Bishop ...

b) bible ...

c) water/bread and wine ...

d) disciples ...

**e) the world in which to live and witness**

The purpose of the Church – bold indicates sub-theme for this week

a) Sign ...

b) instrument ...

c) foretaste ...

**d) of the Kingdom ...**

e) for the world.

The words taken by Bishop Martin for his Sunday reflection:

**On demand**

Theme of the bible study notes

**Life through death**

## Suggestion for gathering

### together the above themes

The challenges of being Christian in a 'post-modern' culture link the themes of this week.

We bear witness in the world as it is. It is for this world that the Church is instituted to be for it a sign, instrument and foretaste of the Kingdom. We are for the world. It is said that the Church relates to mission as a fire does to burning. No burning, no fire! Unless the mission of God is to draw people out of the world into some kind of safe haven then engagement between the gospel and the world is inevitable. We are at the point of intersection.

The gospel is counter-cultural.

Nothing could be clearer when we live life inspired by the glory of the Cross of Jesus.

## Possible questions to start

### discussion

The following questions are taken directly from TCTCV following paragraph 60:

- *Within today's context of increased awareness of the vitality of various religions throughout the world, how may the churches arrive at greater convergence about these issues and cooperate more effectively in witnessing to the Gospel in word and deed?*

And following paragraph 63:

- *How might the churches, guided by the Spirit, discern together what it means today to understand and live in fidelity to the teaching and attitude of Jesus?*
- *How can the churches, as they engage together in this task of discernment, offer appropriate models of discourse and wise counsel to the societies in which they are called to serve?*
- Who are the people called to bear witness in the public square? What challenges do they face?
- Bishop Will talks about how people are curious and necessarily drawn to the things that are provable.

What is your experience of conversations about the meaning and purpose of life with your friends and neighbours?

Several years ago it was common to talk about evangelism in terms of couplets that suggested alternatives – one that worked and the other didn't. Like moving from maintenance to mission. Another was evangelism by presence or proclamation. From this passage and the encounter of the Greeks with Philip, is it one or the other, or both presence and proclamation? What does the answer say about the parish system? How might it look in the future if designed for effective evangelistic worship and witness?

You might have touched on the question of the central importance of the sacraments last week. It would seem to be the experience of some Christian communities that any kind of 'formal' liturgy needs to be abandoned if you wish to be serious in reaching out to others. Do you agree?

What would this say about the journey towards full visible unity?

The proclamation of the gospel makes demands on all who hear it. This was how it was as the Word incarnate went about the highways and towns of Palestine. There are things within our common proclamation that are particularly unpalatable in today's culture. What are they and are we free to keep

- Does being open really mean anything goes? Is this compatible with the gospel passages we have looked at this Lent?