

CRACKED WIDE OPEN

Diocesan Lent Course 2021

Session 2 – Follow Me

Notes:

- This outline order of service is provided to assist parishes where the provision of small groups does not, for whatever reason, prove possible in Lent. (It could, if so desired, be used in addition to small groups – this is a local decision.)
- The use of this outline is another way to encourage people to engage with the filmed conversation between the two bishops and move, from that and the gospel passage, into some reflection on the ministry, mission and unity of the Church.
- As it is an act of worship consideration should be given to the use of silence and music both of which can be inserted at various places in the celebration. Local custom and the availability of resources will dictate the musical provision but – please try to use some as it introduces another dimension to the assembly.
- The use of silence should be considered particularly in relation to reflection following the filmed conversation and around the use of the suggested areas for thoughtful reflection and/or discussion.
- Local circumstances, numbers attending and current regulations and restrictions will all need to be considered by those planning the service.

Before the session begins, place a Bible in a central position.

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

The word of God is living and active.
It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
All is open and laid bare before the eyes of him
to whom we give account.
We confess our sins in penitence and faith.

We pause for a moment to recall those times we have fallen short in our Christian life.

Your word convicts us:
all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Your word commands us:
repent, and believe the good news.

Taken from Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England (2000)
CCLI: 1167556

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Your word assures us:
Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.
Amen.

Opening Prayer

Holy God,
our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin
and through the death of your Son
bring us healing and make us whole
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings from the Bible and 'The Church: towards a common vision'

Mark 8:31-38

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

³¹ Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

[New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised]

The Church: towards a common vision

11. All Christians share the conviction that Scripture is normative, therefore the biblical witness provides an irreplaceable source for acquiring greater agreement about the Church. Although the New Testament provides no systematic ecclesiology, it does offer accounts of the faith of the early communities, of their worship and practice of discipleship, of various roles of service and leadership, as well as images and metaphors used to express the identity of the Church. Subsequent interpretation within the Church, seeking always to be faithful to biblical teaching, has produced an additional wealth of ecclesiological insights over the course of history. The same Holy Spirit who guided the earliest communities in producing the inspired biblical text continues, from generation to generation, to guide later followers of Jesus as they strive to be faithful to the Gospel. This is what is understood by the “living Tradition” of the Church. The great importance of Tradition has been acknowledged by most communities, but they vary in assessing how its authority relates to that of Scripture.

We listen to the Bishops’ Conversation for this session.

Discussion/thoughtful reflection around the following questions (they have been taken from those provided for use by groups).

From the conversation between the two bishops and in the light of the extracts from *TCTCV*:

Bishop Ruth speaks of how the truth of God is a matter of revelation and not something we discover. Bishop Will says that we need to keep our eyes on the divine. How do we see and receive these things? What have you found helpful?

In your experience has the Church (however manifested) been effective as an instrument of the Kingdom in recent months?

Is the Bible useful in our engagement to bring Kingdom values to others?

Is carrying a placard with a biblical quotation sufficient use of the bible as an effective instrument?

How could a Church united as one be a better instrument for the in-breaking of the Kingdom? What blunts present effectiveness?

How effective is our local faith community as an instrument of the Kingdom?

This Thanksgiving should be celebrated with the bible or other symbol of the word as the focus

Your word is a lantern to our feet
and a light upon our path.

This prayer of thanksgiving is said

Blessed are you, Lord our God.

How sweet are your words to the taste,
sweeter than honey to the mouth.

How precious are your commands for our life,
more than the finest gold in our hands.

How marvellous is your will for the world,
unending is your love for the nations.

Our voices shall sing of your promises
and our lips declare your praise.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God for ever.

Spend some time looking at a/the Bible. You could just look at the one placed before you or you could pick up your own copy, or the one in the pew. Think about a verse or story that is important to you journey in faith. Read it slowly and think about what the Word of God is saying to you.

Intercessions are offered.

Let us give thanks for the gift of the Bible
and pray for all who enable it to be studied, understood, and loved.

Almighty God,
in your goodness you have given us the Scriptures
to equip us for every kind of good deed.

We give thanks for all who translate the Bible,
and pray that, through their work and skill,
your word may go forth to the ends of the earth.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We give thanks for all who distribute the Scriptures,
and pray that, through the written text,
your people may be built up in faith and love.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We give thanks for all whose learning interprets the Scriptures,
and pray for biblical scholars and theologians,
that more light and truth may break forth from your word.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We give thanks for Bishop Martin, Bishop Ruth, Bishop Will and all preachers and teachers
in our Diocese,

and pray that, through the word proclaimed and shared,
your Church may grow in holiness and discipleship.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We give thanks for all who read the Bible in public worship,
for all study groups and training courses,
and pray that, through the study of the Scriptures,
your word may find a home in the hearts of your people.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Gracious Lord,
grant to us that loving your holy word,
we may adorn it with obedient and Christlike lives;
to the glory of your name.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

(Either)

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray
**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

(or)

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Almighty God,
we thank you for the gift of your holy word.
May it be a lantern to our feet,
a light upon our paths,
and a strength to our lives.
Take us and use us
to love and serve all people
in the power of the Holy Spirit

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and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.