

6. Prayers

Mentioning people and situations we want to pray for.

7. Closing Prayer

Prayer to St. Brigid

You were a woman of peace,
you brought harmony where there
was conflict.
You brought light to the darkness,
You brought hope to the downcast.

May the mantle of your peace
cover those who are troubled and
anxious
and may peace be firmly rooted in
our hearts and in our world.

Inspire us to act justly and to
reverence all God has made.

Brigid, you were a voice for the
wounded and weary.
Strengthen what is weak within us.
Calm us into a quietness that heals
and listens.
May we grow each day into greater
wholeness in mind, body and spirit.
Amen

Myrtle

Myrtle is a shrub with evergreen leaves
and small white flowers indigenous
throughout Palestine. The fruit is a small
black berry used in biblical times for
rituals and celebrations.
(Isaiah 41:19 and 55:13)



The myrtle tree with its dark green leaves
and star-shaped flowers it is a symbol of
peace, hope, innocence, abundance and
balance. Its perfume is reputed to be more
exquisite than roses.

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Sadhbh Lawlor & Gareth Gowran 2024



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**Gospel-sharing for
Small Groups
First Sunday of
Lent 2024**

1. Welcome and opening prayer

Healing energy of love
we cry out to you.
Our trust has been broken,
the embers of our fire wane.

Come O fire of love, rake up
the flickering embers.
Blow with your mighty breath and
breathe new life into us again.

O loving energy of God, embrace all.
Renew us again; guide us through the
wilderness.
Tell us again, 'Don't be afraid'.
Restore our faith in your steadfast,
healing love.

2. Gospel text: Mark 1:12-15

At once the Spirit sent him out into the
wilderness, and he was in the wilderness
forty days being tempted by Satan. He was
with the wild animals, and angels attended
him.

After John was put in prison, Jesus went
into Galilee, proclaiming the Good News
of God. "The time has come", he said,
"The kingdom of God has come near.
Repent and believe the good news!"

3. Quiet time...

*People can read over the text for themselves
and pick out words or short phrases that
strike them and say them out loud.
When everyone has had a chance to say their
word/phrase, they can then reflect silently
for a moment or two and then briefly say
why such a word/phrase struck them-
in relation to themselves, or their
community or the world.*

4. Background Notes for Mark 1:12-15

Jesus goes away from Nazareth when news
of what John is doing filters through.
Listening to John, a strong affirmation sets
him on a new quest. He is led to the
wilderness, away from the centre of
religion, the temple; led to the margins.

Huge choices face him:

- to distance himself from the idols of
wealth and power that keep the poor,
disabled and oppressed from ever believing
they were worth anything in God's eyes.
- to be against everything that diminishes
life: evil, suffering, political and
religious oppression.
- to open the door to friendship with
God, peace, justice, abundant life,
forgiveness.

His kingdom will be a life and death
challenge to the Jewish kingdom.

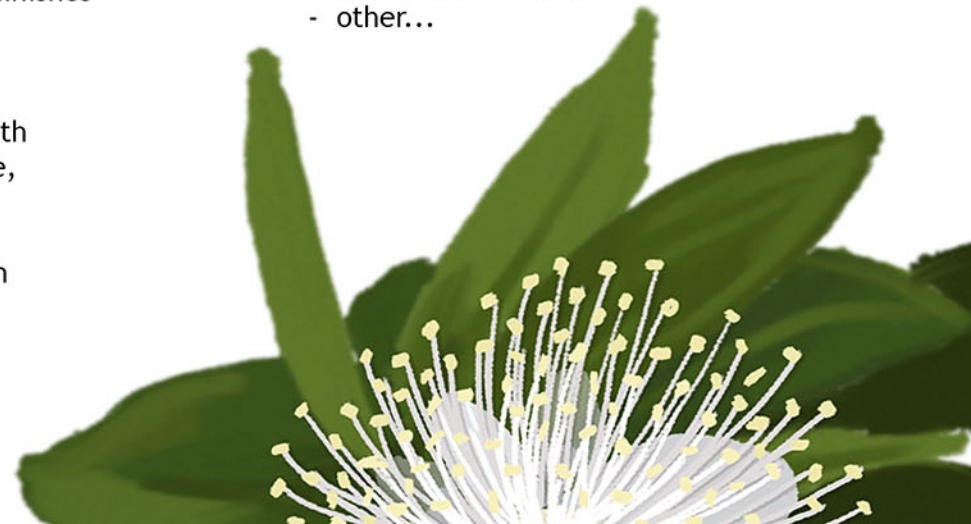
The wilderness referred to is probably
the Judean desert where wild animals
roamed: wolves, leopards, bears,
desert foxes, poisonous snakes.
The angels' presence signify God's
protection.

John's violent imprisonment underlines
what the political leaders are capable of.
In that climate of violence and terror
Jesus heads for Galilee, meeting with
common labourers, and telling them
the Good News of God's tremendous, tender
love to people who had lost hope.

5. Reflection Questions for Mark 1:12-15

Which of these would be likely to
strengthen your trust in God?

- Seeing someone take a stand for
justice against all odds
- seeing someone take a risk for another
person
- reading a poem or text from the bible
- hearing a song
- making a pilgrimage
- listening to a friend
- other...



6. Prayers

Mentioning people and situations we want to pray for.

7. Closing Prayer

God of our longing
hear our prayers
protect our dreams
and listen to our silent hopes.
Deal gently with our pain
speak to our sadness
and remove the barriers
that imprison our spirit.

Shed your light
where shadows are cast
that we may feel your warmth
and know your presence.

Give us courage to
hold fast to our vision
that we may build our world
following your dream
and create a future of love.

Cafod (adapted)

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**Gospel-sharing
for Small Groups**
Second Sunday
of Lent 2024

1. Welcome and opening prayer

God of our lives,
you are always calling us
to follow you into the future,
inviting us to new ventures, new
challenges, new ways to care,
new ways to touch the hearts of all.

When we are fearful of the unknown,
give us courage,
when we worry we are not up to
the task,
remind us that your power is always
available

When we get tired
or feel disappointed with the way things
are going,
remind us that you can bring change
and hope
out of the most difficult situations.

The Pattern of Our Days adapted

2. Gospel text: Mark 9:2-10

After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up to a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.) Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

Suddenly they looked around. They no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

3. Quiet time...

People can read over the text for themselves and pick out words or short phrases that strike them and say them out loud. When everyone has had a chance to say their word/phrase, they can then reflect silently for a moment or two and then briefly say why such a word/phrase struck them in relation to themselves, or their community or the world.

4. Background Notes for Mark 9:2-10

Opposition is building against Jesus from the religious leaders. The disciples still misunderstand what he is about. The scene is darkening around him and finally Jesus has spoken for the first time about what he will endure in Jerusalem at the hands of the chief priests and leaders. Peter can't hear it.

Jesus leads them up a mountain (either Tabor or Hermon). Away from the familiar, from contacts they are accustomed to,

into a totally different space. The two great Jewish liberation leaders appear with him, encouraging him. The disciples misunderstand.

Peter, still operating from the framework of tradition and triumphalism, wants to institutionalise the moment and make it last. But he is challenged. "Listen to him" is an invitation to leave behind their narrow, restricted view of Jesus' mission and open themselves to a very different vision of life.

As they leave the mountain and witness the fatal consequences of his commitment to his vision, the challenge will be not to be scandalised and lose faith in him. They will have to slowly realise, through the Spirit, that Jesus' passion and death will not be the end.

New power and new life will be released. Evil will not have the last word. A transformed, shining world will emerge.

5. Reflection Questions for Mark 9:2-10

What's your sense of God in these difficult years?
A Rock? Light? Challenger?
Comforter? Healer? Counsellor?
In solidarity with you? Energizer? Other...?



6. Prayers

Mentioning people and situations we want to pray for.

7. Closing Prayer

Spirit of God,
give us the openness deep within us to
recognize daily all people as made in
your likeness.
Help us to learn from one another
ways of being fully alive,
at peace with ourselves and with those
around us.
Give us the courage to transform those
parts of ourselves and the world that
separate and create enmity.

Help us to take steps
to stop the cycle of violence
in our homes, in our workplaces,
in our neighbourhoods, in our country,
in our world.

May we be open to our deepest yearning
for a world alive with your justice and
peace, to dream of a society
where all are treated with respect,
and with the power of your Spirit
to take steps to bring it about.

Australian Social Justice Council

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and small white flowers indigenous
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**Gospel-sharing
for Small Groups**

Third Sunday
of Lent 2024

1. Welcome and opening prayer

Lord, may we feel your comforting touch.
May we hear the wisdom of your word.
May we know your healing within us.
May we remember your gracious giving,
transforming the seed into shoot and blossom,
spreading its sweet perfume.
May we trust that our lives lived with you
can fill our land with gentle fragrance
of your kingdom alive.
Take away our resentment, fear, apathy,
indifference, greed. Empty us that there
may be
a beautiful space in us for new things to
happen.
Shower us with your creating love.
Remind us that for your dream, to become
true, you are waiting for us.

2. Gospel text: John 2:13-25

When it was almost time for the Jewish
Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In
the temple courts he found people selling
cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting
at tables exchanging money. So he made a
whip out of cords and drove all from the
temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he
scattered the coins of the money-changers
and over-turned their tables. To those who
sold doves he said, "Get out of here!
Stop turning my Father's house into a
market."

His disciples remembered that it is written,
"Zeal for your house will consume me."

The Jews responded to him: "What sign
can you show us to prove your authority
to do all this?"

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple
and I will raise it again in three days."

They replied: "It has taken forty-six years to
build this temple, and you are going to
raise it in three days?"

But the temple he had spoken of was his
body.

After he was raised from the dead, his
disciples recalled what he had said. Then
they believed the scripture and the words
Jesus had spoken.

3. Quiet time...

*People can read over the text for themselves
and pick out words or short phrases that
strike them and say them out loud.
When everyone has had a chance to say their
word/phrase, they can then reflect silently
for a moment or two and then briefly say
why such a word/phrase struck them-
in relation to themselves, or their
community or the world.*

4. Background Notes for John 2:13-25

The Jerusalem Temple built of huge
imported stones, decorated with gold and
silver and cedar wood was visible to pilgrims
as they approached the city. Inside,
especially at the time of great feasts, the
courts would be full of animals to be
slaughtered, with money-changers and
merchants haggling about prices, making as
much profit as they could from the exchange
system.

The priestly upper class depended on it to
finance their lavish lifestyle and a huge
bureaucracy made their living from it.

Jesus interrupted the temple proceedings
probably only for a few minutes but he
was challenging the whole rotten temple
system. The temple no longer served its
original purpose, it had outlived and twisted
its aim. Instead of championing the poor and
vulnerable and serving justice, the Temple
system perpetuated injustice and oppression,
economic, political and religious.

Mark's account of Jesus' action in the Temple
gives a plausible reason for the authorities
to arrest him. The final verses are written
from a post resurrection perspective. Jesus in
his resurrected body is the true temple or
dwelling of God. In and through him we dwell
in God and God in us.

5. Reflection Question for John 2:13-25

'Create an empty space for new things
to happen' - what would you really
like to see happen in your present life? Or,
what are you glad is happening?



6. Prayers

Mentioning people and situations we want to pray for.

7. Closing Prayer

Gracious God, when the struggles of life hem us in on every side,
open to us the freedom of your presence that can help us see beyond every restriction,
beyond every limit that binds.

When we wake to yet another day of wonder and joy in the beauty of your creation,
give us the heart to keep our needs simple, our desires soft, our wills adaptable,
so that we never participate in the exploitation of the earth,
which is the work of your hands,

Remember those whose minds are menaced by thoughts that worry and wound them,
those whose hearts are broken because love has gone,
or because the light they lived by has turned to darkness;
those whose feet walk in circles, stopping only when they are tired, resting only to walk in circles again,
those who feel discarded and disposable.

Jesus, put your hands where our prayers beckon.

May your kingdom come
in joy and generosity
in the small and the large,
the ordinary and the special,
and to you be the glory
now and always. Amen

Explore faith.org

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**Gospel-sharing
for Small Groups**

**Fourth Sunday
of Lent 2024**

1. Welcome and opening prayer

God in whom is peace
we praise you.

We praise the unexpected gift of peace
which steals softly into our frenzied
activity and gives us still spaces of
tranquillity.

We praise the hard-earned work of peace
which struggles through our anger and
bitterness
to nudge us into forgiveness and new
beginnings.

We praise the shining dream of peace
which beckons and inspires us
to confront violence and injustice
with words of hope and acts of
commitment.

We praise the mysterious peace which
lies beyond our imagination,
our efforts and our dreams -
your gift of peace to a longing world.

Jan Berry

2. Gospel text: John 3:14-21

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the
wilderness, so the Son of Man must be
lifted up, that everyone who believes may
have eternal life in him.

For God so loved the world that he gave his
one and only Son, what whoever believes in
him shall not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world
to condemn the world, but to save the
world through him. Whoever believes in

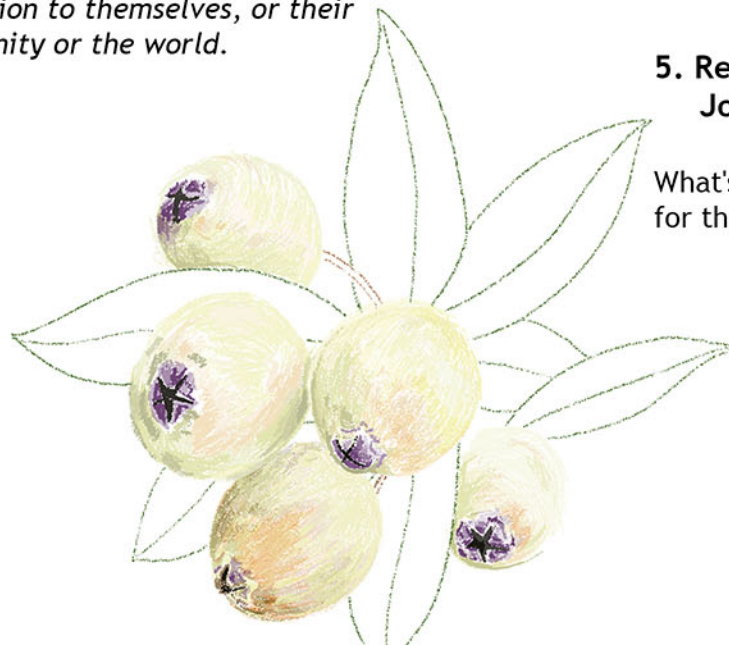
him is not condemned, but whoever does not
believe in him stands condemned already
because they have not believed in the name
of God's one and only Son.

This is the verdict: light has come into the
world, but people loved darkness instead of
light because their deeds were evil.
Everyone who does evil hates the light and
will not come into the light for fear that
their deeds will be exposed. But whoever
lives by the truth comes into the light. So
that it may be seen plainly that what they
have done has been done in
the sight of God.”

3. Quiet time...

*People can read over the text for themselves
and pick out words or short phrases that
strike them and say them out loud.*

*When everyone has had a chance to say their
word/phrase, they can then reflect silently
for a moment or two and then briefly say
why such a word/phrase struck them-
in relation to themselves, or their
community or the world.*



4. Background Notes for John 3:14-21

John records Jesus as using the familiar
image, well-known to Nicodemus, of Moses
lifting up the serpent in the
desert and the people being healed but
puts a new twist to it. While the
being 'lifted up' echoes all too closely the
reality of crucifixion, it can also be a
sign of glory and exaltation. In this way it is
indicating that Jesus' passion and death
for all its injustice and brutality, is a
mysterious revelation of God's love.

John is asserting the faith of his
community that in Jesus, all their dreams
and hopes have been addressed beyond
their wildest expectations, despite all
discouraging appearances.

The verdict: to live in the light,
to choose justice, compassion and trust
in God, believe in the truth of what Jesus
was about and live that truth 'in the light'.

5. Reflection Questions for John 3:14-21

What's your 'shining dream of peace'
for the world? Why?

6. Prayers

Mentioning people and situations we want to pray for.

7. Closing Prayer

An Irish Blessing

May the blessing of light be upon us,
light on the outside and light on the inside,
with God's sunlight shining on us.
May our hearts glow with warmth
to welcome friends and strangers alike.

May the blessing of God's soft rain be on us,
falling gently on our heads,
refreshing our souls with the
sweetness of little flowers newly blooming.

May the blessing of God's earth be on us
as we walk on our way; may we always
have a kind word for those we meet.

May we understand the strength and
power of God in a thunderstorm in
winter, the quiet beauty of creation, the
calm of a summer sunset and the tender
love that surrounds us.

In this Easter season we may rejoice
in all the signs of life springing around us
and in the assurance of God's faithful,
unending love.

Irish Blessing (adapted)

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**Gospel-sharing
for Small Groups**

Fifth Sunday
of Lent and
Feast of St. Patrick
2024

1. Welcome and opening prayer

Prayer of St. Patrick

May the strength of God pilot us
May the wisdom of God instruct us
May the hand of God protect us
May the word of God direct us
May your saving grace, O Lord,
be always ours, this day and for
evermore.

Christ behind us, Christ before us,
Christ beside us, Christ to win us
Christ to comfort us and restore us
Christ beneath us, Christ above us;
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger.
Christ in hearts of all that love us
Christ in the mouth of friends
or stranger.

Christ wherever we go, wherever we
stay.

2. Gospel text: John 12:20-33

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus."

Philip went to tell Andrew, Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

Jesus replied: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am

my servant will be also. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say?" 'Father, save me from this hour?' No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 'Father, glorify your name.'"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

3. Quiet time...

People can read over the text for themselves and pick out words or short phrases that strike them and say them out loud.

When everyone has had a chance to say their word/phrase, they can then reflect silently for a moment or two and then briefly say why such a word/phrase struck them in relation to themselves, or their community or the world.



4. Background Notes for

John 12:20-33

Jerusalem is full of pilgrims arriving for the festival, among them many Greek-speaking Jews from all around the Roman Empire. The text carries a sense of Jesus' life on earth reaching its end. The interlude of the Greeks seeking to meet him is not developed. Jesus answers by giving insight into his own feelings of hesitation and dread. He is overcome by the dawning awareness: his life is coming to an end. The grain must fall down, die and break open.

He shrinks away from what it will mean: his one life taken away in terrible, cruel suffering and death. The 'seed' dying.

But he chooses to be faithful; to trust in God, despite what awaits him.

After his death and resurrection, the elements of God's dream flourish.

The community of followers are not alone but have a new, powerful unity with Jesus and the Father through the Spirit. Living and acting with faith and courage, the followers, then and today, can help life blossom transforming the wastelands. No love ever being lost upon the face of the earth.

5. Reflection Question for

John 12:20-33

This St. Patrick's day, what does Ireland need most?