



The Catholic Women's
League of Canada

Prince Albert Diocesan Council
Spiritual Development Communique #14
Spiritual Development Chairperson,
Lorraine Thibeault, January 17 2021

Topics:

1. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
2. Word of God Sunday
3. Lenten Resources
4. Spiritual Bouquet for Bishop Albert Thevenot

“Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Matthew 4.4 Gospel Acclamation for the 1st Sunday of Lent

I hope that each of you has remained healthy during this Covid19 epidemic and that you continue to practice safe actions for your own safety and for that of others – wear face masks over nose and mouth, sanitize, social distance, limit travel and avoid large in-person group activities.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity –January 18-25, 2021: The Week of Prayer for



Christian Unity is celebrated around the world from January 18-25. This week of prayer encourages members from various and diverse Christian communities to gather to participate in prayer and activities that help us to deepen our oneness in Christ Jesus the Lord. The importance of the unity of Christians is something

that each Christian should pray about and work toward. It is important that we get to know one another as members of the Body of Christ and that we deepen our respect for the rituals, practices and ministry that is nurtured by the other. The international resources for 2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity have been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland, a group of religious sisters from different church traditions brought together by a common vocation of prayer, community life and hospitality and by their commitment to Christian unity.

“The 2021 theme – Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit (John 15:5-9) – calls us to pray and to work for reconciliation and unity in the church, with our human family and with all of creation. Drawing on the Gospel image of vine and branches, it invites us to nourish unity with God and with one another through contemplative silence, prayer, and common action. Grafted into Christ, the vine, as many diverse branches, may we bear rich fruit and create new ways of living, with respect for and communion with all of creation.”

The following themes help us to deepen our appreciation of the biblical text John 15:9-17, selected for our week of prayer. I encourage every member to read the brief theme and scripture passage cited for each day. It is a commitment of about 20 seconds.

Day 1: Called by God: "You did not choose me but I chose you" (Jn 15:16a)

Day 2: Maturing internally: "Abide in me as I abide in you" (Jn 15:4a)

Day 3: Forming one body: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12b)

Day 4: Praying together: "I do not call you servants any longer ... but I have called you friends" (Jn 15:15)

Day 5: Letting oneself be transformed by the Word: "You have already been pruned by the word..." (Jn 15:3)

Day 6: Welcoming others: "Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last" (Jn 15:16b)

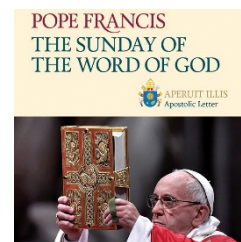
Day 7: Growing in unity: "I am the vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5a)

Day 8: Reconciling with all of creation: "So that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." Jn 15:11

To have further information for each day and to explore the scripture text through reflection questions you can go to the website cited below: Taken from

<https://www.weekofprayer.ca/2021-wpcu-resources>

Word of God Sunday – January 24: In September of 2019 Pope Francis published a document entitled "Instituting the Sunday of the Word of God". Each year on the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time we are to celebrate, study and share the Word of God. In his letter he points out that, *"This Sunday of the Word of God will thus be a fitting part of that time of the year when we are encouraged to strengthen our bonds with the Jewish people and to pray for Christian unity. This is more than a temporal coincidence: the celebration of the Sunday of the Word of God has ecumenical value, since the Scriptures point out, for those who listen, the path to authentic and firm unity."*



My parish community has rearranged its sanctuary so that we can see the importance of the two tables – the Table of the Word and the Table of the Eucharist. This is in harmony with the Second Vatican Council and with the exhortation of Pope Benedict. Pope Francis is now inviting us to deepen our appreciation of the Word of God. This year we will celebrate the Sunday of the Word of God on January 24th.

Pope Francis gives an explanation as to why the Word of God is so important. He states, *"The relationship between the Risen Lord, the community of believers and sacred scripture is essential to our identity as Christians. Without the Lord who opens our minds to them, it is impossible to understand the Scriptures in depth. Yet the contrary is equally true: without the Scriptures, the events of the mission of Jesus and his Church in this world would remain incomprehensible. Hence, Saint Jerome could rightly claim: "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" (Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, Prologue: PL 24,17B)."*

Pope Francis also tells us that, "...sacred scripture, by the working of the Holy Spirit, makes human words written in human fashion become the word of God (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 12). The role of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures is primordial. Without the work of the Spirit, there would be a risk of remaining limited to the written text alone. This would open the way to a fundamentalist reading, which needs to be avoided, lest we betray the inspired, dynamic, and spiritual character of the sacred text. As the Apostle reminds us: "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2Cor 3:6). The Holy Spirit, then makes sacred scripture the living word of God, experienced and handed down in the faith to his holy people."

As we prepare for the Word of God Sunday to be celebrated, we can make a special effort before the mass to read the scriptures for our Sunday liturgy. As we read, then let us ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds to understand our God and our call to witness the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

The time of **Lent** is upon us. I encourage each Spiritual Development Chairperson / Parish President to search out resources for Lent and pass them on to their members by social media or by post. We begin focusing on "almsgiving, prayer and fasting – three traditional Lenten practices to bring us into a closer relationship with God. Below are a few activities provided by the Prince Albert Diocesan Centre.

Adult Faith Formation: A pre-Lenten virtual evening with **Fr. Richard Leonard, SJ** **Thursday, February 4 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Lenten Journey..."What are We Hoping For?"**

A Virtual Lenten Bible Study with Christine Taylor and other members of the Evangelization and Catechesis Commission will be offered **Thursdays during Lent from Feb 18 - Mar 25 from 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

A Virtual Lenten Retreat with Deacon Mike Hardwicke - The Great Story of Jesus in Nine Acts **March 6, 2021 from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

If you have questions about joining these sessions, contact Christine at catechetics@padiocese.ca or via phone at 306-922-4747 extension 227.

Spiritual Bouquet for Bishop Albert Thevenot: Thank you to all members who participated in the spiritual bouquet for Bishop Albert.

A PRAYER AS WE WAIT FOR A NEW BISHOP

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for sending us your Son, Jesus Christ, to be our shepherd.

We ask you to send your Holy Spirit upon us during this time of discernment.

We pray that the one you have chosen will respond to your call.
May your Spirit give him the wisdom for this calling and the love to continue to gather
Your people in faith, joy, peace and hope.
We ask this prayer through your Son and Mary, mother of the Church. Amen

Thank you to Fr. Douglas Jeffrey, pastor of Our Lady of Peace Parish, Meadow Lake
who compiled much of the information included in this communiqué.

Take care. God bless.