

Word Sharing Circle (WSC) Reflection Guide

4th Sunday of Lent (Cycle A, Year I)

March 26, 2017

Community Word:

True faith overcomes temptation.

Theme:

We overcome temptation when we remain in God's presence.

Promise:

"Christ will give you light." (Eph 5:14b)

Reflection:

Human as we are, we are prone to be tempted. No amount of religiosity, spirituality, or holiness can shield us from temptation. Temptation by itself is not sin; it is merely a choice presented for us to act upon. It can bring beneficial effect or lead us to sin. The danger is when temptations are thoughts, words or deeds against God's commandments. And because we are weak, we cannot win the battle alone against temptation to sin.

The Book of Deuteronomy says: ***"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you,"*** (Deut 31:6). There is something ***"greater and mightier"*** than our daily temptation, more inevitable than its strongest pull. It is the loving presence of God in our life. This is aptly expressed in our community theme for this week: ***"We overcome temptation when we remain in God's presence."*** When the Lord is on our side, we can overcome our daily challenges, uncover the hidden lessons concealed in our life's struggles and later on, receive the crown of life after emerging victorious in every trial and test set before us.

But, we ask – how come our "Emmanuel" (God with us) seems to be absent when we experience betrayal by someone close to us? Why does He seem to be far away when we are besieged by series of disappointing events? Oftentimes, we feel that He simply ignores us when our prayers are left unanswered, when we encounter crisis in our personal relationships. He is nowhere to be found in times when we need Him most.

The foundation of our Christian life is believing in God's faithfulness and truthfulness to His words and promises. Despite how we feel, God is always there for us because He is eternal and unchanging. He does not abandon us at all. We, on the other hand, measure God on how we feel and how we look at our relationship with other people. The biggest block from feeling, knowing and accepting God is our sinfulness which we fail to confess, causing us to be spiritually deaf and blind to God's voice. Also, we might be ignoring the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist because we are consumed by our daily struggles. We might have a weak prayer life, with less and less time to pray, no time to attend community worship or reflect on and share God's word. Didn't Jesus say: ***"Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them,"*** (Mt 18:20)? Sometimes, we simply fail to notice God in His wonderful creations and loving people around us, in little blessings here in there, and even in appreciating the value of sacrifice.

Just as the blind man, whose sight Jesus restored, accepted and believed in Him, we too should allow the Lord to increase our faith, so that we will not doubt the manifestation of God's presence in our life because He is Omnipresent. It is His promise this week that, "**Christ will give you light,**"(Eph 5:14b). When this happens, we will experience inner calmness despite the chaos and trials around us. We will find rest in Jesus instead of battling our concerns and struggles by ourselves. Our days will be full of joy. We will experience true security and protection because of the assurance and comfort from our Lord Jesus Christ. Our spirits will be renewed in His strength that will keep us going.

We choose to affirm His presence and His light to guide our path, believing in Paul's message to the Philippians – "**... He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ,**"(Phil 1:6).

Prayer:

Lord God, I know that on my own, it is very difficult for me not to succumb to temptations and to overcome trials. I desperately need You in my life because Your light and Your strength are my only source of power to battle the negative influences of this world and the attacks of the evil one. Let your Holy Presence inspire me to come to You and believe and trust in Your faithfulness. You are always present in every circumstance and situation that I face and I know that You will never allow me to fail or be discouraged. Help me as I travel the path of righteousness. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

1. Presently, what temptations are you struggling with that attract you to commit sin? What steps are you taking to avoid them?
2. Do you feel that sometimes God does not answer your prayers? Do you blame God for anything bad that may have happened to you? What are your reflections on the truth that God always answers our prayers?

This Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:

March 26, 2017 (Sun) - 1Sm 16:1,6-7,10-13/Ps 23:1-3,3-4,5-6/Eph 5:8-14/Jn 9:1-41

March 27, 2017 (Mon) -Is 65:17-21/Ps 30:2,4,5-6,11-12,13/Jn 4:43-54

March 28, 2017 (Tues) - Ez 47:1-9,12/Ps 46:2-3,5-6,8-9/Jn 5:1-3,5-16

March 29, 2017 (Wed) -Is 49:8-15/Ps 145:8-9,13-14,17-18/Jn 5:17-30

March 30, 2017 (Thur) - Ex 32:7-14/Ps 106:19-20,21-22,23/Jn 5:31-47

March 31, 2017 (Fri) - Wis 2:1,12-22/Ps 34:17-18,19-20,21,23/Jn 7:1-2,10,25-30

April 1, 2017 (Sat) - Jer 11:18-20/Ps 7:2-3,p-10,11-12/Jn 7:40-53

"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!"