



Lent

Week 1 – Repentance

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to gather here tonight in your holy Name.

We ask your blessing upon our Emmaus Group and upon the time we will spend together.

Draw us closer to You through each other. Give us the ability to search our own hearts and know ourselves ever more, so we might better know You.

Repentance: “We hear in the Gospel of Mark Jesus echoing the call of John the Baptist to repent. The catechism, defines repentance as “a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one’s life, with hope in God’s mercy and trust in the help of his grace. **(CCC 1431)** Repentance wasn’t a new idea for the New Testament, we see it many times in the Old Testament story of Salvation History. God enters into a covenant with his people, the Israelites fail to keep their end of the deal (sin) and they are asked to repent, to return to God.

Read Mark 1:1-20

Discuss: What word, phrase, or idea most jumped out to you?

Discuss: As Catholics, we believe that conversion is an ongoing and continual process. What areas of your faith life are you being called to repent currently? What actions have you taken that have helped you repent?

Discuss: How has the sacrament of confession helped you repent? What keeps you away from the sacrament?

Read the following three quotes silently. Which one most resonates with you and why?

"Do not be afraid to be holy! Have the courage and humility to present yourselves to the world determined to be holy, since full, true freedom is born from holiness."

St. Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day, Santiago, Spain, 1989



"'Great' holiness consists in carrying out the 'little duties' of each moment."

St. Josemaria Escriva, *The Way*, 817

"If you are what you are meant to be, you will set the world on fire!"

St. Catherine of Siena, Letter 368

Metanoia: Greek for "repentance" (literally a 'change of mind'). The word is used 22 times in the New Testament for a conversion of one's entire life to the Lord. Based on similar Old Testament concepts, it involves a twofold movement of the heart: one who repents turns *away* from sin and *toward* God. (*The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*, 66)

"...Christian conversion demands reviewing especially those areas and aspects of life 'related to the social order and the pursuit of the common good...Spiritual conversion, the intensity of the love of God and neighbour, zeal for justice and peace, the Gospel meaning of the poor and of poverty, are required of everyone.' I fear that these words too may give rise to commentary or discussion with no real practical effect. That being said, I trust in the openness and readiness of all Christians, and I ask you to seek, as a community, creative ways of accepting this renewed call."

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 182 & 201

Discuss: In what ways do you need to reform your external life to match your interior conversion? How can you better serve others and the common good?

A Tool for Daily Conversion: The Examen.

The Daily Examen is derived from Ignatian spirituality to help you recount your day, and make resolutions to improve the next day. It is a helpful tool for intentional living on the path to repent and believe.

The Examen

1. Become aware of God's presence.
2. Review your day with gratitude— recall specific moments and your feelings at the time.
3. Pay attention to the emotions and feelings you experienced today. Excitement? Envy? Resentment? Boredom? Anger? Joy?
4. Pick one or two strong feelings from the day and pray from them. Ask if these feelings drew you closer to God, or not.
5. Look toward tomorrow. How do you feel about the upcoming day? Pray for the strength and peace.

"Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."

St. Teresa of Calcutta

