



*Advent 2010:
Our New Life as a Personal Parish
Our Vision of Hope*

Small Group Reflection Materials

Attached are the following materials for use in Small Groups for the Season of Advent:

Weekly Readings

Charism Statement of the Congregation of the Resurrection

Resurrection Prayer

Constitution Of the Congregation of the Resurrection

Questions for Reflection

Please consider both the readings and the Resurrectionist text associated with each week to contextualize your discussion questions. You are invited to record your group's reflections on the easels in the worship space each week.



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Advent Week One:

First Reading

Isaiah 2:1-5

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

This is what Isaiah, son of Amoz,
saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come,

The mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest mountain
and raised above the hills.

All nations shall stream toward it;
many peoples shall come and say:

"Come, let us climb the LORD's mountain,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
That he may instruct us in his ways,
and we may walk in his paths."

For from Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations,
and impose terms on many peoples.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;

One nation shall not raise the sword against another,
nor shall they train for war again.



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O house of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the LORD!
The word of the Lord.

Second Reading

Romans 13:11-14

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters: You know the time;
it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep.
For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed;
the night is advanced, the day is at hand.
Let us then throw off the works of darkness
and put on the armor of light;
let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day,
not in orgies and drunkenness,
not in promiscuity and lust,
not in rivalry and jealousy.
But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.
The word of the Lord.

Gospel

Matthew 24:37-44

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
Jesus said to his disciples:

"As it was in the days of Noah,
so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.
In those days before the flood,
they were eating and drinking,
marrying and giving in marriage,
up to the day that Noah entered the ark.
They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away.
So will it be also at the coming of the Son of Man.



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Two men will be out in the field;
one will be taken, and one will be left.
Two women will be grinding at the mill;

one will be taken, and one will be left.

Therefore, stay awake!
For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.
Be sure of this: if the master of the house
had known the hour of night when the thief was coming,
he would have stayed awake
and not let his house be broken into.
So too, you also must be prepared,
for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."
The Gospel of the Lord.

Charism of the Congregation of the Resurrection

We desire to be faithful to the grace received by our founders, a grace we now share by our call to the Congregation of the Resurrection. We recognize certain truths to be especially important for our life and work as Resurrectionists because they give expression to this grace and call.

We believe that God's love for us is merciful and unfailing. We have not earned his love. We are nothing, have nothing and can do nothing without God. We are attracted to evil. We are sinners. Yet, God continues to draw us to himself.

We believe that in his love the Father calls us to conversion: to personal resurrection in union with Jesus, to a new life filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. With Jesus, we die to ourselves when we surrender our lives to the Father, renouncing anything that separates us from him. The power of the Spirit forms Christ in us, and moves us to respond with love to the Father's great love for us.

We believe that God calls us to live together as brothers, sharing the gifts that we have received, supporting one another, praying and working together for his



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glory. He has called us to be a community which is a living sign of the gospel values of justice, truth and love.

We believe that God calls us to work together for the resurrection of society bringing his life and love to all: through our personal witness, through the witness of our live in community, and through our community apostolates, primarily

through parish work and teaching. This also requires that we build, and teach others to build a Christian community in which all can experience the hope, joy and peace of Christ's Resurrection.

We believe that Mary is our model for all that we are called to be and do as Resurrectionists.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. The readings talk about a hours on the hill, a visible sign. This is a symbol of revealing what we have known when we climb the mountain. What drew you to this mountain, this house of the "God of Jacob", Resurrection Parish?**
- 2. Reflecting on the Charism of the Congregation, what part of that statement resonates with you?**
- 3. In what way has God called you to "beat your sword into a plowshare?"**
- 4. What will be your personal goals in the coming year to promote the gospel values of justice, truth and love?**



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Advent Week Two

Readings

First Reading

Isaiah 11:1-10

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse,
and from his roots a bud shall blossom.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him:
a spirit of wisdom and of understanding,

A spirit of counsel and of strength,
a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD,
and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD.

Not by appearance shall he judge,
nor by hearsay shall he decide,

But he shall judge the poor with justice,
and decide aright for the land's afflicted.

He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.

Justice shall be the band around his waist,
and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.

Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;

The calf and the young lion shall browse together,
with a little child to guide them.

The cow and the bear shall be neighbors,



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together their young shall rest,
the lion shall eat hay like the ox.

The baby shall play by the cobra's den,
and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair.
There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD,
as water covers the sea.

On that day, the root of Jesse,
set up as a signal for the nations,
The Gentiles shall seek out,
for his dwelling shall be glorious.
The word of the Lord.

Second Reading

Romans 15:4-9

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

Whatever was written previously was written for our instruction,
that by endurance and by the encouragement of the Scriptures
we might have hope.

May the God of endurance and encouragement
grant you to think in harmony with one another,
in keeping with Christ Jesus,
that with one accord you may with one voice
glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you,
for the glory of God.

For I say that Christ became a minister of the circumcised
to show God's truthfulness,
to confirm the promises to the patriarchs,
but so that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.
As it is written:



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*Therefore, I will praise you among the Gentiles
and sing praises to your name.*

The word of the Lord.

Gospel

Matthew 3:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea
and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"
It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said:

*A voice of one crying out in the desert,
Prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight his paths.*

John wore clothing made of camel's hair
and had a leather belt around his waist.
His food was locusts and wild honey.
At that time Jerusalem, all Judea,
and the whole region around the Jordan
were going out to him
and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River
as they acknowledged their sins.

When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees
coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers!
Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?
Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance.
And do not presume to say to yourselves,
'We have Abraham as our father.'
For I tell you,
God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones.
Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees.
Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit
will be cut down and thrown into the fire.



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I am baptizing you with water, for repentance,
but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I.

I am not worthy to carry his sandals.
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
His winnowing fan is in his hand.
He will clear his threshing floor
and gather his wheat into his barn,
but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."
The Gospel of the Lord.

Resurrection Prayer

O Risen Lord,
the Way, the Truth and the Life,
make us faithful followers
of the Spirit of Your Resurrection.
Grant that we may be inwardly renewed,
dying to ourselves in order that you may live in us.
May our lives serve
as signs of the transforming power of your love.
Use us as your instruments for the renewal of society,
bringing your life and love to all
and leading them to your Church.
This we ask of you, Lord Jesus,
living and reigning with the Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever.
Amen



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Reflection Questions

- 1. The first reading today is known as the “Servant Song” and is the ultimate Vision of Hope. The hope is based on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. How are you gifted? How do you use those gifts to promote justice in the world?**
- 2. Which passage personally offers you hope? In what way have you been challenged to act?**
- 3. In what sense are you being called to a change of heart? How do you feel the transforming power of the love of God? How do we then renew society as Resurrectionists?**



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Advent Week Three

Readings

First Reading

Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

The desert and the parched land will exult;
the steppe will rejoice and bloom.

They will bloom with abundant flowers,
and rejoice with joyful song.

The glory of Lebanon will be given to them,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;

They will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.

Strengthen the hands that are feeble,
make firm the knees that are weak,

Say to those whose hearts are frightened:

Be strong, fear not!

Here is your God,

he comes with vindication;

With divine recompense

he comes to save you.



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Then will the eyes of the blind be opened,
the ears of the deaf be cleared;
Then will the lame leap like a stag,
then the tongue of the mute will sing.

Those whom the LORD has ransomed will return
and enter Zion singing,
crowned with everlasting joy;
They will meet with joy and gladness,
sorrow and mourning will flee.

The word of the Lord.

Second Reading

James 5:7-10

A reading from the Letter of Saint James

Be patient, brothers and sisters,
until the coming of the Lord.
See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth,
being patient with it
until it receives the early and the late rains.
You too must be patient.
Make your hearts firm,
because the coming of the Lord is at hand.
Do not complain, brothers and sisters, about one another,
that you may not be judged.
Behold, the Judge is standing before the gates.
Take as an example of hardship and patience, brothers and sisters,
the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel

Matthew 11:2-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew



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When John the Baptist heard in prison of the works of the Christ,
he sent his disciples to Jesus with this question,
"Are you the one who is to come,
or should we look for another?"

Jesus said to them in reply,
"Go and tell John what you hear and see:
the blind regain their sight,
the lame walk,
lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear,
the dead are raised,
and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them.
And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me."

As they were going off,
Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John,
"What did you go out to the desert to see?
A reed swayed by the wind?
Then what did you go out to see?
Someone dressed in fine clothing?
Those who wear fine clothing are in royal palaces.
Then why did you go out? To see a prophet?
Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

This the one about whom it is written:

*Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;
he will prepare your way before you.*

Amen, I say to you,
among those born of women
there has been none greater than John the Baptist;
yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Constitution of The Congregation of the Resurrection (Excerpt)



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“The Congregation of the Resurrection announces and gives witness to the Paschal Mystery. Convinced of God’s unconditional love for us, we herald the liberation and salvation of each person and society as a passage from death to life in which every situation of evil and injustice will be overcome....We assist the laity in their own efforts to

become prophets to the world and to transform it by providing them with a deeper experience of the Paschal dynamic in their lives.”

“The religious will help the laity to discover the power of the Holy Spirit working in the sacraments of Christian Initiation, and in this way introduce them to responsibility for the mission of the church. They will acknowledge the dignity of the role of the laity in the life of the church, listening to their voice with fraternal concern and taking into account their desires, points of view, experience and competence. The religious recognize that the laity have a specific ministry in the service of the church and therefore will give them a free hand and encourage their initiative. They will provide opportunities for the religious education and continuing formation of the laity.” Constitutions of the Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, paragraphs 1, 196.

Reflection Questions

- 1. This week the readings intone the Paschal Mystery. This passage from the Constitution of the Congregation which is quoted in the Friend’s Constitution talks about the Paschal Mystery at the core of our life as Resurrectionists. What experience or relationship have you witnessed that has moved from death to life?**
- 2. Do you have relationships where you are waiting for it to move from death to life? How do you exercise patience?**
- 3. As a Resurrectionist what is your specific ministry? How can your ministry be encouraged and supported? How does your ministry enrich your life with Christ?**



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Advent Week Four

Readings

First Reading

Isaiah 7:10-14

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying:
Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God;
let it be deep as the nether world, or high as the sky!
But Ahaz answered,
"I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!"
Then Isaiah said:
Listen, O house of David!
Is it not enough for you to weary people,
must you also weary my God?
Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign:
the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,
and shall name him Emmanuel.

The word of the Lord.

Second Reading

Romans 1:1-7

A reading from the beginning of the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans



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Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus,
called to be an Apostle and set apart for the Gospel of God,
which he promised previously through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,
the Gospel about his Son, descended from David according to the flesh,
but established as Son of God in power
according to the Spirit of holiness

through resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Through him we have received the grace of apostleship,
to bring about the obedience of faith,

for the sake of his name, among all the Gentiles,

whom are you also, who are called to belong to Jesus Christ;
to all the beloved of God in Rome, called to be holy.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel

Matthew 1:18-24

Jesus will be born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, a son of David.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.

When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph,
but before they lived together,

she was found with child through the Holy Spirit.

Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man,
yet unwilling to expose her to shame,

decided to divorce her quietly.

Such was his intention when, behold,



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the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,

"Joseph, son of David,
do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.
For it is through the Holy Spirit
that this child has been conceived in her.

She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus,

because he will save his people from their sins."
All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet
*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,
which means "God is with us."*

When Joseph awoke,
he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him
and took his wife into his home.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Charism of the Congregation of the Resurrection

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Reflection Questions

- 1. What are the signs of the times that you are called by God to see? What are we called as a community to see?**
- 2. In what ways do you have the grace of apostleship? In what ways are you an apostle—that is one who has been sent?**
- 3. In what ways is Emmanuel, which means “God is with us” , being fulfilled now? How do you see God incarnate in our world, our family, in our parish?**
- 4. How does the Charism statement encourage you as an apostle of Christ?**