



Session 1 – Communion



Participant's Pack

Before the session

- If you have time, skim through the content of this pack. In particular, try to look at the questions that you will discuss in the session. Use the time before the session to reflect on them. You might like to make notes in the space provided, but this is not required.
- Check that you have the necessary technology to join a Zoom meeting.

To start your session

- Join the Zoom meeting, using the information emailed to you.
- You will be admitted from the waiting room as soon as your group leader is ready.
- Check that your name is displayed as you would like to be called.
- Initially you will be muted, so please unmute yourself before you speak.

Outline timings

The aim is for sessions to last about 1½ hours, but 2 hours may be more realistic, especially for larger groups.

- Welcome and introduction
- Opening liturgy
- Reminder of approach and protocols for discussions
- Discussion 1: Journeying Companions
- Discussion 2: Listening
- Discussion 3: Speaking Out
- Final prayer

Opening liturgy

Opening prayer

**Lord, the Word who is Life,
may all the people of our Diocese
grow in openness to the power of the Holy Spirit,
so that through a growth in understanding and courage,
and truly open to your call,
we may bear powerful witness to all around us,
for you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen.**

Gospel reading

A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

Now on that same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognising him.

And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?'

He asked them, 'What things?'

They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him.'

Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening, and the day is now nearly over.' He went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reminder of approach and protocols for discussions

Our sessions will use the 'encounter-listen-discern' model. The point of the discussions is to listen to each other's experiences and reflections, with the aim of hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit. Last September, Pope Francis said this about the Synod: 'It's not about gathering opinions, no. This is not a survey, but about listening to the Holy Spirit.'

The following protocols are designed to help us use the model effectively:

- There are no right or wrong answers.
- Don't feel you need to answer all the questions – focus on those that are most meaningful to you.
- Be yourself - talk from the heart about your personal experiences.
- Encourage each other (even if you don't always agree).
- Don't be afraid of silence.
- Respect each other.
- Keep discussions confidential within the group.
- Everyone's voice needs to be heard.
- Listen actively – allow yourself to be challenged, surprised, or even shocked.

Discussion 1 - Journeying Companions

The first discussion is about those who form our parish community as we journey together. The questions are:

- Who makes up our parish community?
- Which people or groups are on the edges of our parish community?
- Whom do we know who no longer walks with us, those who used to and now we don't see?
- How do we engage with those for whom the experience of Covid has prompted thoughts about faith (positive and negative)?
- How do we welcome people?

Space for your personal thoughts and reflections

Discussion 2 - Listening

The next discussion prompts us to think about how good we are at listening to each other. The questions are:

- Do we listen to each other?
- How do we best do this – people to people, clergy to clergy, bishops to bishops?
- How do we deepen our listening, making it a 'a listening of the heart' and not just of the issues and subjects at hand?
- How do we ensure that the Church responds to the culture and needs of society?

Space for your personal thoughts and reflections

Discussion 3 - Speaking Out

The final discussion is about communication, both within our Parish and with the outside world. The last set of questions are:

- What is the communication like in our Parish & Diocese?
- Do we have the freedom to speak freely, openly, and respectfully?
- How am I living out my Christian life?

Space for your personal thoughts and reflections

We hope you enjoy 'journeying together' as you participate in the session.