



LIFE TRANSFORMED: THE WAY OF LOVE IN LENT

SESSION SIX / WORSHIP

THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

ENTERING THE WAY (Opening Prayer)

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquillity the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer, p. 291)

REMEMBERING THE WAY (Scripture Reading and Teaching)

Scripture Reading Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

Teaching (Father Rob+)

EXPLORING THE WAY (Reflections in smaller groups)

In our reading this week, we are called to let go of our fears so that we might truly WORSHIP God. In a world beset by violence, hunger, exploitation, and oppression, this is no easy task.

1)

The disciples found it hard to believe in the promise of everlasting life that Jesus proclaimed throughout his ministry ... until they encountered him in his post-resurrection appearances. Do you ever struggle with the belief in the resurrection? What signs of resurrection have you seen in your Life?

2)

What brings you the most joy in your life? Can that joy be offered up to God as an act of worship?

FINDING OUR WAY TOGETHER (Sharing with the larger group)

The disciples did not come to believe in Jesus on their own. They joined together in community to share their experiences of Jesus as Lord, experiences that would eventually form the backbone of our faith. The Apostles' Creed is an early statement of belief that forms the first part of the Baptismal Covenant found in the Easter Vigil service. The first three

questions of the Baptismal Covenant (Book of Common Prayer, pp. 304-305) frame the statements of the Apostles' Creed. Together, we can renew these vows and discuss the way these statements of belief call us from fear into joy.

PRACTICING THE WAY AT HOME (A Practice to Take Home)

As we have seen, practicing gratitude can call our hearts to WORSHIP. This week, our practice will cultivate gratitude, helping us set aside the fears that plague us. Ask participants to do the following:

Using a notebook, or index cards, write down at least five things every day for which you are grateful. They can be very small, but they should be things that make you appreciate the gift of life we have from God. At the end of the week, bring this list to worship and place it in the offering plate as an act of grateful worship.

BEING SENT ON THE WAY (Closing Prayer)

O God and Father of all, whom the whole heavens adore: Let the whole earth also worship you, all nations obey you, all tongues confess and bless you, and men and women everywhere love you and serve you in peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer, p. 124)