

Supplemental Information for
Why Catholic? Journey through the Catechism
Life In Christ – Walking With God
To group leaders of
Christ the King Parish, Springfield, Illinois

By Deacon Al Laabs
March, 2011

Session 12: “Human Fulfillment in Christ”

Suggested Environment

This is our last session and I suspect by now your environment has been fairly well stabilized with maybe a few changes every now and then. I think I’ve been remiss in reminding everyone that some liturgical colors should be evident and since this is still Lent purple is appropriate. So maybe if you haven’t put any Lenten color out, you might do so and remind everyone of the three major vehicles that contribute to our progress in Lent: prayer, fasting and almsgiving—just a thought.

As a session leader I would recommend your reading and perhaps encouraging your members who have the red *USCCA* to read the section entitled “Where your treasure is, there also will your heart be” (pages 449-450). Key doctrinal statements on the tenth commandment are also succinctly found on the following pages: Commandment Ten (*USCCA* pp. 455-456).

Lifting Our Hearts

One of the almost overlooked parts of the ordination ceremony for priests and deacons takes place in the very beginning. The candidates are called *by name* and have to stand and then come forward for the ceremony to begin. The significance as we were reminded is in receiving a call from the Church gathered as the people of God to be of service. Our answer of “present” signifies our acceptance of the call to be ordained. You might introduce this prayer by asking everyone to be still for a few moments and imagine they are hearing a call from Jesus himself to step forward and accept his invitation to be a disciple, to be holy, even to be a saint as in truth we are all called to be.

Sharing Our Good News

As usual an opportunity to see what group members did or thought about doing following last week’s session.

Exploring the *Catechism*

We are focusing on commandment ten: "You shall not covet your neighbor's goods." You will notice in that very first paragraph why I suggested reading that particular section in the *USCCA*. I think it is worthwhile to suggest underlining that sentence which reads: "The tenth commandment is about the intentions of the heart." As the *USCCA* points out, money is not the root of all evil but as scripture says "the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Tm 6:10). We certainly have had evidence of what greed can do to a country as well as the world economy and perhaps your group has talked about such issues already. You might remind the group about our Gospel readings from Matthew's summary of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Those beatitudes are presented as the path to discipleship as well as happiness. Greed or an over attachment to any "thing" can be an impediment to finding real happiness in letting love for others be our primary affective force, turning us outward from self.

I like the last paragraph before "Pondering the Word." I've been reading a book by Fr. James Martin, SJ., which has a delightful chapter on "detachment" as preached to Jesuits by their founder in his work on Ignatian Spirituality. In fact, these last two commandments we've studied seem to be suggesting that to put Christ first in our life, we need a sort of detachment from most things in our lives. Remember the story about the rich man who asked how to get to heaven and Jesus told him to go, sell all he possessed and follow Him. I think poverty of spirit is central in our efforts to be good disciples. You might get a good discussion going by raising the issue of how difficult it is to have a spirit of detachment when we are constantly bombarded by media and advertising that suggests we always need the newest, the biggest, and the brightest. Apple has learned that so well in advertising its I-phones and I-pads. Here's a nice link to a [prayer for detachment](#).

Scripture: Pondering the Word

Luke 21: 1-4

1 ¹ When he looked up he saw some wealthy people putting their offerings into the
treasury

2 and he noticed a poor widow putting in two small coins.

3 He said, "I tell you truly, this poor widow put in more than all the rest;

4 for those others have all made offerings from their surplus wealth, but she, from
her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood."

Footnotes

¹ [1-4] The widow is another example of the poor ones in this gospel whose detachment from material possessions and dependence on God leads to their blessedness ([Luke 6:20](#)). Her simple offering provides a striking contrast to the pride and pretentiousness of the scribes denounced in the preceding section ([Luke 20:45-47](#)). The story is taken from [Mark 12:41-44](#).

I have included the footnote from the USCCB site for this section of Luke because it has valuable commentary on the scripture reading. You may want to share the commentary with your group.

Sharing Question

It's a good question worth discussing but encourage people to define what they might mean by extra. We all too often just presume that it is money of some sort but for most of us the most valuable thing we have is our time. Where do we spend our "extra" time, where do we volunteer, and do we give "extra" time to those around us—particularly if we have families and at the same time a demanding job?

Exploring the *Catechism* (continued)

This section is well done and requires little additional commentary. What I would encourage is to draw a connection again, perhaps, to the culture of our times mentioned in the second paragraph and the many paths that often are taken to pursue happiness and the folly they represent for a true disciple. Let me tell you a story about one of the happiest people I know. Every first Friday I take communion to a woman who has been disabled most of her life and is in an electric wheel chair. She is so pleasant and we have the most enjoyable conversations about a wide range of topics from families to what's going on in the city. She always thanks me so much for bringing her communion but I always thank her and tell her it's a joy for me to visit. And when I'm in my car heading to the next person, I thank God for sending her into my life as an example of true Christian joy in the face of so many things that might drive others to despair. Her trust and faith is grace to me in the truest sense and grace is evidence that Christ is present.

I would encourage also as sort of a capstone of this lesson and of this six weeks to read aloud and together that last paragraph on page 77 above the section of "Sharing our Faith." Read it first yourself and see if you think as I do that it is nearly a prayer for wisdom and a summation of our efforts to become disciples and then to live in true Christian joy—kind of our own version of heaven on earth.

Sharing Our Faith

All three points are worth considering. The second point, referring to Romans is: "What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?" and will take you in a certain direction. I am going to try the third point with my group because I would like to leave on a point of following the example of my Lord. If I love "most" I want to imitate and in imitating I transform what may seem as negative commands into positive ways of relating to others and to the things of this earth. If you think of this direction, it helps to get a sense deep in your heart of the title of this session.

We do achieve “Human Fulfillment” when we become like Christ, when we follow his example and learn more about him in Word and Sacrament.

Living the Good News

Again a good range of suggestions to which I would modify the final “response” to a direction of the week by raising the question of some activity during this break between year three and year four. I remember the email I got last year from a group that decided to go to a Saturday 4:30 Mass together and have supper after just to continue the friendship and community they had developed and prized.

Lifting our Hearts

Even if you run over this final session, I think this final Lifting Our Hearts has real merit. That is a powerful scripture passage and a wonderful ending note for the six weeks. You all know how I think spontaneous prayer has great value and we’ve gotten so good at sharing our needs with one another and the Lord. Blessings and peace to all of you as we move from our Lenten days to the great mysteries of Holy Week!!!

Addendum Note: Any feedback you would like to give is most welcome. Please reply to
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