



Newsletter inserts – A foretaste of heaven

Week One

In this, the first week of the diocesan faith-sharing, groups and readers will ask ourselves why we go to Mass on a Sunday. Reflecting on a Scripture passage from John's gospel, where we find Mary Magdalene, Peter and John in front of an empty tomb, we consider the world-changing importance of the very first Easter Sunday. What joy as they celebrated the Lord's Resurrection! The centuries that followed saw men and women persecuted for attending the Sunday Eucharist, those centuries have also seen the Sunday Eucharist become ignored or seen as an obligation. A gift of such magnitude, however, is a cause for great joy and a loving response. How central is the Sunday Eucharist to your week?

Week Two

The second week of A foretaste of heaven explores the theme of Christ's being truly, entirely and really present in the Eucharist. Through the story from Luke's gospel, 'The Road to Emmaus', groups and individuals will share thoughts and faith in the Real Presence and in how we prepare for our receipt of Our Lord in the Eucharist. As we do this 'in memory' of him we also reflect on how we are changed by receiving God himself into our very selves.

Week Three

The third week of diocesan faith-sharing, using A foretaste of heaven, asks the question 'why do we kneel at Mass?' We are confronted by the story of the women who, on hearing that Jesus was eating with Simon the Pharisee, fetched ointment to anoint Jesus' feet, washed them with her tears and dried them with her hair. This humble and reverential act expressed her love for Jesus. In this week we are encouraged to reflect on our own attitude to Jesus, how do we show respect and reverence for Christ present in the Eucharist?

As well as these inserts, it would be an excellent idea if members of the faith-sharing groups be asked to share with the wider congregation what they have gained from each week of the season. Perhaps sharing a short reflection or asking a question that arose from the discussion.



Week Four

In this, the fourth week of the diocesan faith-sharing, groups and readers of A foretaste of heaven will reflect and share on the idea of sacrifice. Sacrifice is a ritual or holy act that pleases God and the sacrifice at Mass is that of Christ on the Cross. In a very real way, we are present at the crucifixion – our sins and those of all who came before us and come after us were carried by Christ. In our daily lives we have the opportunity of imitating Christ's sacrifice, freely giving ourselves for the good of others. What then can we offer to God today?

Week Five

The fifth week of diocesan faith-sharing, using A foretaste of heaven, looks at the theme of participation at Mass. The Scripture passage we read is from Luke's gospel, Jesus is found in the synagogue, filled with the Spirit, and with all eyes upon him reads the prophecy from Isaiah concerning him. Our time at Mass is to be spent with our eyes on him, in rapt attention. Participating does not necessarily mean doing something but in being truly part of what is being done. How then do we overcome distractions? Where have we really felt a part of what is going on?

Week Six

The sixth and final week of A foretaste of heaven explores the Book of Revelation in relation to the Mass. This complex book of the New Testament makes sense in terms of the liturgy we celebrate every Sunday, from the readings, the sacrifice of the Lamb, the angels singing Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Hosts. No wonder that Pope John Paul II talked about the Eucharist as a 'glorious ray of the heavenly Jerusalem that lights up our journey'. The Eucharist really is a foretaste of heaven.

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