

A stylized, colorful landscape illustration. In the top left, a bright yellow sun with an orange center is partially obscured by a yellow L-shaped block. Below the sun, a light blue sky transitions into a series of rolling hills in shades of purple, green, and yellow. A winding blue river flows through the center of the landscape. At the bottom, wavy lines in shades of yellow, light blue, and dark blue represent water or a beach. The overall style is modern and graphic.

**Come to
Life!**

Lent 2010

Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton



My dear people,

The Spirit continues to move across our Diocese:

- Our cathedral is in the process of restoration.
- The Assembly urged us to 'fan into a flame the gifts God has given us' and its recommendations are now being shaped into a diocesan plan.
- Earlier this year, Father Lawrence Freeman, world leader of the Christian Meditation Community, visited each of our regions, drawing us more deeply into the life of God.

Now we are called together to embark on the 2010 Lenten journey, preparing once again to renew, or declare for the first time, our baptismal promises. Led by the Spirit, we open ourselves to the transforming power of each week's gospel.

Come to Life is an invitation that will stretch us, encourage us, open our eyes. We will be led into the wilderness – free of our usual defences or securities – to encounter the living God. There is a mountain to climb - that we may more truly know ourselves to be the chosen daughters and sons of God. We will be invited to invest energies in what is life-giving, and to ponder the mystery of God's all-embracing love, that is as unfathomable, expansive and abundant as our oceans and rivers. Finally we will bask in the embrace of the One who walked ahead of us into Risen Light. Christ, our Life!

Come to Life also weaves together some of our Assembly threads: engaging ecumenically wherever possible; being open to sharing our gifts with gratitude and generosity so that miracles can happen; our call into ecological conversion and paths of justice; our role as companions to those on the RCIA journey - who are learning from us how to live in faith community, and walk with courage through the purifying process of Lent.

It is the International Year of Biodiversity. Unity in diversity is a very Catholic reality. So, while exploring the diversity of our natural environmental symbols, we can also engage diversely with this resource – as individuals, small groups, retreat groups, families, school communities, artists. The whole diocesan family can journey differently, but in unity, towards promised new life.



I am extremely grateful to all who have prepared and contributed to this resource, and ask that we take its call to heart: as followers of Jesus, shaped into living stones, together reflecting that, in Christ alone, we *Come to Life*.

+ Brian Heenan
Bishop of Rockhampton


Lent 2010

Group Sessions - Model for Shared Reflection...

Prepare a sacred space:
a candle; any symbols that may help connect with the focus; a bible open at the week's gospel; booklets, pencils/biros for each person.
If you decide to engage artistically, note suggestions page 18.

Establish an unhurried, reflective mood,
in which there is space for silence and listening to one another.

- Welcome everyone to the gathering, especially noting any newcomers or apologies.
- Invite people to have this page open each week for the Stewardship prayer
- The first time you gather, look together at the booklet and the particular week, to become familiar with the format of the 2 pages and the way the meeting will proceed.



STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
we thank you for the gifts
you have given us.
You ask us
to develop these gifts
and share them
with others.
Help us also,
to recognise the gifts
in others,
so that together,
we may respond
to the call of Jesus,
to spread
the Good News
in our communities.
May your
Spirit of Love
guide us
on our journey.
Amen.

+ The Sign of the Cross

**Turn to the page and
announce the theme for the week.**

Note the **Environmental Focus** for the week,
reading it aloud together.

Focussing Question: (15 mins)

Participants consider a life-centred question
that will lead towards the gospel.
Encourage shared responses,
listening to each one's contribution.

Gospel: Proclaimed by a group member. (20 mins)

Silence

Response: As suggested

Gospel Commentary: invite a member to read. (10 mins)

How does this commentary add to what you have already
shared regarding the Gospel?

Silent Centering Prayer (2-5 mins)

*Encourage each person to sit in a relaxed, attentive manner and use this
line as a mantra, breathing the words in with each breath.*

Connection: Read and discuss (15 mins)
the following question.

Read the RCIA Focus: *Invite any comments.*

Where God's Spirit is Leading: Turn to page 17
...quietly complete the journal section.

Share your responses if you wish.

Concluding Prayer



Environmental Focus - The Wilderness

'Christians, in particular, realize that responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith'

(Pope John Paul II, New Year Message, 1990)

Focussing Question: Think about your life at the moment...In what ways might you be experiencing a call to go out, with Jesus, into the wilderness – away from your usual securities and familiar patterns of living – to reconsider your relationship with God and others?

Gospel: Lk 4:1-13 - Jesus is Tempted in The Wilderness

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Response

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

Gospel Commentary

'Temptation' is often used by the advertising world as something pleasant, playful and just that little bit naughty. That is not how the synoptic gospels present the temptations of Jesus. - deceptive, devious and very dangerous. Not because they appear so bad but rather they look like a good thing. The danger lies in the 'look like'. Three times what the devil offers Jesus looks like something good. Jesus is led by the Spirit to the wilderness which was the place of testing for the Jewish people. There, when he is profoundly weak from hunger and isolation, the devil comes to test him. All these temptations are about how he will be the Saviour, the Son of God, to the people he has come to save.

The first temptation looks so harmless. "Use your power to do just a little service to yourself. No-one will see, we're here in the desert." This is the beginning of corruption. When people in authority use their power for themselves, they cannot relate with integrity to the people they are supposed to serve. They will start to give them things rather than feed their hearts. The second temptation is not subtle. In Luke's gospel, the devil is the prince of this world – he has power, but it is power that he takes. He demands, he dominates, he seduces. But Jesus wants God worshipped in freedom. Never will he force people to follow him or to worship God. The third temptation would be almost laughable if it were not so serious. Satan tempts Jesus to make a spectacle of himself by throwing himself off the most prominent building in Jerusalem and have God save him. Wow! Wouldn't the people follow him then! But they would be seduced by a spectacle, not drawn in free and loving faith.

When Jesus resists each of these temptations, he is embracing a way of salvation that invites us to freely follow him, without being paid, without glory, and without extraordinary effects.

Silent Centering Prayer: - Jesus was led by the Spirit

Connection: Wilderness - Cathedral of The Environment

'Father's occupation: 'Grazier'; appeared on numerous forms as I was growing up in South Australia. Merinos, kangaroos and emus grazed the large paddocks dotted with limestone outcrops and clumps of mallee-scrub. The Hebrews of Jesus' time would have called this the wilderness – an uninhabited place, unable to be cultivated and fit for grazing stock only. An Australian understanding of wilderness embraces both the wild, natural untamed physical places as well as the metaphorical; the wild, untamed and uncharted places within each of us.

God, says, "I will allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak to her heart" (Hosea 2:16). Thus, the wilderness becomes a place of connection and conversion. Many of us choose to spend time in the physical wilderness for recreation, holidays and adventure. Paul Collins, an Australian historian and writer, refers to the wilderness as 'the cathedral of the environment'; a place where many become aware of the presence of the Creator and the sacredness of all creation.

It is true, 'one does not live by bread alone'. Our lives require nourishment of a spiritual nature too. For many, time in the wilderness allows God to speak to their hearts. And so, from time to time, the Spirit leads us in the wilderness for our daily walk, time in the outdoors, in the course of work or study, as we drive from town to town, for recreation... In this diocese, it is almost impossible to avoid the physical wilderness.

The Rockhampton Diocesan Commission for Environmental Awareness (DCEA), has the aim of 'heightening awareness that all creation is sacred and deeply interconnected'. Members of the DCEA are called to a ministry of educating and enabling others to make connections between their experiences in the cathedral of their Catholic faith and the cathedral of the environment (and vice versa). It is all about 'respect(ing) nature as we should, recovering and appreciating a correct relationship with the environment in every day life' (Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 26 August, 2009).

Sr Mary-Ann Casanova rsj

Living the Gospel

- The church and the planet are calling us to ecological conversion: a change of heart regarding the environment. How do you see this happening locally and across the world?
- How are you experiencing ecological conversion?

RCIA THIS WEEK

Week One: Rite of Election – Called and Chosen

This 1st Saturday of Lent our Bishop now declares that our journeying catechumens, desiring an intimate knowledge of Christ and the Church, are ready to share our Christian life and mission. Henceforth, they are the 'elect', embracing the Lenten period of 'purification and enlightenment'.

We are one with them - no longer relying on our own devices, but open to God's renewing grace.

Concluding Prayer: Led by the Spirit into the Wilderness

Leader: Let us entrust ourselves to the God of Creation.

We give thanks for gifting this diocese with an abundance of wild places where all can find you in the cathedral of the environment.

Response: *Speak to our hearts and nourish us on our journey.*

Leader: We give thanks for gifting us with your Spirit who leads us through the wilderness in safety.

Response: *Speak to our hearts and nourish us on our journey.*

Leader: We give thanks for gifting us with companions and professionals to guide us through the wild, untamed and uncharted places within each of us.

Response: *Speak to our hearts and nourish us on our journey.*

Leader: We give thanks for gifting us with the realization that 'responsibility within creation and (our) duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of (our) faith' (Pope John Paul II, 1990).

Response: *Speak to our hearts and nourish us on our journey.*

Leader: We give thanks for gifting us with this time to prepare for Easter.

Response: *Speak to our hearts and nourish us on our journey.*

All: *May your spirit of love guide us on our journey. Amen.*



Environmental Focus - The Mountain

***'To adore the Creator of the universe with praise and thanksgiving
... is to become more sensitive to the wonder of creation.
It is, after all, a beautiful, tender display of God's glory and revelation'***

Catholic Bishops of Queensland, "Let the Many Coastlands Be Glad" 2004.

Focussing Question: Think about your life at the moment... all the things that are going well... Share one or two aspects that you hope will always remain the same; situations you don't want to change.

Gospel: Lk 9:28-36 - Jesus is Transfigured

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" —not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

Response

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

Gospel Commentary

Each of the Synoptic Gospels tells the story of the Transfiguration. Even though there is remarkable similarity between the accounts, the subtle differences alert us to the particular understanding of the writer. Just before this part of the Gospel, Luke has Jesus' first prediction of his Passion and his call for his disciples to take up their cross every day and follow him. Luke then places this experience within the context of prayer. While at prayer on the mountain, Moses and Elijah appear with him. These were two of the most extraordinary people in Jewish History. Moses led the people out of slavery through the Red Sea, around the desert and to the edge of the Promised Land. For decades, he shepherded this difficult people through all their rebellions and disgruntlement. Faithful to God and to his people, it was to him that God entrusted the Law that was to shape the Jewish people. Elijah was the great prophet that confronted the kings and people of God when they deserted God to worship the local idols. Both Elijah and Moses suffered at the hands of the people they tried to serve, both 'saw the face of God'. Both had mysterious deaths.

And here on the mountain they discuss with Jesus his 'passing', his exodus through suffering and death to Resurrection. In the midst of glory, the depths of Jesus' ignominy is faced. Peter does not understand – he wants to stay, to keep this glorious moment alive. In suggesting three tents, he thinks that Jesus is another great leader like Moses and Elijah. The Father's voice teaches him: "This is My Son, my chosen, listen to him!" Soon after this part of the Gospel, Jesus makes his second prediction of his Passion. The revelation of God's glory in Jesus is closely tied to his Passion. Glory, Passion - the two sides of one coin. Like the Apostles, who went to the mountain, we need to treasure the moments of glory that are given to us in life and use them in our times of Passion. They may not make the situation feel easier, but they are a guiding light leading us beyond our small or narrow situation into the glory and love of God.

Silent Centering Prayer: - It is good for us to be here.

Connection: *The Touch of God Deep Within*

Mountains speak of all kinds of experiences: tough climbs, grandeur, 'peak' moments, when all the world stands still and we feel the touch of God deep within. Like the child who, listening to a story about people fighting over land and resources, simply interjected with, "Why can't they all just share?" Or the old man saying, "I wish I could believe like you do. If I believed I would ask God just to take me in my sleep." ...and God did.

It is at times like these that I just want to hold the moment and not let it go. Why can't all of life be like this? Then the everyday reality kicks in and I know that life is also about being challenged out of my comfort zone.

Some aspects of this are in regard to:-

Environment - standing still and seeing the beauty and wonder of the cosmos and all that it contains; taking the trouble to use the recycling bins; putting the shopping trolley back at the collection point; not wasting water – or any resources.

Family - giving time and attention to family members; bothering to instruct/ remind children about good behaviour; taking my share of responsibility for the care and upkeep of house and garden, etc;

Community - taking an interest in and being involved in some community activities, and being faithful to this commitment.

Society - being aware of social problems, such as abusive situations, abused children/adults, human trafficking, drug and alcohol abuse, poverty etc; contributing time/finances/resources to help overcome these.

Spiritual - setting a time aside each day to read/study/ponder the scriptures so that I can discern where the Spirit is leading me today; involvement in parish worship and activities.

The list could go on but St Teresa of Avila reminds us that **'it is not what we do that counts but the love with which we do it.'**

If, like Jesus, we are open to being led by the Spirit then there is no room for excuses, boredom, narrowness of vision, lack of purpose and commitment, self-seeking or my own pleasure.

If it comes from the heart, then there will be enthusiasm and commitment even when the going is tough. But that's the challenge. Isn't it a great feeling when we reach the top of the mountain, or have the satisfaction of a task well done? Actually, it is all very life-giving, not only to others but to ourselves as well.

These are some examples of what has been life-giving to us in

Blackwater: being connected to the local community; trying to ensure the well-being of miners and the community; noticing when people are missing from the community and seeking them out; our community house being a place where people know us by name and can come to connect or have a chat; visiting families just to say 'hello' or giving a hand to help in some way, or preparing children and adults for sacraments.

Not only did Peter, James and John climb the mountain but they did it **with Jesus** – and that made all the difference!

Sr Carmel Boyle pbvm & Sr Colleen Livermore rsm - Blackwater

Living the Gospel

- Identify a life experience or encounter - a transfiguration moment - that's given you the strength and encouragement to keep living your daily reality.

RCIA THIS WEEK

**Week Two:
People of Light**

In entering Lent we look towards baptism. The elect, through the intensity of the season, prepare to be immersed in life-giving waters. The baptised, with equal intensity, prepare to renew baptismal promises - rekindling our call to illumine each day with the Christlight.

Concluding Prayer:

Led by the Spirit Up the Mountain

Leader: Let us entrust ourselves to the God of Life.

We give thanks for architects, designers, artists and gardeners who reflect your glory and lift our spirits.

Response: It is good for us to be here.

Leader: We give thanks for those who shape our communities in ways that enhance human dignity.

Response: It is good for us to be here.

Leader: We give thanks for your overshadowing presence, in both our ordinary and uncertain moments.

Response: It is good for us to be here.

Leader: We give thanks that you constantly invite us to encounter you more deeply.

Response: It is good for us to be here.

Leader: We give thanks for gifting us with this time to prepare for Easter.

Response: It is good for us to be here.

All: May your Spirit of Love guide us on our journey. AMEN.



Environmental Focus - The Fig Tree

'We need to believe that our individual actions, small though they be, will make a difference'

Catholic Bishops of Queensland, "Let the Many Coastlands Be Glad" 2004

Focussing Question: Think about your life at the moment... Are there actions or decisions you are taking that you know are not productive...that may have served well at another time, but are no longer fruitful? Are there patterns which may need reconsidering, because they are not helping relationships with others to grow?

Gospel: Lk 13: 1-9 - The Fruit-Bearing Tree

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Response

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

Gospel Commentary

Anyone who has tried to grow their own fruit and vegetables can relate to this simple parable. Some plants do not bear fruit. Given the work done, one feels frustration and disappointment. A fig tree takes three years before it was expected to yield fruit, and this tree had been given another three years in which to bear. While it may have looked luxuriant, it was taking up the ground, using food and water that other plants could have used. The decision to cut it down was understandable. But the gardener wants to give it one more year and the chance he gives it will entail work for him: Digging and collecting manure are not pleasant tasks for him and are certainly a disruption to the life of the easy-going tree.

So what does all this mean? In this short story, we see the dynamics of parables, one of Jesus' favourite ways of teaching. A parable is not an interesting story, with drama or tension. Rather it is a little tale that gives wisdom when it is mulled and brooded over. It works on the symbolic level, leading us to look below the surface of life to the presence of God working in us.

This short parable is an excellent example. The tree in Jewish Scripture stood for the people of Israel – we can see that it stands for us. God expects us to yield fruit and, too often, while we look alive, we are not actually producing fruit. Producing fruit takes work and commitment. The solution that the gardener offers is not just to leave the tree alone but rather to disrupt its easy life. Digging around, unsettling, even ripping the roots, would be a shock to a plant. Manure is refuse, ugly and smelly, but good for the plant.

In this season of Lent, we are asked to take serious stock of our lives – are we producing fruit for the Kingdom of God? It is not good enough to trust placidly in the mercy of God. Jesus constantly warns us that God expects us to be using our gifts and talents for the Kingdom and that there will be an accounting. If we find that we are not producing fruit, we need to ask the Spirit to show us what disruption we need to do, what manure we need to apply to make us fruitful.

We encounter 'parables' constantly in our lives. The 'cute' saying of a child, the incident in the parking lot when someone is kind, or unkind to another, the funny story added at the end of the news – these can all be little tales inviting us to reflect more deeply on our lives and see the presence of the Kingdom of God.

Silent Centering Prayer: - He came looking for fruit.

Connection: Advocate for Growth

One of the things I see on a regular basis is young people who are present in a community. Like all of us, they have their pew they sit in, their way of engaging, and their way of contributing. It's something I love to see. Far too often, in these communities, I'll hear comments about the lack of young people present, or that the young people simply don't care. This is one of the most challenging and disheartening things I encounter in my job.

This parable has always spoken to me for a few reasons. I've always loved the man who takes care of the vines. He does two incredibly important things. Firstly, he stops to question why there is no fruit. He doesn't take the situation at face value; he delves more deeply into what is happening. Secondly, he is an advocate for the tree. He addresses what is lacking, and points out that it needs others to help it to grow.

As a teenager, I passed an elderly gentleman every day on my way to school for well over a year. Initially we ignored each other. Then one day he smiled at me, and I returned it. A few days later that was a nod, then it was 'morning!' Slowly, it progressed to the point that if we didn't see the other one day, the next day we'd exchange a 'missed you yesterday, everything OK?' Quite simply, we were just two people engaging with the community. In a world full with struggles, where young people are brought up learning that we should never talk to strangers, don't break the status quo and the only acceptable behaviour for a teenager is that which we see on TV, this man helped me to grow and bear fruit. He did it in a simple, non threatening manner and to this day I wish I could thank him for what he gave me. He could have stereotyped me as a trouble making teenager, or simply ignored me. Instead, he questioned what was happening, and was an advocate for change.

I believe young people are like the fig tree. They are present in our communities, but, until we recognise their potential, they'll struggle to bear fruit. We don't need to prune them back so far they disappear; we don't need to give them so much water that they drown. We need to gently fertilise and break up some of the hard clay so they can spread out their roots. We should be patient and not expect fruit before flowers appear. We need to watch and listen, so we can recognise when we need to fertilise, when we need to water and when we need to step back and simply wait. Above all, we should question what is happening, and be advocates for change.

Bethany Lentern - Diocesan Youth Ministry Co-ordinator

Living the Gospel

- What is the clay entrapping the roots (of young people) in my parish community?
- How can we support the growth of young people in our community?

RCIA THIS WEEK

Week Three: The First Scrutiny is celebrated. Open to the Light

Across the next three weeks the community celebrates the 'Scrutinies' – praying that the Elect be healed and strengthened. It is as though their lives, and ours, are 'tested' or scrutinised in the light of each gospel. Some aspects are open to healing; others, to being strengthened. Lent's reflective journey invites all of us into a more genuine self knowledge, a healing of relationships, and a deeper knowledge of God.

Concluding Prayer:

Led into Hope

Leader: Let us entrust ourselves to the God of Life.

We give thanks for varieties of food and fibre produced in the oceans and rivers, on the plains and grassland regions within the diocese, and for those who tend and care for them.

Response: *Help us to look beneath the surface and to be advocates for positive change.*

Leader: We give thanks for the young people in our communities and for those who support them.

Response: *Help us to look beneath the surface and to be advocates for positive change.*

Leader: We give thanks for those who have given us a 'second chance' to bear fruit and for the opportunities we have to give others a 'second chance'.

Response: *Help us to look beneath the surface and to be advocates for positive change.*

Leader: We give thanks for those whose small actions have made a difference in our lives.

Response: *Help us to look beneath the surface and to be advocates for positive change.*

Leader: We give thanks for gifting us with this time to prepare for Easter.

Response: *Help us to look beneath the surface and to be advocates for positive change.*

All: *May your Spirit of Love guide us on our journey. AMEN.*



Environmental Focus - The River *'In justice, it is an urgent task for Christians today to be reconciled with all creation, and to undertake faithfully our responsibility of stewardship of God's gifts. To achieve such reconciliation, we must examine our lives and acknowledge the ways in which we have harmed God's creation through our actions and our failure to act. We need to experience a conversion, or change of heart.'*

Catholic Earthcare Australia and the Australian Bishop's Committee for Justice Development Ecology and Peace, "Climate Change: Our Responsibility to Sustain God's Earth, 2005"

Focussing Question: Think about your life at the moment...especially your experience of forgiveness. Describe an experience of being forgiven, or of reaching out to forgive - unconditionally.

Gospel: Lk 15:1-3; 11-32 - The Parable of The Two Sons

Jesus said: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. The younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living... But when he came to himself he said, I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. Now his elder son called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

Response

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

Gospel Commentary

This parable is directed, not at the sinners coming to Jesus, but rather at the good religious people of that time, who had never fallen away from the observance of their faith. While they had carefully kept all the Law, they had failed to listen with the heart. In this parable, Jesus shows the true nature of God's love by the model of a loving Father responding to the neediness of two very different sons. We are all familiar with the way the father greets the prodigal son. Perhaps too familiar, so we miss the point of the second part of the parable. The father also goes out and seeks to comfort the older son who in bitter anger refuses to come in and celebrate. When this son exaggerates the sin of his brother, the father still tries to woo his heart but the son casts himself in the role of a slave, always following the rules. When the father responds "all that is mine is yours" he is really telling this son that he regards him as a friend – an extraordinary statement in that Jewish context, where no son could share such a degree of intimacy and equality with his father. Yet for all his hard work and rule-keeping the son's heart was hardened and he was unable to celebrate. The father, in his actions and words to both sons, shows an extraordinary emotional care and dexterity, ever inviting, ever hopeful.

Silent Centering Prayer: - All that is mine is yours.

Connection: Sacredness of Reconciliation

'Peace is Flowing Like a River', written by Rev Carey Landry was a very popular choice as a Post-Communion hymn several years ago. The tune was simple and the mood reflective as we pondered a picture of God's love and peace flowing to us and through us to others like a mighty life-giving river. Living our lives at peace with God, with ourselves, our environment, and with others is what we all strive for.

As a Mediator with the Department of Justice for the past fifteen years I am sometimes in awe of the fact that, even though I am a public servant just doing my job, there is something sacred in witnessing two human persons making peace with each other, in some cases after many years of pain and alienation. I have the greatest admiration for the courage and humility of people who use this process, acknowledging that they need to communicate with the other person and even seek outside assistance to heal the relationship – be it with a family member, a work colleague, a neighbour or business associate. Conflict is a part of the lives of each of us and can be a great source of growth if dealt with appropriately.

In this week's Gospel reading of the parable of the two sons, I see some similarity between what happens in mediation and the common action of both father and prodigal son moving towards each other: 'I will go to my father'...and 'the father ran to the boy'. How often, when we are in conflict, do we seek the listening and supportive ear of others before addressing the issues with the person concerned? I would never suggest that it is easy to approach the other person when you are in conflict, and in some rare cases it is unwise – especially if there is any risk of physical harm. But, both in this story and also very clearly in Matthew 18:15., we hear Jesus teaching us how to make peace with our sisters and brothers. Taking that first step makes us very vulnerable, and the prodigal son ran the risk of further pain and rejection in deciding to go home and face his father. When we make ourselves vulnerable by 'going to' the other person, alone or with the support of a third person, we open ourselves to our opponent, to their position, and to the healing power of Jesus who told us stories to help us comprehend the incredible, unconditional love and forgiveness of God - for both parties to the argument.

Margaret Tucker

Living the Gospel

- Where do you see reconciliation happening in your local community or across the world – with people prepared to address conflict, bridge barriers and seek understanding?

RCIA THIS WEEK

Week Four:

The 2nd Scrutiny is Celebrated

1st Presentation: The Creed

The Creed, the great treasure of our faith, was, during the week 'handed over' to the Elect. At either a Sunday or weekday liturgy the community proclaims our threefold belief, as a living document – from the heart. In listening, the Elect receive this gift, the faith of the Church, pointing ahead to the baptismal promises, that they, at the Easter Vigil, will declare 'wholeheartedly', and we, with all our hearts, will renew.

Concluding Prayer:

Led Home by the Spirit

Leader: Let us open our hearts to the God of Compassion.

We give thanks for the gift of professionals in our community who assist us when we find it difficult to take steps towards reconciliation with those we love.

Response: *Lead us to a change of heart; fill us with your compassion and healing love.*

Leader: We give thanks for the gift of people who extend your unconditional love to us.

Response: *Lead us to a change of heart; fill us with your compassion and healing love*

Leader: We give thanks for gifting us with compassion, so that we can reach out to those who are vulnerable - experiencing pain and alienation.

Response: *Lead us to a change of heart; fill us with your compassion and healing love*

Leader: We give thanks for the gift of planet earth as our home.

Response: *Lead us to a change of heart; fill us with your compassion and healing love*

Leader: We give thanks for gifting us with this time to prepare for Easter.

Response: *Lead us to a change of heart; fill us with your compassion and healing love*

All: *May your Spirit of Love guide us on our journey. AMEN*



Environmental Focus - The Ocean

We are, in conscience, required to ask where our consumer goods have come from, where our food is grown or where our water is taken from or goes to, or indeed how much is used'

Catholic Bishops of Queensland, "Let the Many Coastlands Be Glad" 2004.

Focussing Question: Think about your life at the moment...in what ways do you love conditionally and place limits on your loving? Whom do you love unconditionally?

Gospel: Jn 8:1-11 - Jesus and The Woman Caught in Adultery

Early in the morning Jesus came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

Response

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

Gospel Commentary

I was once in a group that was very critical of one of its members. One day a very wise, very young woman said: "The trouble with her is, she wears her faults on the outside while the rest of us are too proud and keep them on the inside." If only people had stopped at keeping their faults on the inside! Sadly, it seems to be an almost universal human failing, that while ignoring their own sins, they will readily condemn others, especially the vulnerable. This is the situation of the woman caught in adultery. She was vulnerable. As a woman, she had no voice in the legal proceedings of that time. Probably half-dressed, she had no dignity. Guilty, she had no defence. And she was being used. Her accusers were not really interested in her sin. They were just using her to attack Jesus. Notice how no-one, except for Jesus, ever speaks to her in this situation. Whatever Jesus doodled in the dust, he took control of the situation and made this mob of hypocrites face themselves...and then they were defenceless. Jesus did not publicly accuse them, but he did activate their consciences and allow them to slink away.

But he does have the woman face her own sin. This is amazing! Not only does Jesus save her from the murderous mob, he saves her from her own sinfulness. He addresses her directly, he neither condemns nor condones her, but he gives her the opportunity to speak. She responds by reverentially calling him "Lord". Now, with her dignity restored, Jesus can offer the life-giving invitation: Go and sin no more. We do not publicly stone people for adultery in our society, but we do condemn in other ways. When criticism rises, whether it be of family members or of refugees, of workmates or the mentally ill, we need to pause and ask ourselves: what is behind this criticism? Are we just trying to make ourselves look better? Do we really know their situation? Have we looked into our own hearts first? It is amazing, but it is only after we have faced the sin in our hearts and lives, and received the life-giving command of Jesus, that we will have some wisdom in dealing with the pain, vulnerability, even the sin of others.

Silent Centering Prayer: - All the people came to him.

Connection: Jesus' Forgiveness and Compassion

This week's gospel portrait of Jesus is one of forgiveness and compassion...

It connects well with Seafarers, who today work hard and are loyal to their Shipping Companies, despite the exploitative and dangerous nature of their work on the high seas.

Seafarers, like Jesus, are slow to condemn their exploiters because their mandate is about the love and care of their extended families back home. Like Jesus they are about a greater reality of human dignity, sacrifice and hope. Therefore they have little time for condemnation of others.

Often quite isolated, they long for the compassion presented by Jesus in this Gospel. Compassion that is full of dignity and respect for the other. Jesus writes on the ground, rather than embarrassing the people gathered in any way. He allows them to reflect on their own lives and judge themselves. Seafarers have often been stereotyped as 'rough types', perhaps even adulterers, by the global community (Girl in every port etc). In a sense they, like the 'woman caught in the act', are often 'set up' by society and have to live with a bad name. But Jesus, not concerned about society's opinions, challenges the status quo...the law of the time... to a new and radical approach – namely forgiveness and compassion.

Seafarers live on board cargo ships within groups from radically differing cultures, religions, customs, and nationalities. Despite their isolation and the abuses they regularly suffer, they can inspire us by the altruistic values that guide their lives, namely the care of other human beings. Even though unknown and faceless to the majority of Australians, these men endure hardships and many months away from loved ones to ensure our personal comfort and national prosperity. They are responsible for the shipment of 95% of the goods we use.

Our Ministry, *Stella Maris Seafarers Centre* in Mackay, offers practical help and pastoral care to all Seafarers by being a compassionate and loving presence. We continue to work and strive to be a welcoming spiritual sustenance to enable the People of the Sea to be the light of Christ for each other.

Bernadette Thorsen

Centre Manager - Stella Maris Seafarers Centre Mackay

Living the Gospel

- What aspects of Bernadette's story touched you?
- How does her ministry enable seafarers to experience God's expansive love?

RCIA THIS WEEK

Week Five:

**The 3rd Scrutiny is Celebrated
2nd Presentation: The Lord's Prayer**

Praying that the Elect, and all of us, are journeying more transparently towards the light, - able to see a little more clearly, preparing to declare more assuredly, our baptismal promises. The 2nd of the Presentations of our great faith treasures also takes place at a weekday liturgy: We hand over to our Elect *the Lord's Prayer*, conveying, as we pray, our living experience of belonging to the all-embracing family of God.

Concluding Prayer:

Led Into the Spirit of Compassion

Leader: Let us open our hearts to the God of Love.

We give thanks for the riches, depths, fragility, beauty and diversity of the oceans - which mirror Your creative power.

Response: ***Teach us to delight in Your ever-expanding horizons.***

Leader: We give thanks for seafarers, who enable us to enjoy the fruits of many lands and the work of many hands.

Response: ***Teach us to delight in Your ever-expanding horizons.***

Leader: We give thanks that we are being called, as Christians, to remove the barriers that divide nations and peoples.

Response: ***Teach us to delight in Your ever-expanding horizons.***

Leader: We give thanks for all in public office and the Church, who commit their lives to the unity and dignity of humankind and the wellbeing of our planet.

Response: ***Teach us to delight in Your ever-expanding horizons.***

Leader: We give thanks for gifting us with this time to prepare for Easter.

Response: ***Teach us to delight in Your ever-expanding horizons.***

All: ***May your Spirit of Love guide us on our journey. AMEN***



Environmental Focus - The Sun

As Christians we believe that the Risen Christ is at the heart of creation and the web of life, bringing all to its completion in God'

Catholic Bishops of Queensland, "Let the Many Coastlands Be Glad" 2004.

Focussing Question: Think about your life...especially its difficult moments. Describe one experience through which you passed from a deep sense of loss into freedom and acceptance.

Gospel: Lk 24: 1-12 - Risen Life Beyond The Empty Tomb

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Response

- Say aloud a word or phrase from the gospel that speaks to you.
- Listen to each person's word or silence.
- Share how this word, a phrase, or the whole gospel, could be speaking to you or your community at this time.

Gospel Commentary

In Luke's account of the Resurrection, there is no order to return to Galilee where Jesus will meet the disciples. Rather, the men at the tomb tell the women to **remember** what Jesus had told them in Galilee concerning the events that they had just witnessed – his suffering, death and now his rising from the dead. 'To remember', for Luke, is not just to recall the past, rather it is always connected with God or Jesus, and usually involves some form of revelation of the gracious power of God. Mary, Zechariah, the criminal crucified with Jesus, all experience being remembered by God. In turn, the ones who remember the saving acts of God, open the way for God's grace to be present in their lives.

Some of the language used in the Greek – the language in which Luke wrote – directs our attention even more to the salvation story. The proclamation of the women leads us to remember the proclamation of the shepherds at the birth of Jesus. Once again, it is the marginalised that God calls to proclaim the new era of salvation. The dazzling clothes of the two men remind us of the Transfiguration where the two great figures of Jewish history, Moses and Elijah, spoke with Jesus about this death and resurrection. Not only are people to remember, they are to share their story of their encounter with Jesus. The ridicule of the women by the disciples doesn't stop them recounting, with wonder and joy, what they experienced. Next Sunday we hear how the two disciples have to return from Emmaus to share with the other disciples their magnificent encounter with Jesus.

Remembering, telling and listening are part of the dynamic that makes us a Church. A lot has been said in our culture about bad memories - how cruel things from the past can twist a life. But little is said of the even greater power good memories have to heal a life, and how the remembrance of the saving acts of God can transform a person. It is a grace-filled practice to recall those events in your life, when in suffering or in pain, God's deliverance came. More often than not, it was not in the way we expected or even wanted but rather it was life overcoming death. And in sharing that story with others, you are not only remembering, but making God's grace alive and active again in your listeners.

Silent Centering Prayer: - Why do you look for the living among the dead?

Connection: Sacred Remembering

She was a waif of a child, forced upon the mother who never loved or wanted her. When Father Pat first met her calling in for lollies after school *she* was eight - a charming, beautiful, quick-witted child and natural leader among the other kids. One day he found the young gang in his storeroom; one boy trying to give another a haircut with the electric drill while a third tipped out a box of nails and a girl demolished a bottle of altar wine. The kids scattered when they saw Father Pat. but when he couldn't stop laughing they stayed to help clean up the mess. When he realised *she* was missing he raced out to the kitchen just in time to see her nipping out the gate with his biscuits!

She was in and out of trouble over the years and was moved to the Child Shelter just out of town in the bush, but *she* knew we loved her, and called in whenever *she* was in town.

In her teens *she* became addicted to petrol sniffing. One 5.00am I heard the church window smash and saw a slight figure in a balaclava. Father Pat was out walking. By the time I got there the church doors were open but no-one was inside. The door to the presbytery was still intact. I saw the figure again outside on the street. There *she* was, clutching a plastic bottle with petrol in the bottom. The fumes took my breath away! *She* looked so sad and thin; so lonely and unloved, and so ashamed. As we sat together *she* agreed to tip out the petrol and listened as I described God's dream for her...made in His image... so precious.

She returned to Woorabinda recently after some years away and proudly introduced us to her boyfriend, a shy, gentle young man who obviously loved her. *She* was radiant! *She* joyfully told us *she* was pregnant with a little girl, and that they wanted her "done" (baptised) in our church..

Despite everything, *she* remembered *she* was loved and that changed everything.

***** Alleluia! *****

**Fr Pat McGeever Cssp
Sr Cecilia Prestashewsky mfc
Woorabinda**

Living the Gospel

- Why have Fr Pat and Sr Cecilia chosen this as a 'resurrection' story?
- What do they teach us about ministering to others?
- What do they reveal to us about God?

RCIA THIS WEEK

**Week Six:
In communion with Us**

Elect and community together move toward Triduum - one continuous celebration across three days. Quiet, prayerful Saturday gives way to evening Vigil: blazing fire, new light conquering darkness, faithfilled storytelling, immersion in the life-giving waters of God's all-embracing love, heartfelt prayer, sharing in the first of a lifetime of eucharists, sent forth into six weeks of rejoicing, remembering and living the gift of new life..

Concluding Prayer: Led Into Life

Leader: Let us open our hearts to the God of New Life.

We give thanks for all people of faith across our nation, that together we roll away any stones that prevent us from living together in peace and joy.

Response: Grace us to rise again.

Leader: We give thanks for our indigenous sisters and brothers, that together we roll away any stones that stand in the way of human dignity and equality.

Response: Grace us to rise again.

Leader: We give thanks for all who will be fully initiated in our faith communities at Easter, that together we will proclaim and live the Good News.

Response: Grace us to rise again.

Leader: We give thanks for the gift of courage, enabling us to let go of all that holds us back from living life to the full.

Response: Grace us to rise again.

Leader: We give thanks for Your Lenten invitation to refashion our stone blocks and hardened corners into living buildings of compassion and justice.

Response: Grace us to rise again.

All: May your Spirit of Love guide us on our journey. AMEN



Sr Mary-Ann Casanova rsj - Diocesan Commission for Environmental Awareness
 - Sister Mary-Ann is a Josephite Sister and is a member of the Diocesan Commission for Environmental Awareness. Since the refurbishment at The Haven, Emu Park, Sister Mary-Ann, together with Sister Rose Schick, has been responsible for the implementation of several ecological projects. Initiatives to date include the design and construction of a large composting worm farm, a labyrinth, the establishment of a bush tucker garden and landscaping using plants indigenous to the site.



Sister Carmel Boyle pbvm - Pastoral Associate Blackwater - Sister Carmel is a Queensland Presentation Sister. She has had a lifetime of involvement in faith education in schools and parishes as well as weekend and home retreats.

Sr Colleen Livermore, rsm – Parish Coordinator Blackwater - Colleen engages with Carmel in a diversity of ministries across the parish and its neighbouring communities, always seeking new ways of making the gospel tangible in people's lives. For 17 years she served in the now-volatile city of Peshawar, Pakistan, as founding principal of St John's Girls' School – offering to students their first experience of education.



Bethany Lentern - Co-ordinator - Diocesan Youth Ministries - Bethany Lentern, the new Diocesan Youth Ministries Coordinator, moved to Rockhampton from Sydney in August 2009. Bethany attended state primary and high schools, where she was involved in social justice groups, and heavily involved at her local parish. After high school Bethany completed a Bachelor of Theology at the Australian Catholic University. She was also fortunate enough to participate in a study abroad program and completed one semester of her degree at the University of St Thomas, in St Paul, Minneapolis. She has been involved with Young Christian Workers and Young Christian Students for several years, as a volunteer and worker on a Diocesan and National level. After working at YCS, she went on to work as the Parish Youth Minister at Waitara Cathedral Parish in the Broken Bay Diocese.



Margaret Tucker - Mediator - Queensland Government: Child Protection Officer - Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton - Margaret has had a lifetime of experience in both Parish and Diocesan projects and ministries from a young age, assisting her mother and the Wandal ladies raise funds for parish and school from street stalls, garden parties and Paddy's Markets in the days long before planned giving. In more recent years Margaret has worked as Diocesan Response Co-ordinator and is currently Diocesan Child Protection Officer and Queensland Professional Standards Representative for the Diocese, as well working as a Justice Department Mediator. But family has always been a priority and there is always time, with husband Doug, to enjoy their three married children, their spouses and eight grandchildren.



Bernadette Thorsen - Centre Manager - Stella Maris Seafarers Centre Mackay - Bernadette is the Centre Manager of the Stella Maris Seafarers Centre (Apostleship of the Sea) in Mackay and has been involved in the ministry for the past eight years. Joining first as a volunteer, she became a member of the Management Committee before taking up the Manager's position in January 2006. She is also the National Chairperson of the Apostleship of the Sea National Council and a committee member of the National Seafarers Welfare Advisory Committee. Having been married to a seafarer herself for the past thirty-four years gives her good grounding for this ministry. Together with her committee, volunteers and staff, Bernadette offers activities and facilities, charity and advocacy, to meet the practical, spiritual and social needs of the People of the Sea.



Father Pat McGeever, Cssp - Resident Priest at Woorabinda for the past 10 years. A Spiritan missionary with 17 years experience in Sierra Leone in West Africa, and 15 years in the West Sepik in PNG, Father Pat spoke the local languages of both countries plus African Kreol and PNG Pidgin English and is a firm believer in the inculturation of the local church.

Sister Cecilia Prestashewsky (Prest) mfc - Resident Pastoral Assistant at Woorabinda for nearly 7 years. Missionary Franciscan Sister of the Immaculate Conception. Sister Cecilia spent 28 years in nursing, laboratory work, and training local staff in remote villages of the West Sepik in PNG. Both she and Father Pat ministered to the people on the NW coast of PNG in the aftermath of the Tsunami in 1998.



Sister Kym Harris osb has been in the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton for only seven years but has been so impressed by some of the distinctive features of our region that she now calls herself a Central Queenslander. She belongs to the Benedictine Monastery in the Capricorn Coast Parish. Sister Kym has written the Gospel Commentaries for this Lenten Program.

WHERE GOD'S SPIRIT IS LEADING...

Before the concluding prayer in each session, spend a couple of quiet minutes individually, noting where you feel you are being called this week. You may like to make a connection with the environmental symbol.

Week One: Wilderness

Week Two: Mountain

Week Three: Fruit-Bearing Tree

Week Four: River

Week Five: Ocean

Week Six: Sun

During these six weeks, as Lent concludes and we look to celebrate the Triduum, I have grown more aware of:

COMING TO LIFE AS LIVING STONES – Artistically

Each group is encouraged to engage artistically with each week's environmental focus.

Suggestions:

Creating Living Stones

- Before the program begins, have a number of 6-sided flat boxes, or sheets of paper with a box shape – 1 for each participant or for the group. A parish liturgy or craft group may choose to construct a larger one. Each could represent a stone, or building block, which can eventually be placed beside or around others – perhaps in the narthex of the church.
- On each side you could represent the week's focus (eg. River). Or you may prefer to form concentric circles, a mandala or a spiral – increasingly taking shape/colour .
- Each group may like to take a short time at the end of each session to add their symbols. At the end of Lent they will both trace your journey and be a blaze of colour - interspersed with a few stones and rocks on the way.
(eg. Wilderness: browns/earth colours; Mountain: woody, forested colour; Fruit-bearing tree: fertile, productive soil/abundant coloured fruits; River and Ocean: diverse life forms/ hues; Sun: symbols of light, perhaps Alpha and Omega)

A Literature Circle or Poets' Corner

Those who are passionate about literature and poetry could gather to share and discuss their selected quotes/passages/poems/works centred on the weekly environmental theme.

Some quotes could be included on Mass sheets, bulletins for others to ponder (and sent to the diocesan website).

For The Image Makers in the Community:

Those who are keen photographers or artists could be invited to prepare a visual display of their images for each week - this could be in the form of a slideshow as people gather for Sunday Eucharist, a simple hung exhibition or...

For The Very Organised!

Prepare ahead of time either one large [for the whole Lenten season] or six small [one per week] empty frames for weaving (ie stick at top and base with down strings).

Invite parishioners to bring along something (non perishable) that can be added to the weaving appropriate to the weekly environmental theme. Objects could be added as they enter the church with the weaving forming part of the entrance procession or placed in a container to be carried in at the beginning of Mass and a few people assemble the weaving during the week.

Just imagine the wilderness with bark, feathers, earthy-coloured fabric off cuts, gum nuts. the ocean with beach towel, fishing rod and child's beach spade, shells, colourful lures, driftwood...

- Artists in the parish will be able to suggest many ways of letting the creative juices free.

Illustrations of possibilities will be available on the Diocesan website well before Lent.

The Diocesan Environmental Commission would love photos of the project – in process or at completion.
ecoedoz@bigpond.com

Implementing COME TO LIFE –

1. Wherever possible, gather ecumenically.
2. If possible, meet during the week before the featured gospel – beginning around Ash Wednesday. It is presumed that the program will be finished before Holy Week.
The only aspect of the Triduum being reflected is the Resurrection.
3. Meet as a small group - in a home, church building or suitable venue - following the program as suggested. You may choose to add an appropriate hymn at the beginning or conclusion
4. A group that has the capacity could meet for its weekly sharing near a local environmental focus of the week (eg. Wilderness/river)
5. Offer the resource as a Lenten Retreat to wider groups (perhaps during the day or in the evening for about 90 mins). A leader would need to ensure that the material is adapted to such a process, setting the reflective atmosphere, the gathering space, music etc . The Connection/storytelling section could be changed to have a local flavor.
6. A family may choose to use a portion of the program in the context of a meal. One family has previously found this very worthwhile: inviting a different person/ family to share at their table each week. Set the table with the weekly symbol and engage the children in deciding how and how much of the program could be used. It can be a most successful and connecting initiative.
7. Use the program for individual prayer, if you are unable to meet with others – perhaps finding a companion across the diocese with whom you could connect online, sharing your responses and reflections. If you would like to do that and need assistance, let us know.

Some helpful websites to assist ongoing growth in faith and spirituality:

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (many sites): <http://www.catholic.org.au>

Ecology

Diocesan Environmental Commission: www.rok.catholic.net.au/DCEA/default.html

Catholic Earthcare Australia: <http://www.catholicearthcareoz.net/>

Church issues/Current Events:

Daily News coverage of pertinent events affecting the Church: www.cathnews.com

Journal of current events, with spirituality connections: Catholic Australia: www.catholicaustralia.com.au/

Justice

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/links.html>

Ecumenism:

Diocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations: www.rok.catholic.net.au/Commissions

Bishops' Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Relations: <http://www.catholic.org.au/>

Spirituality

Excellent daily prayer site - Sacred Space: <http://sacredspace.ie/> (book also available)

Christian Meditation Community: <http://www.christianmeditationaustralia.org/About.html>

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This Lenten program has been produced for the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton, with stories and reflections being contributed by people around the diocese.

Please help us continue to improve on the future issues of the program by providing us with your feedback.

Call 07 4931 3725 for a copy of the Evaluation Sheet or download it from the diocesan website www.rok.catholic.net.au

You might also like to send your comments/suggestions for future issues to:

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