

LENTEN FAITH SHARING

Week Four

Week 4 – Sirach 24: 19-22

"Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my fruits." Sirach 24: 19

The Leader leads the participants through the Centering Prayer Process and Lectio Divina

Begin with **Centering Prayer.**

Sit comfortably with eyes closed.

Begin to slowly breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

As you slowly breathe in, image God breathing breath into your center.

As you breathe out through your mouth, let it be a moment of letting go of your anxieties, worries, anger, hatred, frustrations.

Repeat this practice several times.

1. Choose a Sacred Word or Mantra as a symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.

Whenever you become aware of distractions, sounds, thoughts of other things, simply return to the Lord with Centering or your prayer word/s.

(Repeat this exercise three to four times. Trusting that you are sitting in God's Holy presence by yourself and with others.

While sitting in silence, open your life to become aware of the presence of God with you personally and with the Share Group.

2. **Lectio Divina** – Choose a Reader. The Leader leads the Lectio Divina

Read **Sirach 24: 19-22** slowly, while pausing between paragraphs for silence.

Invite participants to rest in silence for a few moments.

Invite them to savor a word, a phrase or a feeling that rises in you. Reflect on this quietly.

The Leader, after some time of silence can invite participants to share the **word** or phrase aloud.

The Reading is slowly read a second time by the Reader.

Pause for silent reflection.

The leader invites participants to share their experience using the Reflection responses below.

REFLECTION

In the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 11, verses 28-30, we can find a similar invitation to come and be filled with God's rest. We need a place to go when life's burdens get us down. In the reading of Sirach, we are invited to Come, meet God in prayer, open our lives to a total dependency on Him, and to let go of efforts to work things out for oneself. When we pray, we find within ourselves answers we don't know that we possess. This is wisdom at work. Verse 19 of invites us to go to God, the source of all wisdom and be filled with his bounties. Those who eat of him will hunger for more. Those who drink of him will thirst for more. The book of Sirach continues the embodiment of Wisdom and describes her divine origins in verse 9 stating: "*Before the ages, in the beginning he created me, and for all the ages I shall not cease to be.*"

Wisdom is defined as a mysterious communication from God. It is the image of the invisible God. In Sirach, Wisdom invites everyone to eat and drink of the riches which wisdom can offer. When God's people taste Wisdom, they hunger and thirst for more. Wisdom's banquet comes to its fullness through Jesus who became the bread of eternal life. Through him, the hunger of longing souls can become satisfied through Jesus who is our bread of life. John's Gospel Chapter 6, verse 33, highlights the heart of this message through the words of Jesus: "*Whoever comes to me, will never be hungry again, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty again.*"

Reflection responses

1. What in the reading stirred your heart?
2. Does this Scripture story take on meaning for your life?
3. Did the story help you make connections to the Eucharist?
4. What has God taught you about yourself through testing?
5. What did you find enlightening?
6. Are you able to find God's presence in the world through the wisdom of understanding Christ's presence in the Eucharist?

Action – Connect with the disconnected.

How or what will you do to share your experience of Eucharist through the Scriptures and worship with someone who is not participating in the Eucharist?

Can you gently and lovingly, and without judgment, ask another what prevents them from coming to experience the Eucharist?

Listen! Listen! Listen! The Holy Spirit will provide the words you should speak.

Sirach 24: 19-22

19 Come to me, all who desire me,
and be filled with my fruits.

20 You will remember me as sweeter than honey,
better to have than the honeycomb.

21 Those who eat of me will hunger still,
those who drink of me will thirst for more.

22 Whoever obeys me will not be put to shame,
and those who serve me will never go astray."