

LENTEN FAITH SHARING

Week Five

Week Five – Hebrews 9: 1-28

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 other.

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 Hebrews 9: 1-28 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

This Reading is much longer than the other Faith Sharing readings, so we break it up into two sections for better listening and Faith Sharing. In the reading is contained many of the symbols used to connect the Old Covenant with the New and brings to life the Mass with its symbols and rituals as we know it today. When reading these passages, it is very clear that the first covenant had many regulations for worship. Worship in the beginning was in an earthly sanctuary which we would describe today as a tent. In this

first entrance to the tent was the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the Presence. This was called the Holy Place. There was a second curtain and behind this curtain was the place called the Holy of Holies. In it stood the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant. It was overlaid on all sides with gold. There was a golden urn which contained the Manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the Covenant. Above all this was the Cherubim of Glory which overshadowed the mercy seat. The Priest goes into the first area of the tent to carry out his ritual duties. The High Priest and only he, goes into the second area of the tent and only once a year. When he entered the second part of the Tent, he brings the blood that he offers for himself and for the sins committed unintentionally by the people. Through this, the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent is still standing.

The people of God who were under the Old Testament covenant were reaching out toward an experience of God that they could not grasp. They worshiped God in a **temporary sanctuary**. They offered what we call imperfect sacrifices and through a temporary priesthood. The Temple with all its rituals foreshadows the New Covenant with the good things to come.

Blood was essential to Old Testament sacrifice because their belief was that life was in the blood. Blood was very sacred, and its outpouring served as a symbol of cleansing from sin and reconciliation with God.

"Present time," is an expression which is comparable to "present age."

The Sacrifice of Jesus, the Christ, who foreshadows the high priest entering the true sanctuary is entering the true Sanctuary of heaven, which is not of human making. His place there is permanent, and his offering is his own blood that won eternal redemption.

Here we see Jesus, not as the slain Lamb, but as the high priest who bears the atoning sacrifice of his own blood into the heavenly presence of God.

In the Temple of Israel, the **curtain** was the **ritual barrier** that separated people from God's presence. Jesus, as the **perfect** High Priest, has torn the veil of the temple open, and has pulled back the curtain of the sanctuary that shut us off from God.

The **New Covenant in Jesus** required both the death of Christ, the Paschal Lamb and the shedding of his blood. The death of Jesus opened for us the promised eternal inheritance. The Scroll of the law, the holy place, the vessels of worship and God's people were sprinkled with the sacrificial blood of Jesus on the cross.

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. Have you found the experience of the Eucharist to be an intimate experience of the living God?

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.

Hebrews 9: 1-28

1 Now [even] the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary.

2 For a tabernacle was constructed, the outer one,- in which were the lampstand, the table, and the bread of offering; this is called the Holy Place.

3 Behind the second veil was the tabernacle called the Holy of Holies,

4 in which were the gold altar of incense- and the ark of the covenant entirely covered with gold. In it were the gold jar containing the manna, the staff of Aaron that had sprouted, and the tablets of the covenant.

5 Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the place of expiation. Now is not the time to speak of these in detail.

6 With these arrangements for worship, the priests, in performing their service,- go into the outer tabernacle repeatedly,

7 but the high priest alone goes into the inner one once a year, not without blood- that he offers for himself and for the sins of the people.

8 In this way the holy Spirit shows that the way into the sanctuary had not yet been revealed while the outer tabernacle still had its place.

9 This is a symbol of the present time, in which gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the worshiper in conscience

10 but only in matters of food and drink and various ritual washings: regulations concerning the flesh, imposed until the time of the new order.

11- But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be,- passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation,

12 he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes- can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed,

14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit- offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.

15- For this reason he is mediator of a new covenant: since a death has taken place for deliverance from transgressions under the first covenant, those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.

16- Now where there is a will, the death of the testator must be established.

17 For a will takes effect only at death; it has no force while the testator is alive.

18 Thus not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.

19- When every commandment had been proclaimed by Moses to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves [and goats], together with water and crimson wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,

20 saying, "This is 'the blood of the covenant which God has enjoined upon you.'"

21 In the same way, he sprinkled also the tabernacle- and all the vessels of worship with blood.

22- According to the law almost everything is purified by blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

23- Therefore, it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified by these rites, but the heavenly things themselves by better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, a copy of the true one, but heaven itself, that he might now appear before God on our behalf.

25 Not that he might offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters each year into the sanctuary with blood that is not his own;

26 if that were so, he would have had to suffer repeatedly from the foundation of the world. But now once for all he has appeared at the end of the ages* to take away sin by his sacrifice.

27 Just as it is appointed that human beings die once, and after this the judgment,

28 so also Christ, offered once to take away the sins of many,- will appear a second time, not to take away sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.