



WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 4: WHO DO THEY SAY JESUS IS?
WEEK 1, DAY 1

PRACTICING TRUST

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Charity

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the immaculate heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all the apostles of prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month. Amen.

Preparing for the Journey

listen



In Revelation Four, Week One, we will examine how Jesus' witnesses testify to His identity and mission as the Son of God. On Days One and Seven we will continue to offer Helps to Prayer. On Day One, we will examine Practicing Trust. Trust in God is at the heart of discipleship. Trust in God implies that in the ultimate analysis we cannot trust ourselves because sin lurks in our hearts. Trust in God means having an undaunted faith that God is far greater than our circumstances and will make possible and salutary for us what is impossible for us to achieve.

On Day Seven, we will consider the necessity of a Firm Commitment to the Person of Jesus. You can't separate the Person of Jesus from His teachings. Jesus' teachings reveal Him and the other Persons of the Holy Trinity. Jesus is speaking directly to us in the gospels. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. His teachings speak to us of Covenant Life, God's covenant Life in the Blessed Trinity, into which we have been invited through His death on the cross.

On Day Two, we will examine The Shepherds' Witness. Shepherds were counted among the lost sheep of Israel and treated as outcasts. Ironically, they contributed significantly to Temple sacrifice and religious festivals. God provides another instance of offering salvation through His Son to everyone, especially to sinners and outcasts, like the shepherds.

On Day Three, we will reflect on Simeon's Prophecy. Simeon was led by the Holy Spirit into the Temple. Taking the child Jesus into his arms, he prophesies that Jesus will be a sign of contradiction, and Mary will share in that contradiction. The Lamb of God would redeem humankind from their sins, and Mary would participate intimately in His emptying.

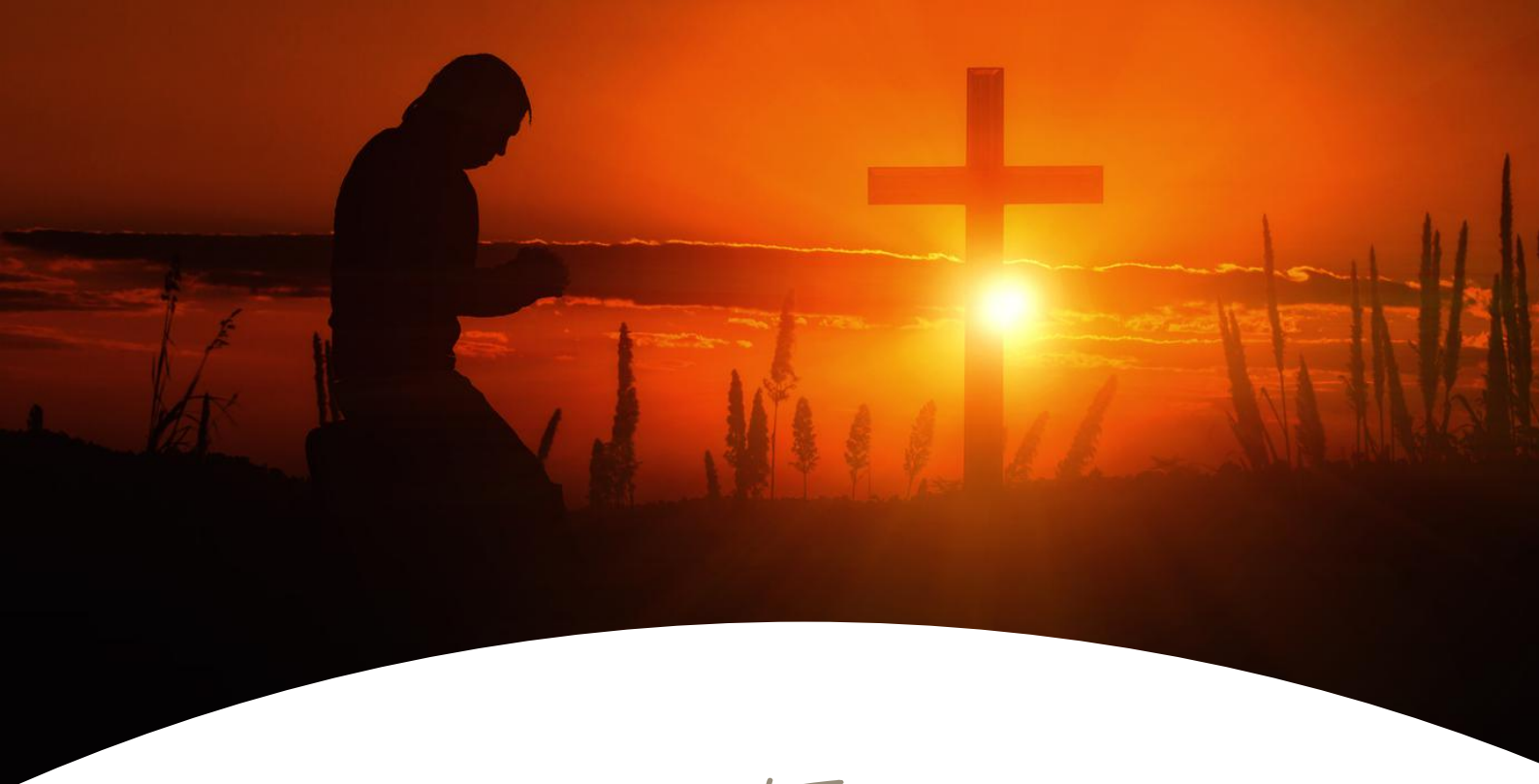


Preparing for the Journey

On Day Four, we will ponder The Magi's Witness. The Magi were true seekers who responded to the voice of the Holy Spirit beckoning them to go and pay homage to the child, Jesus. They prostrated themselves before Jesus and did Him homage. And as befits royalty and God, both aspects applying to Jesus, they offer Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

On Day Five, we will consider John the Baptist's Testimony to Jesus. John saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus at His baptism and was told that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit, a sharp contrast to his baptism of repentance. In the light of this revelation, John knows beyond any doubt that Jesus is the Son of God: "Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God!"

On Day Six, we will embrace The Witness of Mary, Mother of Jesus. Two relationships feature very prominently in Jesus, His relationship to His Father in the bond of the Holy Spirit, and His relationship to us through His mother, Mary, who conceived Him through the Holy Spirit. In the Wedding Feast at Cana, Jesus tells His mother that His hour has not yet come. It will come when He is glorified on the cross. However, His mother knows intuitively that it is time for Jesus to move toward His 'hour.' In acceding to His mother's wish, Jesus embarks upon the fulfillment of His hour. In changing water into wine, Jesus points to the Eucharist. In Holy Communion, we become one with the Bridegroom-Lamb, participating in His 'Hour,' the glorious victory and mystery of His passion-death-resurrection.



Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Trust in God is at the heart of discipleship. Trust in God implies that in the ultimate analysis we cannot trust ourselves because sin lurks in our hearts. God's image and likeness is always in danger of rebelling against the Original, rather than being dependent on Him. Even when our gifts and self-confidence are working well for us, there are numerous variables that we cannot control. In the words of the poet, Robert Burns, the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry. Trust in God means having an undaunted faith that God is far greater than our circumstances and will make possible and salutary for us what is impossible for us to achieve. Jesus trusted His Father completely, even when from His human perspective, the forces of evil and darkness were closing in on Him: "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will" (Mark 14: 36).



Face to Face WITH GOD

There are several verses scattered throughout the gospels that highlight Jesus' total trust in His Father. John 5: 30 says, "I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me." John 6: 38-40 gives us a profound appreciation of Jesus' total obedience to His Father: "I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it [on] the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him [on] the last day." He did this by dying on the cross.

Mary, Mother of God and our Blessed Mother, is the paragon of trust in God. She was totally obedient to the Father's will: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1: 38). Trust in God can be difficult for those who have been traumatized by sustained rejection, ridicule, chaos, and inconsistency in their early lives. Gently and persistently, they need to be encouraged to try Jesus as their Savior and Lord, and experience new life in Him: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light" (Matthew 11: 28-30).

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I thank you for your gracious companionship. I praise you for being my Creator, Savior, and Lord. May I take your blessings to my day, and may your Presence envelop and permeate all my thoughts and actions, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all!



Examination of CONSCIENCE

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O my God, I thank you for all the graces and blessings which I have received from you this day. Express to God your gratitude as you recall the blessings and graces that were present today: For what are you grateful?

Examination of Conscience

O my God, give me light to see what sins I have committed, and grant me the grace to be sorry for them: For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow? Recall your sins of the day and repent in sincere sorrow for the sins you have committed, by reciting the Act of Contrition.

The Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.





Encouragement for the Journey

You are beginning a grace-filled journey into the heart of God. You will be assisted by the Holy Spirit who will become your ardent Advocate, recreating you in the image and likeness of Jesus, and bringing you into the depths of God's Trinitarian love and compassion. Gradually, the Holy Spirit will develop the disciple's lifestyle in you. Prayer, the celebration of God's life in the Eucharist and Sacraments, Scripture and Spiritual Reading, and Ascetical Practices will become an integral part of your daily life. However, developing a disciple's lifestyle takes time and patience. There will be setbacks and lapses as we struggle with sinful urges that make it difficult to stay on the straight and narrow pilgrim road into God's Heart. In this Program, GEM will lead you slowly but surely, on your pilgrimage into God's Heart. We will offer you easy steps and gradually accelerate the process so that no violence is done to your spirit, and you experience your growth as a disciple, organically and naturally.

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- Consider reading *The Imitation of Christ*, the most influential book after the Bible to form disciples of Christ. We suggest three or four Chapters per week. They are short and to the point.
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My Notes

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For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?



WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 4: WHO DO THEY SAY JESUS IS?
WEEK 1, DAY 2

THE SHEPHERDS' WITNESS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

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Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

“Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” - Luke 2: 10-12:

The appearance to the shepherds has enormous significance, given the unsavory mix of facts that came together during their night watch. Shepherds had an infamous reputation in the First Century. God-fearing Jews were exhorted to stay away from them as they would likely be selling them stolen wares. They were counted among the lost sheep of Israel, treated as outcasts. In an unseemly way, even with such a dishonorable reputation, they played a significant role in Jewish society. They contributed significantly to Temple sacrifice and religious festivals, especially the Feast of Passover. They were the ones who picked out for sacrifice the perfect specimens among their new-born lambs. Tending their flocks in the environs of Jerusalem, they were counted upon to provide the animals. Their practice was to wrap each newly born perfect specimen destined for sacrifice with a swaddling cloth.



Face to Face WITH GOD

Into this disreputable mix, God decides to write straight on crooked lines. Contrary to human logic, God provides another instance of offering salvation through His Son to everyone, especially to sinners and outcasts, like the shepherds. Outside of the Holy Family and their close relatives, like Mary's parents and Elizabeth and Zechariah, the shepherds were the first ones to receive the good news that "a savior has been born to you, the Messiah and Lord." From God's perspective, these lowly nobodies were included among God's chosen ones. And God made this point loud and clear by sending them an angel, along with an angelic chorus, to announce the glad tidings.

The shepherds are told to not be afraid. Whenever God sent someone on a daunting mission, He assured them to have no fear as He would be going with them. So, besides being awed and transformed by the birth of Jesus, the shepherds are being sent on a mission as well. This event will have changed their lives permanently, inviting them to become powerful witnesses to other shepherds and lost sheep of Israel that "a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord." They are also told that they "will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." From their perspective, the swaddled Savior of the world is destined to become the Lamb of God who will be sacrificed on the cross. Jesus too will be the Lamb of sacrifice without twisted limbs or broken bones that John 19: 36 references. Mary and Joseph welcomed the shepherds with gratitude and joy. God's ways are different from the ways of human logic. "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart" (Luke 2: 19). And the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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NIGHT *listen* Prayer

The context for our nightly review is our covenant relationship with God. We are assessing our commitment to Jesus as His disciple. God demonstrated His immense love for us when He made the decision to send us His Son to be our Savior and ensure our participation in His Divine Life! In covenant union with God we experience God's total gift of Himself to us, and our surrender to Him becomes our heart's desire. In our morning Face to Face, we saw the transformation that took place in the shepherds. They were told that a Savior had been born for them, Jesus the Messiah. They were invited to come and visit the Baby Jesus and let the world know that her Savior was in our midst! Jesus desires the same transformation which the Holy Spirit will bring about in us. In your Examination of Conscience, you can reflect on the gift of grace in Jesus Christ that you have received as His disciple, along with reviewing your failures to respond generously as a disciple! When you are ready to ask forgiveness, you can pray the Act of Contrition. We encourage you to journal on the following questions: *What is God saying to you? For what are you grateful? For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?*



Examination of CONSCIENCE

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My Notes

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WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 4 SON OF GOD & SON OF MAN
WEEK 1, DAY 3

SIMEON'S PROPHECY

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

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Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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“When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,” and to offer the sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,” in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord... Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” Luke2: 22-24: 34-35

The Presentation of Jesus took place on the 40th day after His birth. According to Mosaic law, the firstborn male child belonged to God as a significant expression of God's covenant relationship with His people. By offering “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,” an offering made by a poor couple, the parents were telling God that He was the Possessor of their child, and they would be his godly caretakers. On this day, the mother was ritually purified. Joseph and Mary kept this law, even though Mary did not need ritual purification as she remained a virgin during and after the birth of Jesus. Significantly, the Presentation fulfills the messianic prophecy of Malachi 3:1: “Now I am sending my messenger – he will prepare the way before me; and the lord whom you seek will come suddenly to his temple; the messenger of the covenant whom you desire – see, he is coming! Says the LORD of hosts.”



Face to Face WITH GOD

Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple and knew that He would be offered as a true sacrifice as described in Hebrews 10: 5-7: "When he (Christ) came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; holocausts and sin offerings you took no delight in. Then I said, 'As is written of me in the scroll, behold, I come to do your will, O God,'" The Presentation is therefore linked intimately with the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. And as Simeon will prophesy, Mary is being asked to participate in her son's inexorable march toward His sacrifice on the cross!

Simeon was led by the Holy Spirit into the Temple. Taking the child Jesus into his arms, he proclaimed his canticle of praise and prophecy. He has seen the Savior and is ready to die in peace: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace." He then highlights some significant aspects about the child. Jesus will be the Savior of His people Israel, and of the whole world: "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel," thereby reiterating the prophecy made in the Second Suffering Servant Oracle of Isaiah 49:6. Another aspect of Jesus' mission is that "this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel." Throughout His ministry, many Scribes and Pharisees were opposed to Jesus, and many came to believe in Him. Jesus will be a sign of contradiction, and Mary will share in that contradiction: "and you yourself a sword will pierce." Mary presented Jesus to God only after listening to Simeon's prophecy. The Lamb of God would redeem humankind from their sins, and Mary would participate intimately in His emptying.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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WEEK 1, DAY 4

THE MAGI'S WITNESS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

MORNING *Prayer*



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"They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then ... they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way."
Matthew 2: 11-12

The Magi were wise men from the East, most likely the kingdom of Persia. The Book of Daniel tells us that Magi were among the highest-ranking officials in Babylon. Around 537 BC, Persia had conquered Babylon where Daniel had been taken into exile as a youth. Daniel was made "*ruler of the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon*" (Daniel 2: 48), because the LORD revealed to him the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. None of the other wise men were able to provide the right answer. Naturally, Daniel had great influence among the wise men of Babylon. An added reason was that as a *magos* (wise man) himself, he had pleaded successfully for the lives of the wise men who had failed to interpret the king's dream correctly and risked death (Daniel 2: 24). It seems safe to assume that the wise men learned much from Daniel about the one, true God of Israel and the coming of the Son of Man: "*I saw coming with the clouds of heaven one like a son of man. When he reached the Ancient of Days and was presented before him, He received dominion, splendor, and kingship; all nations, peoples and tongues will serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed*" (Daniel 7: 13-14).



Face to Face WITH GOD

Centuries later, our Magi were seeking the 'Son of Man' whose kingship would not pass away. Jesus addressed Himself as the Son of Man in fulfilling Daniel's prophecy. Tradition has it that there were three wise men and they visited Jesus, the 'child,' rather than Jesus, the 'baby.' They probably arrived after Simeon's prophecy and surely before the Flight into Egypt. They seemed to have taken seriously Daniel 9: 24-27, which includes a prophecy and timeline for the birth of the Messiah, and traveled about 900 miles to visit Jesus, the Messiah and Lord. Probably they were disappointed that no one in Jerusalem could answer their question about the location of the newborn king of the Jews!

We are told that a star guided them to Jesus. 'Star' fits into the category of the 'burning bush,' 'a pillar of fire by night,' 'a consuming fire on top of the mountain,' 'the transfigured glow or glory of the Lord on Jesus' face,' etc. Revelation 22:16 refers to Jesus as '*the bright morning star.*' It seems clear that the eyes of the Magi were opened to see God's great light, first and foremost in their hearts, and then in Bethlehem. The Magi were true seekers who responded to the voice of the Holy Spirit beckoning them to go to any lengths to answer this divine summons. They prostrated themselves before Jesus and did Him homage. And as befits royalty and God, both aspects applying to Jesus, they offer Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Our covenant union with God and one another will always be motivated by the presence of God, sometimes hidden in what appears to be the mundane and ordinary.

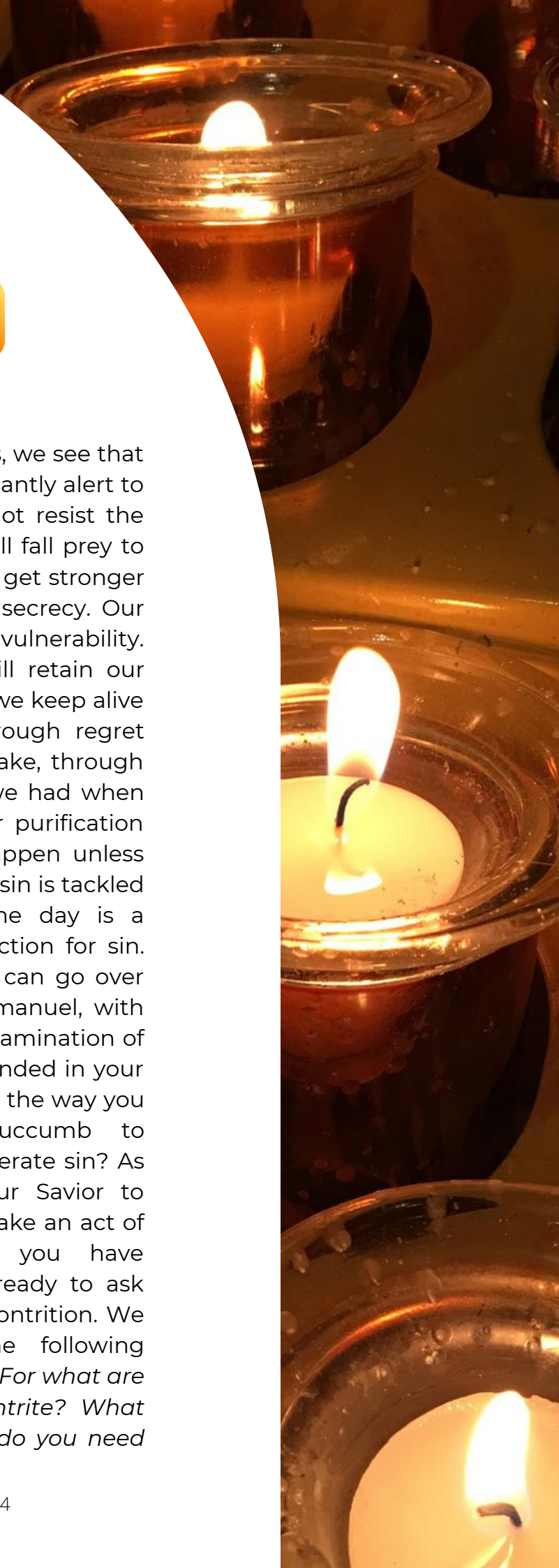
PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I thank you for your gracious companionship. I praise you for being my Creator, Savior, and Lord. May I take your blessings to my day, and may your Presence envelop and permeate all my thoughts and actions, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all!

NIGHT ^{listen} Prayer

In reflecting on temptation in our lives, we see that the best way to avoid sin is to be constantly alert to avoid every deliberate sin. If we do not resist the small temptations immediately, we will fall prey to serious temptations. Temptations only get stronger when they are permitted to grow in secrecy. Our Particular habits of sin can be our vulnerability. Even after we have repented, we still retain our affection for these sinful habits which we keep alive in our memory and imagination through regret about all the sacrifices we have to make, through nostalgia about the good old times we had when we were gambling, drinking, etc. Our purification from deliberate venial sin will not happen unless mortal sin is rejected, and affection for sin is tackled assertively. The nightly review of the day is a significant practice to tackle our affection for sin. With thanksgiving in your heart, you can go over your day and see how God was Emmanuel, with you and in you. You can then do an examination of your conscience to see how you responded in your covenant union with Him, especially in the way you handled temptation. Did you succumb to temptation and did you commit deliberate sin? As disciples of Jesus, we owe it to our Savior to honestly acknowledge our sins and make an act of repentance and contrition. After you have examined your conscience and are ready to ask forgiveness, you can pray the Act of Contrition. We encourage you to journal on the following questions: *What is God saying to you? For what are you grateful? For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?*





Examination of CONSCIENCE

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O my God, I thank you for all the graces and blessings which I have received from you this day. Express to God your gratitude as you recall the blessings and graces that were present today: For what are you grateful?

Examination of Conscience

O my God, give me light to see what sins I have committed, and grant me the grace to be sorry for them: For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow? Recall your sins of the day and repent in sincere sorrow for the sins you have committed, by reciting the Act of Contrition.

The Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.





Encouragement for the Journey

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My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?



WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 4: WHO DO THEY SAY JESUS IS?
WEEK 1, DAY 5

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY TO JESUS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Charity

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the immaculate heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all the apostles of prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month. Amen.



Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, ‘A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.’ I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel.” John testified further, saying, “I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the holy Spirit.’ Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God.” -John 1: 29-34

In the Prologue to his gospel account, John clearly identifies Jesus as the Word who was with God and was God (John 1:1). And in verse 14, the Evangelist states that this same Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us, and the Apostles saw His glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. From then on, the Beloved Disciple marshals witness after witness to testify that Jesus is the Son of God, full of grace and truth. Equally important, he cites example after example of people who are not willing to accept Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God.



Face to Face WITH GOD

John the Baptist is the first and possibly the most prominent of John's witnesses. John the Baptist is the first person to refer to Jesus as "*the Lamb of God.*" When he first saw Jesus during his baptism ministry at the Jordan, he cried out "*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*" John is recognizing Jesus as the great Suffering Servant prophesied by Isaiah. God one day would send someone to rescue Israel from sin, and he would do it by suffering "*like a lamb that is led to the slaughter*" (Isaiah 53:7). Moreover, this servant of the Lord would bear the people's iniquities and "*make himself an offering for sin*" (Isaiah 53:10). And his self-offering would have redemptive power. Through his sacrifice, many would be made righteous (Isaiah 53:11). John the Baptist, therefore, identifies Jesus as the long-awaited Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 – the Lamb who would offer His life as a sacrifice for sin, a crucified Savior. And in Matthew 17: 22-23, Jesus referred to Himself as the Suffering Servant: "*The Son of Man is to be handed over to men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.*"

The Baptist received a special revelation about Jesus: "*On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the holy Spirit.*" John saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus at His baptism and was told that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit, a sharp contrast to his baptism of repentance. In the light of this revelation from the Holy Spirit, John knows beyond any doubt that Jesus is the Son of God: "*Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God!*"

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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Examination of CONSCIENCE

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My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?



WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 4: WHO DO THEY SAY JESUS IS?
WEEK 1, DAY 6

THE WITNESS OF MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

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Morning Offering

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Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, and overshadow me with your gentle wisdom and power as I endeavor to sit at the feet of Jesus during this period of prayer. Purify my mind and heart as I seek to make the teachings of Jesus my priority in life, thinking, speaking, and doing as He desires. You are the Keeper of my soul, leading me into God's heart. May I be docile and submissive to your wisdom and guidance, and may my life be a pleasing offering in your sight, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

"The mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." [And] Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. ... the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." ... Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him." John 2: 3-11

Two relationships feature very prominently in Jesus, His relationship to His Father in the Holy Spirit, their bond of love and oneness, and His relationship to us through His mother, Mary, who conceived Him through the Holy Spirit. Jesus was formed as a human being in His relationship to Mary. Their relational interactions reflected the perfect covenant union between God and humans being brought about by Jesus. In every instance, they were obedient to God's Plan of salvation. In their mother-son interactions recorded in the gospels, we receive an intimate glimpse into the unfolding of God's plan of salvation.

In recording his seven miracles as signs, John understands them as fulfilling God's earnest desire to permanently establish covenant union between Him and us and demonstrate how such covenant union is lived daily!



Face to Face WITH GOD

The Wedding Feast at Cana is the first sign. In the 'Book of Signs,' Chapters Two through Eleven, each sign points to John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." They prepare us for the 'Book of Glory,' Chapters 12 through 21, which deals with Jesus' 'Hour,' or the mystery of His passion-death-resurrection. The Wedding Feast at Cana reveals Jesus' glory or His manifestation as God.

Jesus tells His mother that His hour has not yet come. It is not yet 'Kairos,' an ancient Greek word meaning the opportune or supreme moment, the climax. It will come when He is glorified on the cross. However, His mother knows intuitively that it is time for Jesus to move toward His 'Kairos.' In acceding to His mother's wish, Jesus embarks upon the fulfillment of His hour, and the first sign tells us what will happen as a result. The transition from the Mosaic Covenant to the New and Everlasting Covenant will occur. The six water jars, symbolizing the Mosaic Covenant, brought about a ritual cleansing that did not really purify the adherent's soul. In accomplishing His hour, Jesus will bring about an inner cleansing and transformation, as "He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3: 11). In changing water into wine, Jesus points to the Eucharist, His un-bloody sacrifice on the cross. In this sign, Jesus was also indicating the replacement of the Old Grace (The Mosaic Covenant) with the New Grace (The New and Eternal Covenant). In Holy Communion, we become one with the Bridegroom-Lamb described in Revelation 19, participating in His 'Hour,' the glorious victory and mystery of His passion-death-resurrection.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all! Triune God, be my all!

NIGHT *listen* Prayer



The nightly review of the day is a significant practice in a disciple's formation. The context for our nightly review is our covenant relationship with God. Through baptism we were buried into the death of Christ, and rose to new life, God's own life, through the resurrection of Jesus. We belong to God and the Blessed Trinity has become ours through Jesus. Every single day, God is overwhelming us with grace upon grace, suffusing our lives with His tender mercies and unconditional love. Every single day of our lives, then, is an opportunity to praise, adore, and thank God for His indescribable goodness and loving kindness. We engage in praise and thanksgiving for the blessings and protection we received from God. Today, with thanksgiving in your heart, you can go over your day, from morning to evening, and see how God was Emmanuel, with you and in you. You can then do an examination of your conscience to see how you responded in your covenant union with Him. Did you succumb to temptation and did you commit deliberate sin? As disciples of Jesus, we owe it to our Savior to humbly acknowledge our sins and make an act of repentance and contrition. After you have examined your conscience and are ready to ask forgiveness, you can pray the Act of Contrition. We encourage you to journal on the following questions: What is God saying to you? For what are you grateful? For what are you contrite? What spiritual discipline, including fasting, do you need to focus on tomorrow?





Examination of CONSCIENCE

Prayer of Thanksgiving

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My Notes

Date :

What is God saying to you?

For what are you grateful?

For what are you contrite?



WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

REVELATION 4: WHO DO THEY SAY JESUS IS?
WEEK 1, DAY 7

FIRM COMMITMENT TO THE
PERSON & TEACHINGS OF
JESUS

MICHAEL FONSECA, D. MIN

MORNING *Prayer*



Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches because in revealing them you can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

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Face to Face WITH GOD



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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You cannot separate the Person of Jesus from His teachings. The teachings of Jesus are autobiographical statements. Jesus is God's Incarnate Word. His teachings reveal Him and the other Persons of the Holy Trinity. The Bible is God's own voice, speaking to us personally, through the authorship of human beings. Scripture being the Word of God, Jesus is speaking directly to us in the gospels. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Every one of His teachings speaks to us of Covenant Life, God's covenant Life in the Blessed Trinity, into which we have been invited through His death on the cross. Covenant union with God always presupposes obedience and total surrender as our response to God's wholehearted gift of Himself to us through Jesus. Therefore, we cannot be cafeteria Catholics, picking and choosing what pleases our fancy. If we did so, we would pick Jesus apart. We would choose ourselves over Him. We cannot have Jesus piecemeal. We have got to receive Him whole, as He reveals Himself, and give ourselves wholeheartedly to Him, as He gave Himself to us in a total self-offering.

The reason for picking and choosing among the teachings of Jesus is because sin lurks in our hearts. One reason could be because we are overwhelmed by the high standards of Jesus: "So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5: 48). Jesus, however, knows our weak and pusillanimous faith, and assures us that He will make possible for us what is impossible by human standards.



Face to Face WITH GOD

At Jesus' request, the Father gave us the Holy Spirit to be our Advocate, to teach us everything and remind us of all that Jesus taught us (John 14: 26). Another reason could be that we are also entrenched in our sin and rebellion against God. We have made ourselves the center of our universe, thus opting out of covenant union with God. No covenant union with God or humans is possible without an honest effort to serve the other and forget self.

The thousands of Christian ecclesial communities and denominations speak to the split we have created between Jesus and His teachings. Such a split is not of God. Human sin is the sole cause: "So that they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me" (John 17: 21). A central teaching of Jesus is that He appointed Peter and the Apostles, and their successors, to speak and act in His name, to forgive and retain sin in His name. The Catholic Church can trace an unbroken link to the Apostles, and therefore to Jesus. While the Catholic Church will have sinners in her ranks, and will cause scandal and strife because of sin, the fact remains that she has survived 20 centuries, and will continue to do so till the end of time, like no other human institution, because "the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16: 18). So, become familiar with the Bible, God's spoken Word in Jesus, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and your discipleship will become ardent and committed.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY TRINITY

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