

ARCHDIOCESAN-WIDE RETREAT

CHRIST THE KING - CHRISTMAS



Participant Guide

Each week, these guides are meant to be used by individuals and groups to launch from the Sunday homilies during the archdiocesan retreat into prayerful reflection and dialogue. Take this guide to a holy hour, a dinner conversation with your children, or your regular small group as food for reflection and conversation, all based on the previous Sunday's homily.

WEEK 5: RESPONSE

This is the final week of our journey through the *kerygma* together. In all honesty, this is the most important week of the entire experience. Why? Everything so far has been leading up to this moment! The purpose of this four-week journey was not simply to share information with you, **but to share an invitation with you**. The heart of the kerygmatic proclamation is God's invitation to enter into an intimate, fulfilling, eternity-long relationship with him. And this invitation is not simply given to "us"... but to *you!* personally, individually, specifically.

As you'll see when reading the suggested Scripture passages below, God has been revealing his desire for this intimate relationship with us from the beginning. He even goes so far as to compare the relationship he wants with you to the relationship between a husband and a wife. That's the closest human analogy God could use to describe the kind of relationship he wants with you. A relationship that involves the total gift of self between you and him. He wants to share with you a love that is total, free, fruitful, and faithful. In the kerygma, God has "proposed" his love to you, will you respond?

How should you respond to this incredible revelation and invitation? Say "Yes" to his proposal! Tell him that you believe in his love for you. Tell him that you choose to enter this relationship (or renew this relationship) with him today. Make a decision with your whole person (intellect and will) to go "all in" with him. Hold nothing back.

Read below for some suggested scripture passages, discussion questions, and actions to root your "yes" in "fertile soil" and begin this deeper relationship with the Lord.



Suggested Scripture Passages and other reading:

- » Isaiah 54:9
- » Hosea 2:21-22
- » Matthew 22:1-14
- » Revelation 3:20
- » CCC 1430-1432
- » Pope Francis “*Joy of the Gospel*”, paragraph 3.

Questions for Discussion

- » How has this journey through the *kerygma* changed the way you understand the heart of our Catholic faith? How has it changed the way you understood God’s plan for your life?
- » Which of the four parts of the *kerygma* was most impactful for you? Why?
- » What thoughts, feelings, or desires arise in you when you consider that God is inviting you into a “marriage like” relationship with him?
- » Do you want to be in this kind of relationship with God?
 - » (if your answer is “yes”, we invite you to pray the suggested prayer below out loud while your small group listens and prays for you.)
- » What “next steps” do you feel God is inviting you to take in your faith?

Pray

God, I believe that out of your infinite love, you created me. I'm sorry for all the times that I have believed the enemy's lies that you are not a good Father and that you don't love me. Please forgive me for all of my sins. Thank you for sending Jesus to rescue me from sin, death, hell and Satan.

I choose this day, to place your Son, Jesus, at the center of my life.

And so, today, here and now, I surrender to you, Jesus, and desire your lordship over every area of my life. I ask you now to flood my soul with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Help me know my true identity as a beloved son/daughter. Help me to know that I matter and that I am worth dying for. Recreate me to be the person you destined me to be. Please use me as an instrument in your merciful hands to rescue others and to help recreate this world that you love so much.

Amen.

**This prayer is copied with permission from “Rescued: The Unexpected and Extraordinary New of the Gospel” by Father John Riccardo, p. 142.*



Suggestions for “rooting” your commitment to Jesus:

- » Make a good confession.
- » Tell a friend or family member about your decision.
- » Journal about the experience of hearing the *kerygma* and making this decision.
- » Find a program or small group that will teach you how to pray and help you grow in the habit of daily relational prayer. *(If your small group is looking for a resource, we recommend “Oremus” by Ascencion Press.)*

