

Date 14/2/16
Style Celebration
Social Context Getting Going

Christian Season Lent

Recommended Text
Deuteronomy 26: 1-11, Luke 4: 1-13

Notes

Through Lent, I would like Christian Lenten disciplines to be seen as informing and encouraging everyday disciplines. Society has been back on the job for two weeks now and could be helped to get going by reflecting on what and why they are doing what they do.

1. The Deut. text invites us to make the first 'fruits' or results of our work as gifts to God - the 'first fruits' of our post-holiday re-start and the beginning of our plans for 2016.
2. The Luke text expands this sense of commitment and reminds us that the end does not justify the means. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus' rejoinder to the Devil's options is the re-dedication of himself and his work to God.

Date 21/2/16
Style Traditional
Social Context Getting Going

Christian Season Lent

Recommended Text
Luke 13: 31-35

Notes

Continuing allowing Christian Lenten disciplines to inform and encourage everyday disciplines. Who are the 'enemies and threats' to what we have set out to achieve? What does it take to 'carry on regardless?'

Date 28/2/16
Style Informal
Social Context Getting Going

Christian Season Lent

Recommended Text
Isaiah 55: 1-9, Luke 13: 6-9

Notes
Continuing allowing Christian Lenten disciplines to inform and encourage everyday disciplines. How do you decide whether to persevere with something, or stop wasting your time with it?

Date 6/3/16
Style Traditional
Social Context Getting Going

Christian Season Lent

Recommended Text
Luke 15: 11b-32

Notes
Continuing allowing Christian Lenten disciplines to inform and encourage everyday disciplines. What do we do if we stuff things up?

Date 13/3/16
Style Traditional
Social Context Getting Going

Christian Season Lent

Recommended Text
Isaiah 43: 16-24, Phil. 3: 4b-14.

Notes
Continuing allowing Christian Lenten disciplines to inform and encourage everyday disciplines. What past 'high points' of our lives do we need to let go in order to attain a new, hoped for, experience.

Style Celebration
Social Context Getting Going

Christian Season Lent - Palm Sunday

Recommended Text
Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29. Phil. 2: 5-11, Luke 19: 28-40.

Notes
Concluding allowing Christian Lenten disciplines to inform and encourage everyday disciplines. What would it look like when we achieve what we set out to achieve?

Date 20/3/16

Date 24/3/16

Style

Social Context Crisis

Christian Season Holy Week, Maundy Thursday

Recommended Text

John 13: 1-17, 31b-35

Notes

Holy week and Easter radically challenge the sense of 'getting going' of our social context. Unlike the northern hemisphere and the biblical context) there is no germinating and sprouting seed and springtime metaphor to help people anticipate a positive outcome. During Holy Week, everything that Jesus 'overcame' on each stage of our Lenten journey overwhelms him. The context for Holy Week is crisis. Where is God? Why didn't God stop it happening? These same questions arise when people face situations like intractable illness, financial loss or relationship collapse in themselves or people they love. The view of God as all powerful and omnipotent fails. Surprisingly, what strengthens and holds us is a God who suffers for us and with us.

Jesus' servant role at the Last Supper reinforces Palm Sunday's scripture of the un-kingly king and the self-emptying slave.

Date 25/3/16

Style

Social Context Crisis

Christian Season Holy Week, Good Friday

Recommended Text

Psalm 22, John 18:1 - 19: 42b

Notes

The context for Holy Week is crisis. Where is God? Why didn't God stop it happening? These same questions arise when people face situations like intractable illness, financial loss or relationship collapse in themselves or people they love. The view of God as all powerful and omnipotent fails. Surprisingly, what strengthens and holds us is a God who suffers for us and with us.

Psalm 22 as spoken by Jesus on the Cross, expresses our own sense of being deserted by God at our time of need. But the whole psalm is implied, if not spoken, and the sense of trust and presence in the latter verses is a measure of Jesus' faith through the experience of abandonment and a talisman for our own faith in a time of crisis.

Date 27/3/16
Style Informal
Social Context Living Confidently

Christian Season Easter

Recommended Text

Luke 24: 1-12

Notes

Easter or, more particularly, the end of the first school term, marks the end of the new year startup period and the beginning of a time of greater confidence in the course of one's life. Faith offers a deeper basis for that confidence, especially when crises have to be faced. Wavering confidence is restored by unexpectedly experiencing the real presence of Jesus as your companion and helper. The incredulity of this possibility is reflected in the Easter Day experiences.

Date 3/4/16
Style Traditional
Social Context Living Confidently

Christian Season Easter

Recommended Text

John 20: 19-31 (S of S reading - not annunciation.)

Notes

Easter or, more particularly, the end of the first school term, marks the end of the new year startup period and the beginning of a time of greater confidence in the course of one's life. Faith offers a deeper basis for that confidence, especially when crises have to be faced. Wavering confidence is restored by unexpectedly experiencing the real presence of Jesus as your companion and helper. The John text emphasizes the 'real' in the presence of Jesus vs wish dreams, suggestion or the paranormal. The extra blessing for those who live in the real presence of Jesus without the tangible evidence that Thomas demanded is a key point.

Date 10/4/16
Style Celebration
Social Context Living Confidently

Christian Season Easter

Recommended Text
Acts 9: 1-20

Notes

Faith helps to generate greater confidence in how we live- our wellbeing. Wavering confidence is restored by unexpectedly experiencing the real presence of Jesus as one's companion and helper.

The extended Acts reading is important. Ananias' healing role is as important as a revelation of Jesus being with us in life as the vision on the Damascus Road. The story also shows that Jesus is there for us even when we are not there for him.

Date 17/4/16
Style Traditional
Social Context Living Confidently

Christian Season Easter

Recommended Text
John 10: 22-30

Notes

This text reminds us that God-with-us, in Jesus gives confidence, especially in the face of bullying, jibes and put-downs, through a sense of belonging and special relationship.

Date 24/4/16
Style Informal
Social Context Living Confidently

Christian Season Easter

Recommended Text
John 13: 31-35

Notes

This text reminds us that God-with-us, through Jesus' love and our loving support of one another gives confidence, especially in the face of separation, loneliness and insecurity.

Date 1/5/16
Style Traditional
Social Context Living Confidently

Christian Season Easter

Recommended Text
John 14: 22-29

Notes

This text reminds us that life can be lived with greater confidence through a sense of being 'at home' with God and being surrounded with love, guided by the Holy Spirit and being 'at peace,' in spite of the indifference and disturbing influences of the world.

Date 8/5/16
Style Celebration
Social Context Living Confidently

Christian Season Easter

Recommended Text

John 17: 20-26

Notes

We live confidently when what we do is done, and received, in a spirit of God-given unity.

