

# in Touch with the Word

Lectionary-Based  
Prayer Reflections

*Cycle B for  
Ordinary Time*

**Lisa-Marie Calderone-Stewart**



saint mary's press

Thank you, Mom, for the weekly fun and encouragement.  
No matter what happens in my life, my first thought is always,  
“I can’t wait to tell Mom about this!”  
Here’s one more book to put in the trunk of your car!

Thank you, Ralph, for the daily fun and encouragement.  
You help me dream my dreams, yet keep my feet on the ground.  
You inspire my creative juices!

Thank you, Bishop Ken Untener.  
You have had a major influence  
on my spiritual formation, my ministry, and my life.

The publishing team for this book included Robert P. Stamschror,  
development editor; Laurie A. Berg, copy editor; Lynn Dahdal,  
production editor; Hollace Storkel, typesetter; Stephan Nagel and  
Kent Linder, cover designers; Maurine R. Twait, art director;  
manufactured by the production services department of Saint  
Mary’s Press.

The acknowledgments continue on page 146.

Copyright © 2005 by Saint Mary’s Press, Christian Brothers  
Publications, 702 Terrace Heights, Winona, MN 55987-1320,  
www.smp.org. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be  
reproduced by any means without the written permission of the  
publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

3806

ISBN-13: 978-0-88489-853-5

I dedicate this book to:

Fr. Robert P. Stamschror,

Recipient of the 1998

NFCYM

(National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry)

National Youth Ministry Award

In the category of Publisher/Author/Artist

You had faith in me as a writer

Long before I was an author.

Your critical eye and your challenge for excellence

Have made books out of my manuscripts.

I never call you "Father Bob,"

But in many ways

You have become a father figure for me.

You look at my accomplishments with pride

and affection,

Knowing that your hands

Are the ones that have taught and guided me

along the way.

You are a joy to work with

And a delight to be with.

Having you as my editor has been a blessing.

Having you as my friend has been an honor.

Thank you for enriching my life.

# Contents

Introduction . . . . . 9

## *Ordinary Time of the Year*

Trinity Sunday . . . . . 15  
Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ . . . . . 19  
Second Sunday . . . . . 23  
Third Sunday . . . . . 26  
Fourth Sunday . . . . . 30  
Fifth Sunday . . . . . 33  
Sixth Sunday . . . . . 36  
Seventh Sunday . . . . . 40  
Eighth Sunday . . . . . 43  
Ninth Sunday . . . . . 47  
Tenth Sunday . . . . . 51  
Eleventh Sunday . . . . . 54  
Twelfth Sunday . . . . . 58  
Thirteenth Sunday . . . . . 61  
Fourteenth Sunday . . . . . 65  
Fifteenth Sunday . . . . . 68  
Sixteenth Sunday . . . . . 71  
Seventeenth Sunday . . . . . 75  
Eighteenth Sunday . . . . . 79

Nineteenth Sunday . . . . .	83
Twentieth Sunday . . . . .	86
Twenty-First Sunday . . . . .	89
Twenty-Second Sunday . . . . .	93
Twenty-Third Sunday . . . . .	96
Twenty-Fourth Sunday . . . . .	100
Twenty-Fifth Sunday . . . . .	104
Twenty-Sixth Sunday . . . . .	108
Twenty-Seventh Sunday . . . . .	112
Twenty-Eighth Sunday . . . . .	116
Twenty-Ninth Sunday . . . . .	119
Thirtieth Sunday . . . . .	122
Thirty-First Sunday . . . . .	125
Thirty-Second Sunday . . . . .	129
Thirty-Third Sunday . . . . .	133
Thirty-Fourth Sunday (Christ the King) . . . . .	137
<b>Index by Theme . . . . .</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>Index by Focusing Object . . . . .</b>	<b>144</b>

# Introduction

Did you ever go to Mass on Sunday, listen to the Scripture readings, and then promptly forget what they were all about or how your life relates to their message? Does this sound familiar? Even though you may have listened to a homilist who connected the word with you and challenged you at that time, what about the week before the Sunday Scriptures or the week after? How can you anticipate and prepare for the word? How can you stay in touch with the word that was heard?

This book is a resource designed to do just that—to help you prepare for the Sunday Scripture readings and to help you stay in touch with the word.

## Using This Book

Using *In Touch with the Word* is a simple procedure. First, decide which Sunday's readings you are going to share. If it is Friday afternoon, you might want to reflect on the readings for the next Sunday so you can be more prepared for the upcoming liturgy. If it is Monday morning, you might want to remember the readings you heard on Sunday so you can stay in touch with that word the rest of the week. Next, turn to the page for the Sunday you have in mind. There you will find reflections, questions, and a prayer based on that Sunday's readings.

### **The Sunday Scripture Readings**

The Scripture readings for each Sunday are found in a book called a lectionary. The Sunday readings follow a three-year, A-B-C cycle that continues to repeat itself. The readings in the A cycle highlight the Gospel of Matthew. The readings in the B cycle highlight the Gospel of Mark. The readings in the C cycle highlight the Gospel of Luke. (If you are wondering about the Gospel of John, don't be concerned. His readings are woven throughout all three years

on special days that seem to need that “John” touch.)

The church calendar year consists of the seasons of Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter, plus Ordinary Time. This book covers Ordinary Time, B cycle only. (The Sundays of A and C cycle in Ordinary Time, and the Sundays of the Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter seasons will be found in other volumes of this series.) Most Sundays have three sets of readings, one for each cycle. But in this book you will only find the readings for the B cycle. The dates for each Sunday in the B cycle are given for the next several years.

You will note that the Scripture readings are not reprinted in this book. It would make the book too big and too expensive. You will need either a lectionary or a Bible to read one or more of the Scripture readings as part of the prayer reflection. However, a capsulated version of each Scripture reading is provided.

One (and possibly two) of the three Scripture readings listed with each Sunday has an open bullet (◦) next to it. This indicates which reading will be most focused on in the reflection and which one you might want to read as part of the reflection.

### **Theme**

A summary of a central theme of the readings is also offered. You may want to use it to set a context for the reflection questions that will initiate sharing of and reflection on the word.

### **Reflection Questions**

The reflection questions for each Sunday address audiences in three categories: adults, teenagers, and children. However, feel free to cross categories in the use of the questions whenever it is appropriate.

### **Focusing Object**

For each set of readings, you will find a suggested focusing object. Using a focusing object in these

prayer reflections is not mandatory, but it is helpful, especially with teenagers and children. It is a visual, hands-on reminder of the readings and their message. For example, anticipating or recalling the meaning of the passage about our relationship with Jesus being like a vine and its branches is much easier and more vivid if a plant with a stem and branches is present when reflecting on the reading of that passage.

The focusing object is handy for facilitating the prayer reflection and sharing. For example, after the Scripture reading is proclaimed, the facilitator asks one of the reflection questions for everyone to think about and share their thoughts. Then the facilitator picks up the focusing object and begins the sharing. When finished, the facilitator passes the object to the next person who is ready to share.

The focusing object can be passed around a circle, so everyone knows when their turn is coming, or it can be passed randomly as people become ready to share. A large group does better sitting in a circle and passing the object around in order. In a small group—one that fits around a table where everyone can reach the middle—anyone who is ready can pick up the object, share, and replace it for the next person who is ready to take a turn. Also, using the object makes it obvious when a person's turn has ended—no one has to guess. If someone just wants to offer a one-word response, or even remain silent, the focusing object is simply handed to the next person.

The focusing object is more than a reminder or a turn-designator. It is also an effective way to reduce the self-conscious feeling many people get when they are expected to share with a group of their peers. Persons handling an object and looking at it tend to relax and forget that a roomful of people are watching them. People who are relaxed and comfortable do a better job of sharing. This is true of adults, teenagers, and children!



After everyone has had a chance to share, the object comes back to the facilitator, who ends with the “Closing” or any other words she or he feels would be appropriate.

The focusing object can stay on a kitchen table or a classroom shelf all week, acting as a reminder of God’s word and the people’s response.

### **Closing**

A closing is provided for each prayer reflection. It consists of a poem or reading that ends the reflections with an inspirational touch. You will notice that the closings come from a variety of cultures and each culture adds a rich spiritual tradition to the prayer reflections.

### **Indexes**

Each Sunday’s prayer session is indexed by focusing object and by theme in the back of this book.

## **Settings**

### **Parish**

**Parish staffs, councils, and committees** usually want to start their meetings with some type of prayer. Prayer based on Sunday’s readings is a great way to help the group relate to the parish liturgy, connect with the message of the Sunday readings, and start the meeting off on a spiritual plane.

**Homilists** can benefit from this resource by looking at the message through the eyes of adults, teenagers, and children. This can provide a springboard for the type of insights needed to be pastoral, effective, and challenging to the assembly of mixed ages that typically gathers each Sunday. (Actually sharing the reflection questions with adults, teenagers, and children and listening to their responses each week provides even better feedback for a homilist!)

**Liturgy planning groups** will find this book helpful. Members with different degrees of liturgical experience and understanding can read the theme summaries, share the questions, and get a feel for

the flow of the Scriptures. The suggested focusing object can also remind the group to investigate the possibilities of symbolism in the physical environment of the worship space.

**Prayer groups and small Christian communities** will find *In Touch with the Word* very helpful, especially if the groups include families with children of different ages.

**Youth Groupings**

**Youth ministers** will find the prayer reflections in this book a simple way to prepare a youth group or team for the readings they will hear the following Sunday or feast day and to help them stay in touch with the readings they heard the previous Sunday. At the same time, the reflections call attention to the major seasons of the church year. The prayer process in the reflections works equally well with junior high teens or high school teens.

**Parish religious education teachers and catechists** meeting with a class once a week can use this resource to relate to the Sunday and feast day readings. Sending a note home each week encouraging parents to discuss the readings with their children at the dinner table or at bedtime, perhaps with a similar focusing object, is a good way to weave a family connection into a parish religious education program.

**Religion teachers in Catholic schools** looking for a way to connect students with their parish community will value this resource. Anticipating or recalling the Scriptures read at the parish liturgies will help students stay in touch with their parish community.

**Families**

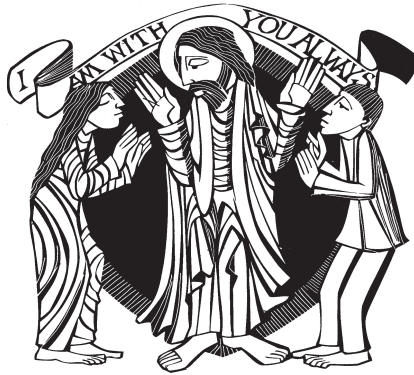
**Busy families** will find that using *In Touch with the Word* at home is a great way to make liturgical worship more relevant for their teenagers or younger children. Using the prayer reflections does not take long and is easy to do. Best of all, it helps the family as a whole connect with what is said at Mass and remember it throughout the week. Parents may find their teenagers more likely to share prayer if they

are doing it “for the sake of their younger brothers and sisters” than if they think they are doing it for themselves!

**Parishes with family-based programming** can use this resource in several ways. If the parish supplies families with resources to be used at home, every family can receive a copy of *In Touch with the Word* to use on their own. If families gather regularly at the parish for a scheduled activity, the sharing process can be incorporated with the program. If family groups meet in cells or units, they can be provided with copies of this book and suggestions for how it can be used in the context of their meeting.

Whether you work with adults, teenagers, or children in a parish, school, or home setting, you will find that being in touch with the word is easy with *In Touch with the Word*.

# Trinity Sunday



## Baptism

### Scripture

- *Deuteronomy 4:32–34,39–40*. Moses questions the people, “Has anything as great as this ever happened before?” in order to help them see the awesome greatness of their God.
- *Romans 8:14–17*. We are children of God: created by our *Abba*, heirs with Christ, and led by the Spirit. We have been chosen because of great love.
  - *Matthew 28:16–20*. From a great mountaintop, Jesus commissions the disciples to go forth and baptize in the name of God as Trinity.

### Theme

Great things happen on mountaintops, and all three readings revolve around the greatness of God and God’s love. Moses calls the Israelites to consider the great things done by God, and Paul challenges the Romans to consider the greatness of our Christian heritage. Finally, the conclusion of Matthew’s Gospel has Jesus on top of a mountain, sending forth the eleven chosen ones to do great things—to baptize and to teach, and to know that he will be with them until the end of the world.

### Focusing Object

A shell (as used to pour water in baptism)

## Reflections

### For Adults

The eleven Apostles Jesus chose (minus Judas) are thrust into greatness at the moment of this commissioning. They are sent forth to baptize in the name of God as Trinity, and to teach and carry out the mission of faith Jesus showed them with his life. They are hardly great individuals. They didn't yet exhibit great courage, great understanding, or even great faith. But Jesus believes in them, and that's all that matters.

- What do you think it must have been like for the eleven Apostles at that moment?
- When have you ever felt thrust into a position where you felt inadequate to do what you had to do? Who was depending on you? Where or how did you find the courage and ability to do what had to be done?

When we are baptized, we are reborn into greatness. Most of us are infants and have no idea of the significance of the moment. Most of us cry and fuss and just want to be held and comforted. Some who are adults at baptism later report that they still didn't fully comprehend the grace of the sacrament at the time; it's an awareness that we slowly grow into as our faith matures.

- What's your knowledge of your own baptism? How do you view that moment?
- When was the most recent baptism you have witnessed? How did you feel witnessing that event?
- Are you a godmother or a godfather? If so, how do you view your role as a mentor in faith for your godchild?
- What does it mean to be baptized in the name of the Father, *Abba*, our Creator, our Mother, our Source of Being?
- What does it mean to be baptized in the name of the Son, the Christ, our Savior, our Redeemer, our Teacher, our Brother?
- What does it mean to be baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, the One who makes

**For Teenagers**

all things holy, the Breath and Wind of change and growth?

The twelve Apostles are not great people. At the time Jesus commissions them, only eleven remain, because one has committed suicide after betraying Jesus. Peter denies Jesus, Thomas doubts that he has risen, and none of them really understand what Jesus was all about. But they became great because Jesus sent them forth to do great things. They were given a responsibility, and they lived up to it.

- When have you been given a big job to do? When did someone believe in you? When did you live up to a responsibility, even though you were not necessarily confident in your abilities?
- How is it that ordinary people can end up doing great things?

When we are baptized, it is done in the name of God as Trinity. We are baptized in the name of a God that has relationship and love as the inner core: “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

- “*Father . . .*” Think of your father, your mother, your grandparents. Think of life, think of being created. Think of the times you have been creative and you have formed something out of an idea. This is what our *Abba* is about. What kind of God is this? Why are we baptized in the name of this God? What does it mean?
- “. . . *Son . . .*” Think of yourself as a son or a daughter. Think of yourself as a brother or a sister. Think of yourself as a teacher or a student of another. Think of yourself as a friend. This is what Jesus is about. What kind of God is this? Why are we baptized in the name of this God? What does it mean?
- “. . . *Holy Spirit.*” Think of holiness. Think of power. Think of energy. Think of goodness. Think of the positive force of doing the right thing just because it’s the right thing to do. Think of the joy that comes to you when you make the right decision. Think of the harmony of all people

joining together to be a support to one another. Think of love. This is what the Holy Spirit is all about. What kind of God is this? Why are we baptized in the name of this God? What does it mean?

### For Children

When we bless ourselves, we make the sign of the cross and say, “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.” We call that the Trinity. The Trinity is one God that is three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

- God the Father is sometimes called *Abba*. *Abba* is like our father, our mother, or our grandparents. We are here because our family loves us and takes care of us. How does your family take care of you? How does *Abba* take care of you?
- God the Son is Jesus. Jesus is like our brother, our teacher, or our best friend. Do you have any brothers or sisters? What are their names? What is the name of your teacher? What does your teacher teach you about? Who is one of your best friends? What does he or she like to do? What do you know about Jesus?
- God the Holy Spirit is the part of God that lives inside of us. Every time you take care of someone or help someone or do something good, you are working with God to make the world better. When have you done something special for someone?

In the Gospel story, Jesus tells his Apostles to go out and baptize people.

- Have you ever seen someone get baptized? If so, what happens?

### Closing

Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. —William Shakespeare

*(Go for the Gold)*

## Acknowledgments (continued)

The excerpts on pages 18, 74, 107, 111, 121, 127–128, 132, and 139–140 are from *Go for the Gold: Thoughts on Achieving Your Personal Best* (Kansas City, MO: Andrews and McMeel, Ariel Books, 1995), pages 136, 287, 234, 368, 276, 284, 18, and 281, respectively. Copyright © 1995 by Armand Eisen.

The excerpts on pages 22, 57, and 64 are from *Native Wisdom for White Minds: Daily Reflections Inspired by the Native Peoples of the World*, by Anne Wilson Schaefer, PhD (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), n.p. Copyright © 1995 by Anne Wilson Schaefer.

The excerpts on pages 25, 29, 53, and 82 are from *Action 2000: Praying Scripture in a Contemporary Way: C Cycle*, by Mark Link, SJ (Allen, TX: Tabor Publishing, 1992), pages 137, 134, 167, and 154, respectively. Copyright © 1992 by Mark Link.

The excerpts on pages 32 and 35 are from *Mission 2000: Praying Scripture in a Contemporary Way: B Cycle*, by Mark Link, SJ (Allen, TX: Tabor Publishing, 1993), pages 257 and 154. Copyright © 1993 by Mark Link.

The excerpts on pages 39, 46, 50, 78, 88, 92, and 99 are from *Acts of Faith: Meditations for People of Color*, by Iyanla Vanzant (New York: Simon and Schuster, Fireside Book, 1993), n.p. Copyright © 1993 by Iyanla Vanzant.

The excerpts on pages 42, 67, and 124 are from *Vision 2000: Praying Scripture in a Contemporary Way: A Cycle*, by Mark Link, SJ (Allen, TX: Tabor Publishing, 1992), pages 213, 126, and 157, respectively. Copyright © 1992 by Mark Link.

The excerpts on pages 60 and 95 are from *Success Every Day*, by Weight Watchers (New York: Macmillan General Reference, 1996), n.p. Copyright © 1996 by Weight Watchers International.

The excerpt on page 70 is from *Rhymes for the Irreverent*, by E. Y. Harburg (New York: Grossman Publishing, 1965), page 1. Copyright © 1965 by E. Y. Harburg.

The excerpt on page 85 is from *Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed., by John Bartlett, edited by Emily Morison Beck (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), page 531. Copyright © 1968 by Little, Brown and Company.



The excerpts on pages 103, 114–115, and 135–136 are from *Families Creating a Circle of Peace: A Guide for Living the Family Pledge of Nonviolence*, compiled by Jim McGinnis, Ken and Gretchen Lovingood, and Jim Vogt (n.p.: Families Against Violence Advocacy Network, 1996), pages 13, 4, and 18, respectively. Copyright © 1996 by the Institute for Peace and Justice.

The excerpt on page 118 is from *Random Acts of Kindness*, by the editors of Conari Press (Berkeley, CA: Conari Press, 1993), page 130. Copyright © 1993 by Conari Press.

The art on page 19 is from *Clip Art for Year A*, by Steve Erspamer (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1992). Copyright © 1992 by the Archdiocese of Chicago. Used by permission of Liturgy Training Publications, 1800 North Hermitage Avenue, Chicago, IL 60622-1101. All rights reserved.

All other art in this book is from *Clip Art for Year B*, by Steve Erspamer (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1993). Copyright © 1993 by the Archdiocese of Chicago. Used by permission of Liturgy Training Publications, 1800 North Hermitage Avenue, Chicago, IL 60622-1101. All rights reserved.