



## LENT DISCUSSION PACK

The enclosed Lent pack derives from a conversation held between Rev Robert Hill, Diocesan Social Responsibility Advisor, and Alan Lord, Chief Executive **Family Care**.

The pack is a collaborative approach to assist parishes to reflect on social issues through the Lent period.

The seven themes, one for each week, are designed and offered to stimulate thought and promote reflection for individuals and groups in parishes during this meditative period in our Christian year.

Each discussion carries a theme and Bible reference(s). There are a number of questions to prompt discussion and aid enquiry. For the erudite amongst us there are some thoughtful quotes.

You will notice that a further anonymous quote by a **Family Care** worker or person receiving a **Family Care** service has been included. We anticipate these extracts will create a sense of present day reality in your discussion. Some may be unpalatable and may feel uncomfortable; we hope, however, that introducing some everyday experiences expressed by sections of our society will assist your exploration of the theology of the Lent period.

We hope you find the pack worthwhile and challenging please let us know, we would welcome response.

If you would like to know more about Social Responsibility in the Diocese and the work of **Family Care**, please visit the following websites:



[www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/social/socialjustice.htm](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/social/socialjustice.htm)

Rev R Hill, SRA



[www.familycare.co.uk](http://www.familycare.co.uk)

Alan Lord, Chief Executive **Family Care**



**Theme:** Triumphal Entry

**References:** Matt 21: 1-11  
Mark 11: 1-11  
Luke: 19: 28-40  
John: 12: 12-14

**Reading:** 'It is a sign of the times that a celebrity is one of the most visible persons attacking global poverty. Where are our political and religious leaders? Why have they not already headed a more successful effort of their own? The answer is simply that even if we are not, in Neil Postman's words, "amusing ourselves to death", our society is shaped more by entertainment than by politics and is more enamoured with celebrities.'  
Douglas A Hicks

**Prompts for discussion:**

What is adoration and how can the family use it?

How does a celebrity culture prevent the exploration of a deeper spiritual life?

Jesus did not cling to that celebrity of the triumphal entry because he knew his true identity, mission and meaning. Do we know our own?

**Everyday Comment:**

'I just want someone to recognise me.'  
Out of work parent



**Theme:** Mothering Sunday

**References:** Galatians 4:26

**Reading:** *'The moment a child is born, the mother is born. She never existed before. The woman existed but the mother never. A mother is something absolutely new.'*  
Rajneesh

**Prompts for discussion:**

Mothering Sunday, the fourth in Lent, became part of the Liturgical calendar as Laetare Sunday to honour the Virgin Mary and the mother of the Church and Mother Church.

In a time of manic change, blurring of boundaries, traditional givens being challenged, what is the message Mother Church has for God's creation and Kingdom?

Mary unconditionally shared the love of her son with the world, do we share that love with each other and the world?

To whom do we turn for nurture, love and protection?

**Everyday Comment:**

*'My mum let me down; she knew what he was doing.'*  
Abused daughter



**Theme:** Appearances - Companionship

**Reference:** Luke 23: 13-35

**Reading:** *'Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person; having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but to pour them all out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then, with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away.'*  
George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans)

**Prompts for Discussion:**

Jesus draws alongside – encouraging, teaching and only when fully ready revealing. Are we willing to do the same?

Do we listen for Christ in those we know, our family, or do we expect wisdom from experts?

How are we sensitive to our companions, or see the Christ in our relationships?

**Everyday Comment:**

*'You know one of the nicest things that can happen is when you walk down the street and somebody says "Hello" to you.'*

**Family Care** job applicant



**Theme:** Desert

**References:** Matt 4: 1-11  
Mark 1: 12-13  
Luke 4: 1-13

**Reading:** *'He is the inner self of all,  
Hidden like a little flower in the heart.  
Only by the stilled mind can he be known.  
Those who realise him become immortal.'*  
From the Upanishads (600-300BCE) India

**Prompts for Discussion:**

Is there a difference between Jesus' desert experience and the profound loneliness and isolation that can happen in our society?

For many people families can be a barren experience, how can this be?

In the isolation of a barren place how do we remain connected, feed each other and avoid the temptation of negativity?

**Everyday Comment:**

*'In this area there is much despair, desolation and debt. It's a very lonely place to live.'*

**Family Care** worker



**Theme:** Peter's Denial

**References:** Matt 26: 69-75  
Mark 14: 66-72  
Luke: 23: 54-62  
John: 18: 25-27

**Reading:** *'The first time that Peter denied his Lord  
He had neither the Throne, nor the Keys nor the Sword,  
A poor silly fisherman, what could he do,  
When the cock crew, when the cock crew,  
But weep for his wickedness when the cock crew?'*  
Rudyard Kipling from 'A Song at Cock-Crow'

**Prompts for discussion:**

Why was it Peter-the-Rock who denied and why did he deny?

How is our Christian family/ community safe, reassuring, steadfast in a world of uncertainty and trauma?

How do we deny, betray or support each other in our family, our community?

**Everyday Comment:**

*'She said we were ok and she loved me, she promised me everything, then went off with someone else. I'm gutted.'*

Lone parent



**Theme:** Temple

**References:** Matt 21: 12-13  
Mark 11: 15-17  
Luke: 19: 45-46

**Reading:** *'I am yours, you made me.  
I am yours, you called me.  
I am yours, you saved me.  
I am yours, you loved me.  
I will never leave your presence.'*  
St Teresa of Avila (1515 – 1582)

**Prompts for discussion:**

Is our Christian life pure and simple?

What do we need to do as family to ensure our focus remains on him?

Before we get to worship what are the obstacles?

**Everyday Comment:**

'I wish I could clear the boards and start again, too much bad stuff in my life.'

Recovered alcoholic parent



**Theme:** Ascension – completing the circle

**References:** Mark 16:19

**Reading:** *'When we took our son Robert to University in Nottingham I gave him a tin of biscuits and told him not to unwrap the package until we had left. ... When we had got everything in his rooms we left for home. He was happy and excited at the new life ahead of him, I just cried all the way home. I knew I hadn't lost him, and I knew he'd be home in a couple of weeks, but he was moving on in his life and I had to let him go if I was going to keep him.'*  
M L, Corby

**Prompts for discussion:**

Jesus ascends and leaves his disciples but they are not sad because they have seen him alive after his crucifixion and are waiting for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

God in Jesus is entrusting all He has accomplished to those that are following on and so to us. What impact does this have on us?

Empowering is important to those often overlooked in society. It is quite amazing that God should entrust something so foundational and important to humanity (even empowered humanity) how can we follow his example?

In his letting go how strong an attachment did he secure with us?

**Everyday Comment:**

*'Having my baby is a gift from heaven, there really is a future.'*  
New mum

