



Introduction to the Course

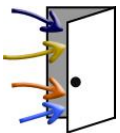
What is 'our' story? As individuals we have a personal life story, as families, as churches, as parishes, as deaneries, as diocese, as communions and denominations. But we have no story without the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His story is our reference point as disciples for living. His story is the deep well from which we drink to make meaning and give meaning as we share the gift of life. 'Our' story not only springs from his: it is through his eyes that we read the scriptures, seeking to interpret the passion and resurrection. This Lent we use Acts 1 and 2 to see what we can learn.

But wait a minute! How do we prepare for Easter through Lent by learning about the disciples' experience of the Ascension and Pentecost? Isn't that back to front? Yes it is back to front, but actually this is how we always do it. We are always an Easter and Pentecost people looking back at our life-giving story. We have a foot in both Lent and Pentecost. This Lent course enters into the life of the raw and electrified witnesses to the passion and resurrection. They looked to their experiences with Jesus and their scriptures to make sense of who they were and what they were now doing.

'Their' story begins with 'waiting' Acts 1.1-11, then 'preparing' Acts 1.12-26, 'receiving' Acts 2.1-13, 'Telling' Acts 2.14-36, and finally 'living' Acts 2.37-47. They are living the story of the Risen Christ, nurtured by his word as they follow his leading. As we share in their story it becomes ours. As we move through the journey of Lent to the cross, we see the cross and resurrection 'from the other side'.

Key to 'their' story and 'ours', is encountering God in the scriptures and allowing the Word he speaks to change us. We will listen and pray the Scriptures, mainly using a method called *Lectio Divina*, which dates back to the 6th century Benedictine tradition but which has roots even older. *Lectio divina* is a tool for reading the scriptures that is being rediscovered, largely because it allows each one of us, however much we know about the scriptures, to respond at a deeper level to what we hear - for us. As a tool it is complementary to Bible study, with an emphasis more on what we 'hear' than what the text means historically. Bishop Trevor wrote in his introductory letter that this Lent course might 'stretch our capacity to use the scriptures more imaginatively and confidently within our communities. This is not so much a study about the Bible, but a course to enthuse us about how we use the Bible.'

The four stages of each session are:



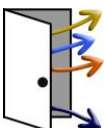
Entering - This is the introductory part of the session, where we consciously enter into each other's presence and into that of the God who promised to be among us when we gather in his name.



Encountering - This is the part of the evening where we openly listen together to scripture by doing *Lectio Divina*.



Exploring - This is where we follow questions that build on our lectio and seek to understand the disciples perspectives on Christ's death and resurrection



Engaging - Having encountered God and explored the word with others; as the early church would have done, we listen and use the scriptures as a springboard to prayer and action.