

WINTER ADULT FORMATION/BIBLE STUDY

The topic for our February-March sessions encompasses one Old Testament book and several New Testament ones under the umbrella title *Relationships and Boundaries in Scripture*. It derives from a series of lectures I attended a number of years ago at Georgetown which first considered the ways the Bible describes Old Testament “relationships and boundaries” between God and God’s creation as well as the complex familial relationships in the time of the Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, along with their wives and concubines.

Then, in the Gospel of Mark, the Georgetown presenter invited us to observe the ways Jesus and his disciples related to one another and how Jesus challenged the religious norms and authorities of his day. Finally, in the Pastoral Epistles of Timothy and Titus (none of which were written by St. Paul!), we studied the complex Greco-Roman world with which the early Church had to interact in order to survive, much less grow. So here is the schedule, with a brief description of each session:

February 9: *Genesis, Chapters 1-9: Creation, Fall, Consequences.* We’ll look at the two contradictory creation stories in Genesis and see the boundaries that God establishes in the “six days” of creating the world as well as the boundaries breached by the sins of our “first parents”, by Cain, and by the people of Noah’s day.

February 16: *Genesis, Chapters 11-46: The Ancestral Sagas—Relationships and Boundaries Created and Challenged.* This is where we’ll look at the world in which the Patriarchs lived and which challenged their understanding of how this “new” God wanted to relate to them and how God wanted them to treat one another.

February 23: *The Gospel of Mark: The Suffering Messiah—Broken Relationships: Family, Disciples, Authorities.* Here we’ll look at the world in which Mark wrote his Gospel and the challenging words and actions of Jesus which strained his relationship with his disciples and even his own family, not to mention the Jewish authorities.

March 2: *The Pastoral Epistles: Boundaries and Relationships in 2nd Century Christian/Societal “Household Codes.”* We’ll consider how the early Church challenged, but mostly adapted to, the norms of the society in which they lived and in which they hoped to survive in order for the Gospel to be proclaimed.

March 9: *The Pastoral Epistles: The Household of God—Governance in the Church of the 2nd Century.* Here we’ll see how the Church structured itself, sometimes imitating civil society, and how it both cared for and disciplined its members.

All these sessions will be on five consecutive **Saturdays at 1:00p.m.** in the new, large, accessible, meeting room in the school (enter by the double doors between the rectory and the school). We will be looking at LOTS of scripture verses, so it will be very helpful if you have a *Revised New American Bible* which you can purchase from us for \$10.00 or just borrow for the duration of the sessions. When you call the rectory to register, just indicate if you would like to either **purchase** or **borrow** a bible so that I can have enough available before February 9.

Because the table set-up in the new room can comfortably accommodate over 40 people (no one should have to hold their notes or bibles on their laps anymore!), there's no rush to register since there won't be an attendance limit. And the above schedule also gives you the opportunity to pick and choose which sessions you might wish to attend. The session on Mark pretty much stands on its own, so you wouldn't need to attend the first two to understand that one. But the Genesis sessions and the Pastoral Epistle sessions are dependent on one another for a full understanding of the material, so you'd have a bit of catching up to do if you came to sessions two and five, but missed sessions one or four. And because of the extensive biblical notations, each session will probably last close to two hours, so you might want to bring along some coffee!

Fr. Bob