



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home Sunday 18th August 2019

1. Start with stillness and quietening down; then gently read the passage, noticing any feelings and connections to your own experience.
2. Read the passage again and spend time noticing what you don't readily understand. *The notes in your Bible may be of help at this point.*
3. Read the passage a third time - wondering how you yourself might pray the text over the next few days.
4. Over the next week, set aside times to come back more than once to the passage. You could read it all or part of it again, slowly. Perhaps there is a special word for you in this passage of Scripture? Keep this word or phrase in your thoughts and gently repeat it, bringing it to mind and allowing God to speak to you in your heart.
5. Finally, come back to the text to conclude: What is God in this scripture asking of you this week? What is the one challenge, one little change you are asked to make or the thing you have been asked to do? Then say a prayer of thanksgiving for the good news in the passage. End in quiet prayer.



THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL - LUKE 12:49-53

Jesus said to his disciples,

"I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

A THOUGHT- People who approach the Bible for the very first time may be surprised to discover that the Church offers us only three basic guidelines for reading it: (1) Be attentive "to the content and unity of the whole scripture; (2) Read it within "the living Tradition of the whole Church"; (3) Be attentive to the analogy of faith (*keep in mind the Creed*). Take, for example, today's Gospel passage. Imagine for a moment if you just read this passage in isolation and neglected all the others? That kind of image or impression would you have of Jesus?

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- Jesus is passionate about his mission. What lights a fire in my heart?
- Jesus does not set out to cause conflict, but so radical is His message that it inevitably does cause division in certain situations and relationships. The Gospel is a call to conversion, to becoming 'a new creation' (*2 Corinthians 5:17*). It means shedding the skin of a former way of living. Does my Christian faith make a real difference to the kind of person I am and to the kind of life I lead?
- Living my faith passionately will certainly involve me in conflict, even at the deepest levels of my life and relationships. Think of a time you felt your faith being challenged? How did you react? What did you learn about yourself, your relationship with God?
- How am I living my faith today? Does it challenge others? Do I shy away from conflict?
- Living true love, compassion, peace, inclusion, hospitality is still a radical message in our society? Why?
- Who inspires you to live the Gospel message? How do you inspire others?

Prayer

Lord, your word disturbs me, shakes me out of complacency and makes my heart burn within me. Your message is not just about being nice. It means being angry at times, confronting injustice, making a stand. Grant me the courage to not be a by-stander but a true witness to the Gospel message. Amen