



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 2nd Feb 2020



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 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 2:22-40 – The presentation of Jesus in the Temple

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (*as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"*) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel."

And His father and His mother marvelled at what was said about Him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God and spoke of Him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town, Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon Him.

A Short Thought

Today is the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple. In the past, it was also known as *Candlemas Day* because Simeon saw in Jesus a great Light. Jesus comes not in splendour, but as a baby in his mother's arms. Simeon "took him in his arms". In the original biblical language this expression described what the priests of the Old Law did as they accepted the gifts offered by the faithful for use in the temple sacrifices. Then it was Anna's turn. She praised God and spoke about the role the child would play in the redemption of us all. Simeon and Anna, because they were people of intense and ongoing prayer, always found themselves in the right place at the right time. Like them, each one of us, is called to witnesses to and part of God's loving plan.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

- At the Presentation in the Temple, Mary and Joseph made '*the Offering of the Poor*' – two pigeons instead of the lamb which was the offering of the better-off. How do we share our gifts and talents with others?
- It was a day that started without any expectation of something unusual. It turned out to be a day with a meeting they would remember for a long time. Perhaps you have had significant meetings on what you expected to be just an ordinary day?
- In what ways have you experienced God's salvation in your life: an experience of being loved, or discovering a sense of purpose in life, or being touched by the wonders of creation? Give thanks for those memories.

Prayer

Lord, increase my faith. May your Spirit allow me to see the extraordinary in the ordinary and beautiful in the mundane. May I walk with you always and uses my gifts to witness to your love. Amen