



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 19th April 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 – John 20:19-31 ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you’

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

A Short Thought

The Risen Jesus meets his closest friends for the first time after they had all abandoned him in his hour of need. It must have been a moment they were all dreading. Yet his first words, twice over, were, 'Peace be with you'. No rebuke, no reproach, just 'Peace!' And then he showed them his wounds, the unmistakable signs. Thomas doubted. Thomas is an ordinary person, knotted up in his own fears and doubts. Perhaps we all carry something of his DNA? Here we are shown the transforming impact which his personal encounter with Jesus has on him. Pope Francis says: 'I invite all Christians to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them. I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day.'

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. "Peace be with you" was the greeting of Jesus on meeting his frightened apostles. Who has come to you bringing peace at times when you were afraid? To whom have you been able to bring peace?
2. Thomas, doubting and questioning, is possibly a person with whom we can identify. What part have doubting and questioning played on your faith journey? How has your faith been strengthened by such moments?
3. Note the way that Jesus dealt with Thomas. He did not give out because he doubted. He accepted how he felt and led him along to see the truth of his resurrection. Who has been that kind of teacher for you, gently taking you from where you were and leading you to a deeper knowledge about some truth about life? For whom have you been that kind of teacher?
4. 'Sending' is what God likes to do. Jesus is sent, the Holy Spirit is sent, and we are sent too. Jesus is sent to bring love, light and truth into the world. I too am sent. I am to bring love, light and truth into my little world. I am important to the plans of God. How do I feel send? The world will be better if I carry out my mission.

Prayer -

God of life, source of all faith, through the waters of baptism you have raised us up in Christ and given us life that endures.

Day by day, refine our faith that we who have not seen the Christ, may truly confess him as our Lord and God, and share the blessedness of those who believe.

We ask this through Jesus, who died and rose for love of us and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen

Prayer in these uncertain times

We pray for all those in our country and throughout the world suffering from the Corona Virus. May its victims and their families be strengthened by the support of our community of faith and restored soon to full health. We also pray for our leaders and medical personnel who deal with the virus. May we keep calm and may we join together in solidarity with care and compassion to tackle this emergency. This we ask in confidence through Christ Our Lord. Amen

