



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 24th 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 understanding. *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 – Matthew 28:16-10 “The Great Commission – Ascension Sunday”

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

A Short Thought

One of the most powerful scenes in the Gospel of Matthew is the text's finale, which is usually described as the 'Great Commission'. We typically hear it during mission days at church, mission conferences, or when missionaries come to town with their slide shows, presentations and the like. But it is more than that; the reference of the text is much broader. The text frames the basis for the communal identity and life together for the movement that will become the church. We could ask how is the Risen Lord with us? The New Testament and the church tradition offer a rich array of “presences.” Christ is present in the neighbour in need, in created reality beautiful and awe-inspiring, whenever the disciples gather, in the word proclaimed, in the sacrament celebrated and through the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we do not always feel this presence, but the words of Jesus are a guarantee that no matter what is going on in my life or my community or my church, he is with us, our Emmanuel.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. It is time for Jesus to return to his Father. He meets his disciples for the last time. His final words give them direction for their future. Perhaps you can recall such parting moments in your own life - leaving home, school, college, training, the death of a loved one. What was that like for you? Was there an occasion when words spoken then gave you direction for your future?
2. In current times the loss of contact and feeling of isolation can creep in. But Jesus assures us we are not alone, the lack of his physical presence will be made up to them by the sending of the Holy Spirit, who will be with them permanently. Where and when do you feel God's presence?
3. Perhaps you can identify with Jesus in the story, when as a parent, teacher, or in some other way you sent someone on his/her way in life knowing you would not be with him or her as in the past. When did the way you parted help the other to make his or her own way in life?
4. Jesus told his disciples that although he would not be with them as in the past he would be with them in a new way right through their lives. Have there been times when you were reassured by the love and support of another even though s/he was not physically present with you?
5. In parting with his disciples Jesus gave them a mission for the future. Where, when and how did you get a sense of the meaning and purpose of your own life? How does that sustain you now? Is there

any way in which that purpose ties in with the mission given to the eleven to make disciples of all the nations?

6. Matthew's Gospel begins by introducing Jesus as "Emmanuel – God with us" and ends with the promise of Jesus to be with his disciples until the end of time. That promise is also to us. What are the things which help you to be aware of the presence of Jesus with you on life's journey?

Prayer -

God of majesty, yours is the power that raised Christ from death, yours the glory that exalted him to your right hand. By the mystery of the Ascension, sustain our hope as we bear witness to our baptism. By the perpetual outpouring of your Spirit confirm your Church in its mission of salvation. Grant this through Jesus Christ, the first-born from the dead, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen. **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

