



## Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

### Sunday 9th August 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 14:22-33

Jesus walks on Water

*Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."*



### A Short Thought

A most strange gospel story – Jesus walks on the water. It's the type of gospel that suits a decision time, a time of deep trust – an invitation to come to the water; not to be afraid.

Jesus walks on water. It's about trusting in Jesus, when there is nothing else. If you have human help, it's great – but not the same as trusting in God.

Death and funerals.... trust in me. Why – because "I am the way and the truth." Old age can be the same, or times of life when we just don't know what the future will hold. Or illness. We meet it regularly. Sounds strange but what Jesus does in this situation is very human — not a lecture but holding hands! Someone was given a book on bereavement once – he said he needed a hand to be held, or tears to be heard. That's Jesus. He held Peter... God is a God with skin, with a human heart, and leaves all sorts of big ideas behind when we are in trouble. Jesus just went across the lake, stopping his comfortable prayer. Another time Peter would jump into the lake again – after the resurrection! Always a water man! Then he would be asked not just to hold a hand, but to be the hand that would reach out to others. Peter was prepared for his mission in many ways, as Pope Francis says – "When the Lord wants to give us a mission, wants to give us a task, He prepares us. He prepares us to do it well." He prepares each of us for our mission, always with us in our efforts to live in love and service of him. *Donal Neary SJ*

### SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Jesus took some time apart to be at prayer. His time with God did not close him to the world, but

inspired him to go to the help of the troubled disciples. Does the time that I spend at prayer build me up in my relationship with God and strengthens me to act in God's name?

2. Peter had courage when his eyes were on Jesus, but foundered when he focused on himself and his situation. Were are my eyes focused? Ask God to help me to keep Jesus before me.
3. The story illustrates the power of faith. Have you noticed that when you believe in someone, or something, you can do things that would not be possible when you are full of doubts? Recall moments when your faith gave you strength and courage? Name for yourself the different kinds of faith that had this effect: belief in yourself, trust in another, faith in God.
4. The hand of God is a human hand. Jesus reaches out to guide us, steady us, support us - all the things a touch of the hand can do. Where have we been that for others? When have we felt that from others?
5. At times we can feel helpless, at times we can do nothing for those we love except place them in the hand of God, knowing that God loves them and trusting in God's compassion and care. Take a moment to place those you love, situations that you have no control over or areas that you may feel helpless into to God's hands

## Prayer -

Lord, save us when circumstances seem to overwhelm us, when we cannot see our way forward, when we find ourselves sinking. Take us by the hand and lead to the open space of freedom and confidence in you.. We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God 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*

