



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 4th April 2021 – Easter Sunday

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 20:1-9 ‘He is Risen’

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

A Short Thought

Traditionally, we have found it easy to think of the cross as the measure of God's love for us. Because of the focus on the cross, we find it more difficult to think of the resurrection as also the love of God, perhaps "all the more so"! The originality of the Fourth Gospel says it all: the disciple Jesus loved, the head cloth recalling Lazarus (see how much he loved him) and, not least, the great figure of Mary Magdalene (Mary!). In summary, Jesus died and rose again for love of us. Let us be loved!

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

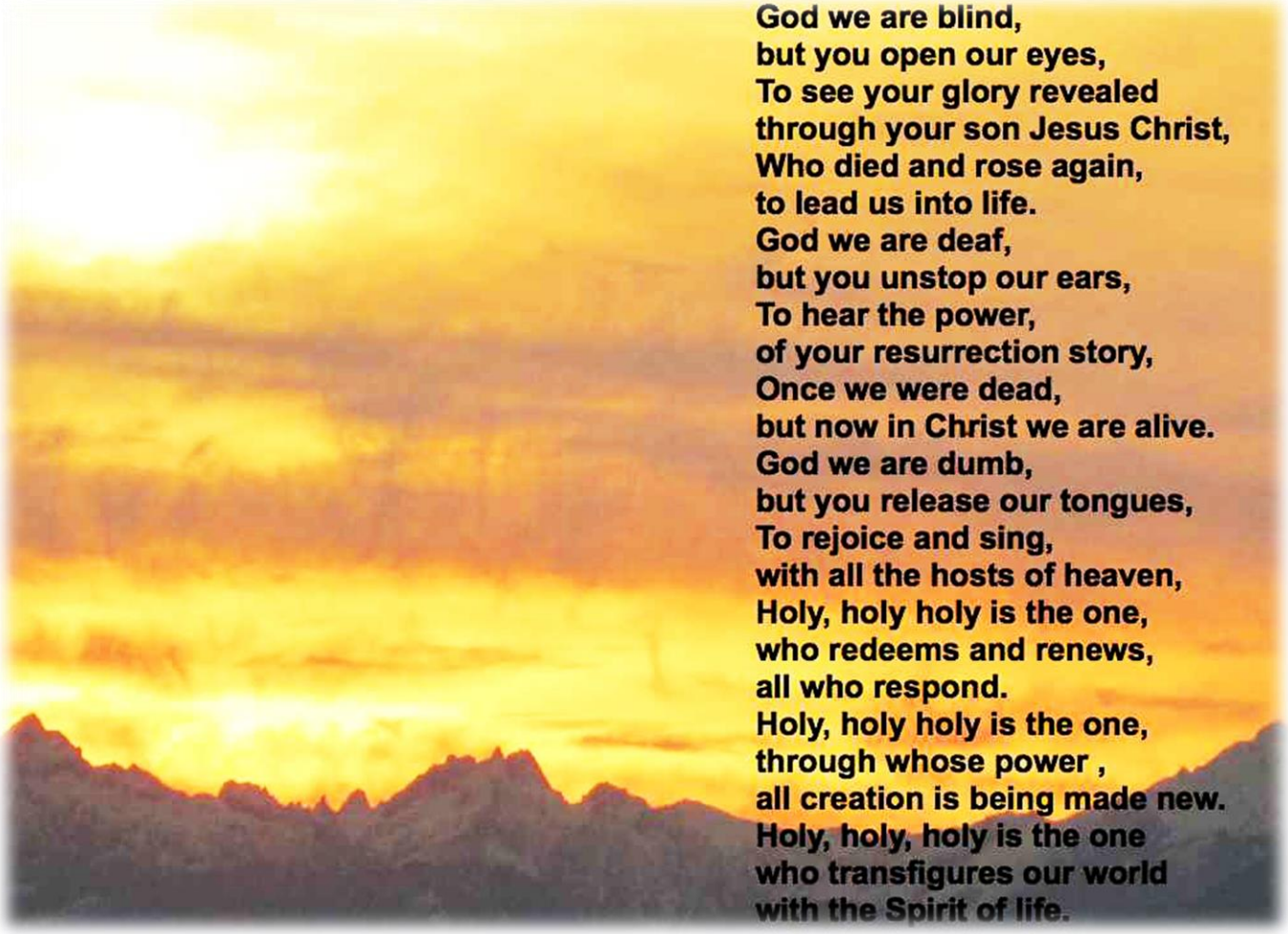
1. The disciples are in a state of shock after their traumatic loss. Jesus, the one in whom they had placed so much hope, has been murdered and buried. Then, before they have time to recover, they get another shock. The body of Jesus is missing. Have you had experiences in which one tragedy or crisis follows quickly after another? What was that like for you? How did you cope? Who, or what, sustained you?
2. Mary and Peter, and the other disciple, came and discovered that the tomb was empty. In this text no explanation is given. They are left in a state of bewilderment 'for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead'. Have you been in situations, faced with events you cannot explain, possibly events that have dashed your hopes in another person, or in God? What has that been like for you?
3. Yet in spite of the lack of explanation, the beloved disciple 'saw and believed'. Have there been times when others have done something that you could not understand, and which they could not explain at the time, and yet you believed that all was not as it seemed; times when you decided to trust in spite of the evidence? Have there been times when others have shown this kind of faith in you, when you were not able to offer satisfactory explanations, and all you could say was 'trust me'?
4. Have there been times in your relationship with God when you have felt that you were faced with an empty tomb, and still you believed? What have you learned about life, about love, from such experiences?

Prayer -

Loving God, you love us more than we can imagine or take in. Help us to allow ourselves to be so loved by you, that your love may penetrate our hearts, our lives and our loves. 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



**God we are blind,
but you open our eyes,
To see your glory revealed
through your son Jesus Christ,
Who died and rose again,
to lead us into life.
God we are deaf,
but you unstop our ears,
To hear the power,
of your resurrection story,
Once we were dead,
but now in Christ we are alive.
God we are dumb,
but you release our tongues,
To rejoice and sing,
with all the hosts of heaven,
Holy, holy holy is the one,
who redeems and renews,
all who respond.
Holy, holy holy is the one,
through whose power ,
all creation is being made new.
Holy, holy, holy is the one
who transfigures our world
with the Spirit of life.**