



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home Sunday 2nd May 2021

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 15:1-8 “The true Vine

‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

A Short Thought

In this passage, we learn a lot about: the kind of relationship we are to have with Jesus - I am the Vine you are the branches;

how we must maintain that relationship - abiding in Jesus and following his commandments; and, what will result from that relationship - bearing fruit and experiencing joy. The focus of the reading is Love. A priest whose first language wasn't English used say 'I am the wine' in reading the gospel today. We smiled and tried to tell him the difference between 'vine' and 'wine'. It's an interesting difference because the vine becomes wine and in turn becomes the blood of eternal life in the Eucharist.

He uses the image of wine for the new covenant and for the New Testament. The water of the Old Testament was changed into the wine of the new. The cup of wine 'he took and shared' was his blood, his life's energy given for us.

The wine, so beautiful in meaning, came from the simple grape on a vine. The ordinary and the extraordinary, the human and the divine, are intimately linked in Jesus himself and in the way he speaks for us. The Incarnation leads to the resurrection, all linked to the body. Everything human is a way to God for us. Love mingles earth and heaven, for all love is of God. Our moods and feelings, desires and joys, sorrows and griefs, hurts and shame, all lead us to God. We mingle water and wine at Mass so that we know 'we share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity'.

As vine and branches draw life from each other, we draw life from the body of Christ in the Eucharist so we can share his love among others and so bear much fruit. Maybe the mispronunciation was not completely in error!

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. In this lyrical text, Jesus introduces us to the great mystery of God sharing his life with us: I am the vine, you are the branches...My Father is the vine-grower. The life that courses through the Holy Trinity is the same life that runs through my veins. The vine is a special tree, where the distinction between the trunk and the branches is more difficult to make out than in other trees: God shares his own life with me. Where do you see God at work in your life?
2. In a relationship connectedness is important. Relationships cannot be taken for granted and need time and care to be life-giving. What does your experience tell you of the truth of this in your relationships with God, with your friends, with your family, with communities or groups to which you belong?
3. The Father is pruning us, working deep in our hearts to draw us closer to himself in Christ. Am I resisting his efforts? Ask for the gift of openness to his pruning work.
4. "Apart from me you can do nothing." Call to mind your total dependence on Christ for life and love. Recall his many gifts over the years and ask for more.
5. The parable also reminds us that we are not the source of our own life. It is a gift from God, from our parents, and from all who have nourished us. Give thanks for those who have been a source of life for you?
6. The fruits of our Christian life are the work of God. Each of us can see the life and work of God in others - in ministry, in love, in commitment, courage, endurance, and ordinary daily kindness and compassion. Each of us, too, is gifted in some unique way. We can bear fruit for God in a way nobody else can. How to we use our gifts to witness to God's love in our world?

Prayer -

O God, you graft us on to Christ, the true vine, and, with tireless care, you nurture our growth in knowledge and reverence. Tend the vineyard of your Church, that in Christ each branch may bring forth to the glory of your name abundant fruits of faith and love. 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

