



Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 18th July 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 – Mark 6:30-34 ... *rest a while*

The apostles gathered around Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.



A Short Thought

In this Sunday's gospel Jesus is moved with compassion for the crowd and responds to their needs. The apostles needed to rest, time to recuperate, regenerate and gain spiritual nourishment, but there was no rest for Jesus. The people followed him in their thousands to the place where they had chosen to rest. So, moved with compassion, Jesus responded to their needs spiritually and bodily with food.

In a sermon on 30 October 2017, Pope Francis used five verbs to refer to the "closeness" of Jesus to his people: see, call, talk, touch and heal. The Pontiff explained "Christ calls us to touch the flesh of the other by hand, particularly the suffering and the needy." This, the Pope insisted, is "the path of the good shepherd". This is the kind of shepherd Jesus calls us to be if we are to feed those who are hungry, give drink to those who are thirsty, shelter those who are homeless, visit those who are sick and prisoners, bury the dead and give alms to those who are poor.

Through the gospel, we are reminded not only to seek God, at the expense of a connection with other people. Instead, we are asked to prepare ourselves better to reach out to others in need, through strengthening our relationship with God.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The apostles reported to Jesus all that they had done and taught. Perhaps you have had the experience of being able to check in with somebody and share an experience. What was that like for you?
2. Jesus cares about me and invites me too to come away and rest a while. I will be helped if I can go to a 'deserted place' occasionally to allow my soul to catch up. Otherwise, as T. S. Eliot says, I have the experience of God's action in my life, but miss its meaning because I don't give time to reflection. Where and when do make time to recharge your batteries, renew your faith?
3. When Jesus saw the crowd, he recognised their need and reached out to them. Who has been a Jesus person for you, someone who recognised your need and reached out to you? For whom have you been a Jesus person in that way?
4. It sometimes can be difficult to strike a balance between responding to the needs of others and

meeting our need for rest and nourishment. What has helped you to keep the balance right?

5. Lord, there are times when I want to get away from the crowds, when I feel oppressed by company. There are other times when I just wish that somebody knew that I exist; I can have too much of aloneness. If I can reach you in prayer, and know that you are more central to me than my own thoughts, I feel at peace, as the apostles must have felt.

Prayer -

Compassionate and caring God, from far and near you gather your Church into one. Safeguard the unity of your flock through the teaching of Christ the Shepherd that all your scattered children may find in him the guidance and nourishment that they seek. I ask this as always through Christ our lord, **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

