

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 31st Oct 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 12:28-34

The Greatest Commandment

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' Then the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that "he is one, and besides him there is no other"; and "to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength", and "to love one's neighbour as oneself", -this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that no one dared to ask him any question.



A Short Thought

As over the past few Sundays, we find Jesus today in conflict with Jewish leaders who are out to destroy him. So today's Gospel begins with yet another trick question, yet another trap, designed to ensnare or incriminate Jesus. But on this occasion, we hear no answering word of sharp rebuke or harsh condemnation. Instead we have just his luminous response, about the two-fold commandment of love. It's spoken without any hesitation, and with total authority; so simple yet so profound; a distillation of all his own teaching, and of all divine revelation; few words, yet shot through with the Holy Spirit, and with wisdom; words that touch our deepest yearnings, and that come to us as refreshment, and consolation, and blessing. Today's Gospel is one of those passages that seem so simple on the surface, but when we begin to realize what is being asked of us, we can see how challenging it actually becomes. Love the Lord your God, with all your heart, soul, and mind. Can we honestly look at ourselves and say that every part of our emotional life, our spiritual life, and our intellectual life is freely given to God daily? And how about the commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves? Do we truly treat the people around us in a way that reflects how we want people to treat us in return?

St John says God is love, and whoever abides in love, abides in God, and God abides in him (1 Jn 4:16). So Love is the template, the starting point and the measure. We need to SEE and BE love. St Mother Teresa probably put it best when she said, "Be the love you want to see in the world". This challenge, this call remains as poignant today as it did 2000 years ago. For a second close your eyes and hear Jesus speaking these words to you, where you are, in these strangest and most difficult of times. How do you respond? How will I respond?

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the rules and regulations of your own tradition? And have you ever been blessed by meeting someone, or reading something, that was able to cut through all the layers and point out to you what is essential in life? Who was that person? What did s/he say or do? Is there

some phrase or text that encapsulates such wisdom for you? That they may become one – What in your own words is the gospel message that binds us together? Where do I see, feel, bring and witness to love?

2. The gospel today centres the message of Jesus on love; on two loves united in each of us. Love God, love the neighbour - this is the only commandment of Jesus. Without this, all we say we do for him is really done for ourselves. The message of Jesus is all-embracing and covers all our relationships, both the close relationships of marriage, family and friendship, as well as the call to love the wider world, particularly where the needs are great. What stops me from showing love?
3. If you were asked what is most important in life, what would your answer be? Recall the experiences and relationships you have had. Which are the ones that you treasure most? What has particularly enriched your life? How would you encourage another person who asked you how s/he could live a full life?

Prayer -

Your love, O God is boundless. We who were strangers have been made your children. We who were defenceless have been brought into your household. Keep us mindful of your deeds of mercy, that we may love you with all our heart and love our neighbour as ourselves. We ask this 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



THE WORLD
IS FULL
OF GOOD PEOPLE. IF
YOU CAN'T
FIND ONE,
BE ONE.
-M. TERESA