

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 21st November 2021 – Feast of Christ the King

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 18:33-37

Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."



A Short Thought

Every day we form countless judgments. Often they seem based more on what others have said, than on what we know. We are often told what to think by the media, government and even co-workers. Pilate was one of those whose judgment was based on what others had said. His question to Jesus was that of a functionary; not of someone sincerely seeking the truth. Jesus sensed this weakness and confronted him. Pilate's excuse was that he was not Jewish, so how could he hope to understand? I will be judged one day on how I judged. How fair, how sincere and really how interested am I in others? Do I treat those in my life as though I really cared?

This is a message of hope that the author is giving to his people who are hopeless. It is a message that says the pain and suffering that you experience will not be the last word. It is a message that is so current in our world of uncertainty, Covid, Climate change, etc. Where can we see the hope? And where can we be the hope?

This feast day may seem a strange one to end the liturgical year on – Christ the King is a strange feast as Jesus never wanted it. But he didn't want a lot that happened to him. He took it on out of love. So, in the gospel what sort of king do we meet? One of truth, justice, compassion and love. The defender of the poor. The King who prays and is steeped in our reality. Our Christian life then is getting to know Jesus more and taking part in his mission – not standing as judgemental bystanders. We are called to be type of person he was. Our role and our vocation is called to be like him. Our mission is a calling to live like him in love and service. He is worth our following! This is the Kingdom we are asked to emulate, take part in, witness to and be active in. So this week may we find the courage and voice to say with truth and conviction – *Lord, may your Kingdom come...*

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The feast we have today and the gospel give us an opportunity to reflect on the different ways in which we, and others, exercise influence and leadership. The authority of Pilate came from position and power. The authority of Jesus came from his integrity and what he stood for. Recall leaders you have known whose influence was like that of Jesus.
2. Today, there are many voices competing for my attention. Can I recognise which of these voices speak

the truth to me? Which of these voices are false? What is my prayer as I reflect on these issues?

3. The values of the kingdom of God cannot be imposed. It is never a matter of fighting battles, or forcing others into compliance. Perhaps through experience you have learned the limitations of the use of force, as a parent, a teacher, a group leader. What has been the good news, the learnings for you, in this?
4. Why is it important to read a scene from the passion today? Does it help us to grasp what the kingship of Christ truly means? (*Notice Jesus' stress on truth in this passage*). How can Jesus be both king and Suffering Servant?
5. In Jesus, the king, we are all brothers and sisters in the image of God. God is so big that we're all like him. What does that mean now? This is the big act of faith that we will soak ourselves in for the next few weeks; that God became one like us, one of us, born, lived, suffered and died like the rest of us. The real God is found in real people. Spend some time in prayer with this, this week as we move toward Advent.

Prayer -

Jesus, in the midst of all the noise and distractions of this world we find it hard to hear your voice. Open our ears Lord that we may hear and take account of your word. Open our hearts Lord, that we may have the courage to live your truth. 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

