

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 29th May 2022 – The Ascension of the Lord

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 – Luke 24:46-53

“Ascension Sunday - While Jesus was blessing them, he withdrew from them”

And he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.



A Short Thought

The gospel talks about hope of the resurrection and the joy that is coming. The ascension of the Lord was a new beginning of His presence and for His disciples. Before He departed, He promised that he would always be with them and send the Holy Spirit who would anoint them. The disciples were not left in sorrow, but they were filled with joy and great anticipation for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The gospel also talks about the power of God, to forgive a sinner and the power to heal, restore and make us whole again. It is to proclaim the good news of salvation. God's love and gift of salvation was for everyone who will accept it. The Lord ascends with a smile on His face. He smiled because of His love for us. The Lord accomplished His earthly mission and had conquered death. It is our mission to spread the good news and to proclaim that Jesus never abandoned and left us in this task, for the risen Lord is always with us through the power of Holy Spirit.

As the Easter season draws to a close, both the liturgy and the lectionary point us towards the clothing with power from on high. In these days, our prayer is “Come, Holy Spirit.” Each year, this prayer is of greater urgency, as we all try to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Our future being as Christians, as community, as church, all depends on our own deep attitude of listening and of openness. The future church will be a church of the Spirit, energised and exuberant, faithful and on fire.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. It is time for Jesus to return to his Father. He meets his disciples for the last time. His final words give them direction for their future. Perhaps you can recall such parting moments in your own life - leaving home, school, college, training, the death of a loved one. What was that like for you? Was there an occasion when words spoken then gave you direction for your future?
2. We are invited to enter into the situation in which the early Christians found themselves. The ‘old’ Jesus whom they knew and loved and yet Jesus is in some way changed, he is ‘new’? How am I in

my relating to this Jesus as the Spirit? Do I have a sense of his 'living' in me, in others and in our world?

3. The disciples experienced 'great joy' when Jesus blessed them and moved fully into the divine dimension of reality – heaven. Such moments of insight and pure joy are rare but precious for us. While they eventually become dim, their memory can carry us through difficult times. Can I identify one such moment of 'great joy'?
4. Jesus invited the disciples to be witnesses to the good news they had learned. The way we live, speak and relate to others speaks of what we have learned about life. We all are witnesses. How have you been a witness to the goodness of life?
5. In v. 49, Jesus instructs the apostles to wait patiently for the moment of grace. What been your experience of waiting for a moment of grace? What are the moments of grace that you particularly recall (*a friendship, a new opportunity, birth of a baby, etc*)?
6. When people see me, do they see Jesus? When people see me, do they want to know Jesus? When people see me, do they want to join our community, share our life, and take the Gospel as the foundation of their life? That is the meaning of the Ascension.

Prayer -

God of majesty, yours is the power that raised Christ from death, yours the glory that exalted him to your right hand. By the mystery of the Ascension, sustain our hope as we bear witness to our baptism. By the perpetual outpouring of your Spirit confirm your Church in its mission of salvation. Grant this through Jesus Christ, the first-born from the dead, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen. **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

We pray for Ukraine. For all of humanity distorted by war. For all the lives lost, homes seized, and peace broken. May the Spirit of comfort and compassion envelop all who dwell in fear. May peace prevail and justice reign. May love always be the guide and measure of our actions and responses. Amen

