

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 17th July 2022

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 10: 38-42 Martha & Mary

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."



A Short Thought

Being busy is a sort of cultural value among us—and rightly. "If you want something done, ask a busy person." But, of course, the question of balance arises. There are indeed other needs and other hungers. These include simple human things like time for friends. Even hospitality—which is always work—can get in the way of really meeting. Something similar can be said of time for reflection, meditation and prayer. Time is not really the issue—after all, we manage to find time to waste on TV, tablets etc. It is more a question of insight, choice and decision, lest we overlook and even lose "the better part."

In a culture of hectic schedules and the relentless pursuit of productivity, we are tempted to measure our worth by how busy we are, by how much we accomplish, or by how well we meet the expectations of others. We know that worrying does no good, and that much of what we worry about is not so important in the larger scheme of things, and yet we cannot seem to quell our anxious thoughts and frantic activity. Both listening and doing, receiving God's Word and serving others, are vital to the Christian life, just as inhaling and exhaling are to breathing. Yet how often do we forget to breathe in deeply? Trying to serve without being nourished by God's word is like expecting good fruit to grow from a tree that has been uprooted. We do know that Jesus invites all of us who are worried and distracted by many things to sit and rest in his presence, to hear his words of grace and truth, to know that we are loved and valued as children of God, to be renewed in faith and strengthened for service. There is need of only one thing: attention to our guest. As it turns out, our guest is also our host, with abundant gifts to give.

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The two sisters symbolise the contemplative and active dimensions of life, at times difficult to balance. What wisdom have you learned through life experiences on how to strike a balance between prayer and action?
2. In my relationship with Jesus, am I more of listener or more of a doer? More like Martha or like Mary? Both were friends of Jesus, who enjoyed their company. Take a moment to thank Jesus for your relationship with him and ask him to bless it and make it grow.
3. Many people misunderstand hospitality. They worry and fret about decorating the house and

preparing abundant food. Yet sometimes it is something else that is needed to make people feel at home, namely, to sit with guests and to listen to them speaking. What has been your experience of being a cherished guest and when have you been able to make others feel welcome and at home?

4. Some scripture scholars remark that this gospel is less about work versus prayer and more about breaking boundaries. They understand that sitting at Jesus' feet or, listening to any rabbi was reserved for men only. They in turn would become teachers of faith. But here, Mary has stepped out of the traditional role when she should be in the women's quarters and Jesus fully approves, inviting Martha to do the same. Where or when have we been challenged to step out of our traditional roles for the good of another? Where does our faith call us to break boundaries?
5. We can make the same mistake in relation to people who are important to us in life: children, friends, parents, or others. We can worry and fret about doing things for them when perhaps the important thing is to give them time and to listen to them. What does your experience tell you?
6. Where or when have I lost sight of what is most important in life? Am I so busy doing many things that I do not have any time for God? Is my work for the Lord causing me to be anxious and troubled? Is love at the centre? Lord, please help me to put things in perspective and not to lose sight of my mission in life, which is 'to love and serve in all things'.

Prayer -

Eternal God, you draw near to us in Christ and make yourself our guest. Amid the cares of our daily lives, make us attentive to your voice and alert to your presence, that we may treasure your word above all else. You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever 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

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

