

Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 14th August 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 12:49-53

I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!

Jesus said to the crowds, "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."



A Short Thought

With all of the divisiveness present in society these days, it seems like the last thing we need is a gospel text that seemingly encourages more division. In today's world, every morning we see and hear multiple stories of division and violence: in families, cities, churches and countries. Perhaps the most frightening stories are the acts of violence and destruction that take place in our own cities, our own neighbourhoods and perhaps within our own families.

What is the message Jesus is trying to convey to us? Is he trying to frighten us? Or is he simply hoping to awaken us? Is Jesus trying to motivate us to live peacefully, lovingly, cooperatively, and respectfully with each and every person on earth, even the individuals we may not like or agree with? Now, take a moment and imagine a world where every single person was respected and honoured simply because he or she is a human being whom God created in love. You are one of those individuals and so am I. Every individual on earth was created from God's loving heart, each loved into existence. And yet, we war upon one another with our words, our actions, our prejudice and our violence.

For a moment dare to think of an individual with whom you struggle. It may be someone who has hurt or angered you, or it might be a person you simply don't like or one who grates on you. Now, quiet yourself and imagine that person in your mind for a moment or two. Then surround that individual with acceptance, peace and joy. Hold this person in your mind for two or three minutes. You have given this individual a loving gift today. True, they may not consciously recognize what you have done. However, their spirit will know that someone has gifted and graced them today. Be alert and attentive! Perhaps you will receive a similar gift!

Our faith is the ember that sees the world and all the relationships in the light of love. Allow the Spirit to fan that ember into a raging fire!

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The commitment of Jesus to his mission is shown in his desire to undergo the baptism that awaits him. Have there been times when there was something you greatly hoped for, even though you knew there would be a baptism of fire along the way? What was it like for you to undergo such a baptism of fire and then arrive at what you desired?
2. Think of your life at this moment in time, where do you find that your values or faith cause others to feel uncomfortable or may even bring division? Take time to invite the Lord to be with you in these situations. Is love your ultimate motivation and goal? Ask God to guide and strengthen you as you need.
3. Jesus recognised that the message he proclaimed would meet with a mixed reception. This did not hold him back from proclaiming the Reign of God. When have you seen this kind of courage in yourself, or in others?
4. Today Jesus has kindled a light in my soul, how can I transmit that light to my neighbour? Or, better still, to someone with whom I have fallen out?
5. What are you passionate about? Your passion is no accident. The environment, politics, your football team... Jesus was passionate about his mission. He knew it would mean his death, but this seems to have made him show an even greater sense of urgency. Apathy kills faith, even more than doubt. Am I a lukewarm follower of Jesus or do I somehow share his passion in spreading the good news with the gifts I have been given?

Prayer -

To set the earth ablaze, O God, your Son submitted to a baptism unto death, and from his cup of suffering you call the Church to drink. Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and give us strength in time of trial to run the race that lies before us. We ask this through your Son who lives and reigns with you 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

