

PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE, MEET GOD

Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 31, 2019

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Day One: Luke 15:1-3, 11-13

Reflection question: The Pharisees and scribes complain about Jesus hanging out with sinners. Imagine you are in the scene and Jesus is looking at you: are you with the Pharisees and scribes, or the sinners?

Day Two: Luke 15:14-19

Reflection Question: The prodigal son comes to his senses and prepares to return home. Have you had an experience of setting out on your own, only to find you needed to return to where you started? How did you prepare for your return? Did you brace yourself for a scolding upon your return? Or did you expect a loving welcome?

Day Three: Luke 13:20-24

Reflection Question: The father responds in joy and love that his son has been found. What does it mean to you that God the Father rejoices in your returning to him?

Day Four: Luke 13:25-27

Reflection question: The older son comes home to find a celebration. If you were the older son, how would you receive the news of who is the guest of honor?

Day Five: Luke 15:28-32

Reflection question: As you read this passage today, imagine yourself in the scene. Are you the younger, or the older son? What does the Father say to you?

How to Pray Each Day

Pray:

“Lord Jesus, you who are the Son of the living God, teach me to listen to what you tell me in the holy Scriptures, and to discover your face there.”—Guigo II, the Carthusian (ca. 1113-1193)

Read the day’s passage once, slowly:

Take 2-3 minutes to ponder the passage. Note any phrase, word or image that stands out for you.

Read the passage a second time slowly:

Take a few minutes to ponder the passage again. Stay with the text: Why do you think the words or image stand out the first time? Is your mind drawn to another part of the text?

What do you think God is trying to tell you through the text today?

Consider the Reflection Question:

Jot down any thoughts or responses you have to this question—also make note of any questions that rose from the text.

Pray

1. Take a few minutes to be still and present to God.
2. Share your thoughts, questions with God.
3. Is God “speaking” to you? Remember: it may not be a voice you hear but a nudge, a consolation or an insight. If you are keeping a journal, you may want to write these down.
4. When you feel done, say a quick prayer thanking God for this time with him.

Optional Small group session to follow these daily reflections:

Pray the following prayer or one in your own words

“Lord Jesus, you who are the Son of the living God, teach me to listen to what you tell me in the holy Scriptures, and to discover your face there.”—Guigo II, the Carthusian (d.1297)

Allow each person to reflect upon their encounters with the Word this past week. They may wish to review any notes or journaling they did at that time.

Read

- Have one person read the complete passage twice, with a 1-2 minute pause between readings.
- Allow time for silent reflection.
- What stands out when you hear the text, altogether? Is it something that stood out before, or is it something new?

Meditate

- Have someone else read the passage once more.
- Where do you meet God today in the Word? Does he speak or communicate with you in another way?
 - Sit quietly with God and wait for his response.

Ponder

- Allow time for each person to quietly reflect upon these words from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

545 Jesus invites sinners to the table of the kingdom: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." He invites them to that conversion without which one cannot enter the kingdom, but shows them in word and deed his Father's boundless mercy for them and the vast "joy in heaven over one sinner who repents". The supreme proof of his love will be the sacrifice of his own life "for the forgiveness of sins".

Reflection questions:

- What does it mean for *you* that Jesus invites sinners to his table in the Kingdom?
- Where have you experienced the love and mercy of the Father?

Discuss

Allow each person to share what they encountered in their prayers this past week as in this session. They can respond to any question from their daily reflection or this session; or share an insight or experience that rose out of their prayer.

As the discussion draws to a close, ask if there are any needs members would like the group to pray for. If it is possible, at this time move to a chapel or the church for the closing prayer.

Pray

- Allow a time of silent prayer, allowing each person to offer their own silent prayers of praise and thanksgiving, petition to the Lord.
- Allow additional time to sit in the Lord's presence.
- If possible and appropriate, allow each person to offer any prayers aloud.
- Close with prayer as is the custom of your community. It could be: a spontaneous prayer, a parish prayer for renewal said together, an Our Father, Glory Be or prayer to the patron saint of the parish asking his/her intercession, etc.