

God Speaks Good News

*God speaks Good News at every moment of our lives.
The Good News is the Gospel.
The Gospel - God became like us in Jesus, who died and
rose from the dead.
Jesus is God's Word, spoken to us and living in us.*



This is the truth, whatever may be going on in the world or within our own lives – and in these challenging times of the COVID lock-down. God calls us to celebrate that we are living in Jesus and he is living in us. God, in Jesus, points us to those places in our lives where we may be feeling isolated and cut off from family and friends, from our parish and the groups we belong to. This is a strange time when we can even forget what day it is. It can also be a time when we face both joy and sorrow with the people close to us.

So we need to listen to God who, in Jesus, asks us to live the truth. How do we listen to that truth? Well, many people take great strength from reading the Word of God, the Bible, and letting that Word find a place in their heart:

My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready Psalm 56 (57)

This doesn't mean devouring the Bible: *'The more I read, the better I'll be.'* Or *'I'm going to read the Bible from cover to cover.'* There is a very simple way of letting God into our hearts through his Word; simple, but not always easy! This way is called *Lectio Divina*, Latin for *Holy Reading*. We can do this exercise in a group or alone, and as things are at the moment, it will probably have to be alone, (unless you are self-isolating with someone who wants to join you.) *Lectio Divina* need take no more than ten minutes of your day. Here is just one way of doing it:

Take a few moments to become aware that God is looking at you with great love; he wants to come into your heart. You may find it helpful to light a candle and make the Sign of the Cross.

Be honest about how you are feeling: angry, distracted, fearful, joyful, sad, peaceful, frustrated. Don't pretend. Don't try to feel anything other than the way you really feel. God sees and loves you as you are and where you are.

Then pray: *'Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to the Word. Help me to hear what you are saying to me in the depths of my being. Help me to put to one side all the many things and people who need my attention. Make me attentive to the Word you will speak to me.'*



Then read a passage from the Bible. Below are some suggestions that can help you 'tap in' to where you are at the moment. Or you can read the Gospel for the day, or one of the readings for mass last Sunday that seemed to touch you in a special way. Whatever you choose to read, read slowly. If your mind wanders off, don't be surprised! God has made your wonderful mind so that it can deal with many things at the same time, so don't be surprised and don't be harsh with yourself. Gently, draw your attention back to what you are reading.



Once you have finished reading, pause for at least a minute and be silent.

Then read the same passage again. This time look out for a word or a sentence that speaks especially to you. When you have finished reading, go back to that word or sentence and hold it in your heart, it is God's word for you, today.

Repeat your word(s). Ponder what God has given you. Chew it over, the way a cow chews the cud!

Now let the word you have received become a prayer; what is God prompting you to say to him?

Gently end your time of prayer. You might say the *Glory be* ...

And don't forget to blow out your candle!

Passages from the Bible you might read:

When feeling lonely in your isolation: 2 Kings 6: 15-17

When you feel vulnerable: 1 Kings 19: 9-18

When tempted to return to an addiction: Ephesians 3: 14-19

When feeling angry or resentful: Ephesians 1: 3-10

When confused: Matthew 7: 15-20

When you are full of sadness: Luke 15: 11-32

When joyful: Philippians 3: 7-14

When wanting to pray for someone in need: Matthew 7: 7-11

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:16)