

# Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

## Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021 – 4th Sunday of Advent

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 1:39-44

#### **Blessed are you...**

*In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy.*



### A Short Thought

Twentieth Century industrialist W. J. Cameron once said "there has been only one Christmas. The rest are anniversaries." It's a time for keeping the memory of God's greatest gift alive in our hearts... In recent years many people have expressed concern that Christmas has drifted far from its religious roots. We have also witnessed an attack on religious displays in public places while watching the corporate world hijack the Christmas celebration as an excuse to sell their latest wares. Massive traffic jams, packed shopping malls, and lines stretching around the block have become hallmarks of today's Christmas activities. Ad campaigns for holiday sales can lead to pandemonium as shoppers are knocked down and trampled in their frantic efforts to buy the latest gadget. However, I suggest this is a good time to reflect upon the distinction between what we want and what we need or what we give instead of what we get.

The true value of a gift isn't necessarily measured by its price tag. In fact some of the most precious gifts cost nothing at all... and can be life changing. Many people simply need to be loved, listened to, or appreciated. Some gifts, such as taking time to listen to someone who is hurting emotionally or giving a word of encouragement, can make a tremendous difference in a person's life and bring joy to the giver. This holiday season consider how our community would be affected if everyone looked for opportunities to give someone a life-changing gift for Christmas. As Helen Steiner Rice wrote; "Bless us Lord, this Christmas, with quietness of mind; teach us to be patient and always to be kind." May we receive this most precious of gifts ourselves and be that gift for others!

*(Adapted from: Christmas; A Time for Joy, Reflection, Reverence and Tradition by D. GARY DAVIS)*

### SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. What a wonderful encounter: two women, bound by kinship, both bearing sons, both blest by the Lord. How affirming to Mary that the revelation made to her, is understood by her kinswoman. Do I have someone with whom I can share what God is doing in my life? Can others share their news with me?
2. Blessed are you – **YOU ARE BLESSED!** Do you let yourself believe this, really feel this?
3. In what ways has the Lord visited you, your family, and your community? How are you asked to be

the 'Christ-bearer' to others?

4. In life do I always appreciate what is happening and who is really present?
5. What is this gospel challenging you to do, to be?

## Prayer -

Lord, this Christmas, let my heart be touched by your gift of love and my life be your witness. My I know that I am truly blessed and that you, through my life, can bring blessings to others. With joy, expectation and confidence, I pray, 'Come Lord Jesus Come.' I ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever 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*

