

Bible Reading

2nd August – 4th September 2021



Isaiah 40:28b-31

The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.

He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.

Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;

but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;

they will run and not grow weary,

they will walk and not be faint.

Some suggestions as you come to prayer ...

- Time: If you are able to, set aside a regular time for Bible reading and prayer each day when you are best able to be focused and least likely to be interrupted. If you are not used to having a regular devotional time, don't set your sights too high. Start by setting aside 10 or 15 minutes each day. After a while you may find that you want to put aside a longer time. "Pray as you can, not as you can't."
- Stillness: Take time to still yourself and become mindful of God with you before reading the Bible passage for the day. You may consider lighting a candle or making some form of gesture as a means of reminding yourself of God's presence with you and of this time being set aside for God.
- Reading: Choose a modern Bible translation that you find easy to read and understand. Some suggested versions are: New International Version (NIV), New Living Translation (NLT) or the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Read the Bible passage through slowly twice. Notice what strikes you most - it might be just one word or a phrase. Ponder on that and speak to God about it. Use the accompanying question for the day if it is helpful.

1. *What does the text (Bible passage) say? What is going on?*
2. *What does the text say to me? What relevance does it have to my daily life?*
3. *What do I want to say to God about this text?*
4. *What difference will this text make in my life?*

- Writing: You might like to make a note of what has struck you most from your time of prayer.
- Action: Is there anything you would like to do as a result of your prayer?

SUGGESTED READINGS

These readings come from the Revised Common Lectionary. It may bring you encouragement to know that all over the world today other people will be praying with these readings, just as you are. If you find a reading especially fruitful, though, feel free to remain with it during your next prayer time, rather than moving on.

Mon 2nd Aug: Matt 14:13-21

I imagine myself in the scene. What is it like to be there (among the disciples or in the crowd)? What would I like to say to Jesus?

Tues 3rd Aug: Matt 14:22-end

I place myself in the scene, using my senses. What is this experience like for me? How do I respond to Jesus?

Wed 4th Aug: Matt 15:21-28

I imagine myself in this scene – perhaps as the Canaanite woman, or perhaps as one of the disciples. What strikes me most?

Thurs 5th Aug: Matt 16:13-23

“What about you? Who do you say that I am?” I respond to Jesus’ question.

Fri 6th Aug: 2 Peter 1:16-21 *Hiroshima Day (World Peace Day)*

I pray for peace. I may use the words from the Anglican Prayer Book which are printed later in this booklet, or pray using my own words.

Sat 7th Aug: Matt 17:14-20

I imagine that I am one of the disciples. How do I respond to Jesus’ words?

Mon 9th Aug: Matt 17:22-end

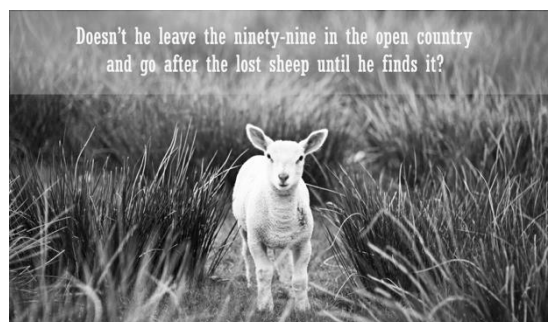
What words stand out for me in this reading today? I pray about these.

Tues 10th Aug: Matt 18:1-5, 10, 12-14

I give thanks for the compassion and kindness of Jesus which I have experienced.

Wed 11th Aug: Matt 18:15-20

Is there a situation I am troubled or anxious about? I bring this to God.



Thurs 12th Aug: Matt 18:21-19:1

How do I respond to this parable? I pay attention to my reactions and my emotions, and I ask God for wisdom and guidance.

Fri 13th Aug: Matt 19:3-12 *Birth of Florence Nightingale, 1910*

Today I might spend some of my time with God praying for nurses throughout the world.

Sat 14th Aug: Matt 19:13-15

I pray for the children in my family, among my friends' families, and within our church community. I pray also for children who are frightened or in need today.

Mon 16th Aug: Matt 19:16-22

Is there anything holding me back from following Jesus wholeheartedly?

Tues 17th Aug: Matt 19:23-end

What words stand out for me from today's challenging reading?

Wed 18th Aug: Matt 20:1-16

How do I respond to this parable today?

Thurs 19th Aug: Matt 22:1-14

Where might I place myself in this parable? I imagine being part of the story. Afterwards ... what might I want to say to Jesus?

Fri 20th Aug: Matt 22:34-40

Are there specific ways I might seek to keep these commandments today? I ask for God's help.

Sat 21st Aug: Matt 23:1-12

What does it mean to me to be "a servant"?

Mon 23rd Aug: Matt 23:13-22

*"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."
(Psalm 51:10)*

Tues 24th Aug: John 1:43-51

I imagine myself in the scene – where/who am I in the story? What do I notice? What does Jesus say to me?

Wed 25th Aug: Matt 23:27-end

*“He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)*

Thurs 26th Aug: Matt 24:42-end

I ask God for wisdom – not just in understanding Scripture, but in applying my faith to some specific aspect/s of my own life.

Fri 27th Aug: Matt 25:1-13 *The birthday of Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu – who became Mother Teresa (“Saint Teresa of Calcutta”)*

I pray for all who serve the poor, especially during this time of global pandemic.

Sat 28th Aug: Matt 25:14-30

I ask the Lord to help me to use my gifts and personality and life experience for the good of others and for his glory.

Mon 30th Aug: Luke 4:16-30

What words stand out for me from this reading? I talk to God about these.

Tues 31st Aug: Luke 4:31-37

The people were amazed at Jesus’ power and authority. What amazes me about Jesus? I bring this into my prayer.

Wed 1st Sept: Matt 5:1-12 or Psalm 119:153-end

I stay with one phrase that stands out for me. I chew it over.

Thurs 2nd Sept: Luke 5:1-11

I imagine myself in the scene. (What do I see, hear, taste, feel, smell?)
How do I respond to Jesus?

Fri 3rd Sept: Luke 5:33-end

What stands out for me most from this reading?

Sat 4th Sept: Luke 6:1-5 *First Canterbury Earthquake, 2010*

I might reflect on the Canterbury earthquakes, praying for ongoing healing and hope for myself, for others, and for our city. I might also wish to pray for others affected by recent natural disasters.

**A Prayer for Peace –
from A New Zealand Prayer Book | He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa**

Let us be at peace within ourselves.

Silence

Let us accept that we are profoundly loved
and need never be afraid.

Silence

Let us be aware of the source of being
that is common to us all
and to all living creatures.

Silence

Let us be filled with the presence of the great compassion
towards ourselves and towards all living beings.

Silence

Realising that we are all nourished
from the same source of life,
may we so live that others be not deprived
of air, food, water, shelter, or the chance to live.

Silence

Let us pray that we ourselves cease to be
a cause of suffering to one another.

Silence

With humility let us pray for the establishment
of peace in our hearts and on earth.
May God kindle in us
the fire of love
to bring us alive
and give warmth to the world.
Lead me from death to life,
from falsehood to truth;
lead me from despair to hope,
from fear to trust;
lead me from hate to love,
from war to peace.
Let peace fill our heart,
our world, our universe.

In the evening you may wish to use this **Examen Prayer**.

The Examen prayer: A 5 step process

1. Pray for God's Help

Ask God to help you look at your day with his eyes.

2. Give Thanks for the Gifts of the Day

With God's gentle guidance, let God show you the blessings of your day. Name the blessings, from the most significant and obvious to the more common and ordinary. Be specific.

3. Pray Over the Significant Feelings That Surfaced

As you reflect on your day, you may notice some strong feelings arise: painful or pleasing – for example, joy, peace, sadness, anxiety, confusion, hope, compassion, regret, anger, confidence, jealousy, self-doubt, boredom, or excitement. Pick one or two strong feelings and ask God to help you understand what aroused those feelings and where they led you:

- Did they draw you closer to God?
- Did the feelings lead you away from God?

4. Rejoice and Seek Forgiveness

Rejoice in those times that you were brought closer to God and ask God for forgiveness for those times today when you resisted God's presence. Praise God for the awareness even of the things you are not proud of, because this awareness is the beginning of healing and conversion.

5. Look to Tomorrow

Look at your schedule for tomorrow. God wants to be there with you, in the most dramatic and mundane moments of your life. Ask God to give you the grace you need. Close with speaking to God from your heart or with a familiar prayer like the Lord's Prayer.

(There are many versions of the Prayer of Examen. This one is adapted from *The Ignatian Prayer Adventure* by Kevin O'Brien SJ, 77)