

## **REFLECTION FOR LENT WEEK 2: (MEETING ON 6 MARCH 2021 AT 7PM ONLINE).**

***Welcome to the Lent reflections for this week. Take your time to read the Bible texts and apply the method of reflection suggested below. We shall also share our reflections at the end of the week.***

### **LECTIO DIVINA – A WAY OF READING THE BIBLE**

*Lectio Divina* is a contemplative way of reading the Bible. It dates back to the early centuries of the Christian Church and was established as a monastic practice by Benedict in the sixth century. It is a way of praying the Scriptures that leads us deeper into God's word. We slow down. We read a short passage more than once. We chew it over slowly and carefully. We savour it. Scripture begins to speak to us in a new way. It speaks to us personally, and aids that union we have with God through Christ, who is himself the Living Word.

Ask God to speak to you through the passage that you are about to read.

This way of praying starts with our silence. We often make the mistake of thinking prayer is about what we say to God. It is actually the other way round. God wants to speak to us. He will do this through the Scriptures. So do not worry about what to say. Do not worry if nothing jumps out at you at first. God is patient. He will wait for the opportunity to get in. He will give you a word and lead you to understand its meaning for you today.

**First reading: LISTEN:** As you read the passage listen for a word or phrase that attracts you. Allow it to arise from the passage as if it is God's Word for you today.

**Second reading: PONDER:** As you read the passage again, ask how this word or phrase speaks to your life and why it has connected with you. Ponder it carefully in silence.

**Third reading: PRAY:** As you read the passage for the last time, ask what Christ is calling from you. What is it that you need to do or consider or relinquish or take on as a result of what God is saying to you in this word or phrase? In the silence that follows the reading, pray for the grace of the Spirit to plant this word in your heart.

*(Adapted from Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, 2021)*

### **REFLECTION 4: Read John 6.16-27**

#### ***'It is I; do not be afraid' (v.20)***

Four words, in the vivid Greek narration of this drama, tell us everything we need to know about Jesus. 'I AM; FEAR NOT. Into the midst of the storm, Jesus comes, bearing divine reassurance and peace. Hebrew literature is full of dark stories about the raging of the sea. In graphic detail, Psalm 77 describes one of those elemental storms: 'the clouds poured out water, the skies thundered; your arrows flashed on every side' (Psalm 77.17). Meditating on God's power to redeem, the psalm recalls how the Lord strode through mighty waters, making a path through the heaving seas. The imagery is unforgettable and the meaning unambiguous: the one who walks through stormy seas is none other

than the almighty Lord himself. Did the disciples begin to grasp this? The story tells how, as they crossed the sea in their small boat, it grew dark, such that they could not see Jesus. Surprised by the ferocity of the storm, they became suddenly aware of the nearness of the Lord; yet, even then, they were terrified and hesitated to take him into the boat. Buffeted by anxious times, all Christians know these archetypal fears. When we are overwhelmed by forces too strong for us, even in the pitch of night, Christ comes close – to reassure, to speak peace, to step right into our lives, to guide us to our safe haven.

‘It is I; do not be afraid.’

*(Reflection by Margaret Whipp)*

## **REFLECTION 5: Read John 6.27-40**

### ***‘I am the bread of life’ (v.35)***

Little by little, the glorious vision of the Fourth Gospel continues to unfold. Jesus first utters the majestic phrase, ‘I am’, at the calming of the tempest earlier in the chapter. Now we begin to glimpse the vast depth of meaning set forth in those words. ‘I am’ is nothing less than an emphatic expression of divine origin, and of personal union with God. Moses, trembling before the burning bush, was the first to receive the revelation of the Lord’s name in mysterious terms. Translators, quite naturally, struggle to render the enormity of this designation, which concentrates all the energy of the verb ‘to be’. How can human thought or language begin to apprehend the truth of a name that is given as ‘I AM WHO I AM’, or simply ‘I AM’? (Exodus 3.14-15). Here in the gospel of Jesus, we begin to see with our own eyes and grasp with our own hands the electrifying immanence of this divine aliveness. Step by step, the evangelist will take us deeper into this mystery, through seven momentous sayings on the lips of Jesus. ‘I AM the bread of life.’ Like manna in the wilderness, yet so much more, Jesus satisfies our aching hunger. His gift is as earthy as bread, and as heavenly as life eternal: it is the gift of his own self.

‘Lord, give us this bread always!’

*(Reflection by Margaret Whipp)*

## **COLLECT**

Heavenly Father, your Son battled with the powers of darkness, and grew closer to you in the desert: help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer that we may witness to your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord.