Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 2021

INTRODUCTION

We hope you enjoy this aid to your scripture reflection, alone or with others, during this Advent. Prayer is an integral part of our Synodal journey. This Advent why not take time to reflect on our Sunday Gospels. Take a moment to slow down in our busy world.

Lectio Divina is a practical approach to praying the scriptures. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, *Lectio Divina* occurs "where the Word of God is so read and meditated that it becomes prayer." The three key moments of this approach to the scriptures are reading, reflection and prayer. We read the Word of God to understand it; we reflect on the Word to see how it can apply to our lives; we pray in order to be transformed by the Word.

These three "moments" of *Lectio Divina* can be summed up by three questions:

i. When we read, we ask: "What does the text say in itself?"
ii. When we reflect, we ask: "What does the text say to me/us?"
iii. When we pray, we ask: "What does the text lead me/us to say?"

Ossory Adult Faith Development
Tel 056 7753624 Email afd@ossory.ie Web www.ossory.ie

READ
REFLECT
PRAY
SECOND SUNDAY
LUKE 3:1-6

READ

All mankind shall see the salvation of God

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod terarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:
A voice cries in the wilderness;

Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley will be filled in,
every mountain and hill be laid low,
winding ways will be straightened
and rough roads made smooth.
And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECT

Have you ever read a book with lots of footnotes? Usually, that kind of book is the preserve of scholars. You won't find footnotes in a novel or a short story. They'd be a distraction from the main events. In fact, that's why even scholarly books have footnotes: so that the readers don't get too distracted from the main train of thought. They might glance down to see what's in a footnote – or then again, they might not. In any case, when material is put in a footnote, that's to make the point that while it might be of some interest, it might also be a distraction.

When the evangelists were writing their Gospels, they did not use footnotes. But in a certain sense, they did. We have a lovely example of 'footnotes that aren't quite footnotes' in today's Gospel reading from Luke. The evangelist wants to set the stage for the preaching of John the Baptist. He begins by telling us who the Roman emperor was at that time. He then tells us who was in charge of the Roman province in which John – and Jesus – lived. Then Luke goes on to tell us who the local leaders were, and who was in charge in Jerusalem.

But the most important thing Luke has to tell us is that the Word of God came to a certain person, John the Baptist, while all these other people were – apparently! – in charge. That's the heart of the matter, as far as Luke the evangelist is concerned: the most important and influential people are those who are receiving the Word of God, just as Mary received the word of God at Nazareth, and went on to become the Mother of Jesus, the Word incarnate. The emperor Tiberius and his agents, Pontius Pilate, Philip and Lysanias, are the background to what God is doing. They are, to use an image from the computer desktop environment, 'wallpaper.' They are footnotes! We are invited to take a glance at them, but only so that we might locate the real action, and the real action in the Gospel happens whenever people are open to the word of God. This is true for disciples today: there is so much going on in the world, so much chatter and debate and controversy. But where is the real action happening? The real action today is located in the very same place as the real action in the time of John the Baptist, Mary – and Jesus. It is where God's word is heard and heeded by his faithful people, irrespective of who is in charge, or what is going on in the world.

PRAY

Lord, in this season of Advent, as in every time, there is so much happening, there is so much turmoil in the world. This pandemic has us in fear and turmoil. We can receive into our hearts a large and depressing dose of speculation and anxiety, or we can open our hearts to your word, just like John the Baptist, and Mary, indeed like Jesus himself. Help us to choose well, to have the wisdom to receive your word into our hearts and to bear a rich harvest in our lives. Amen.

Our Synodal Prayer: We stand before you, Holy Spirit, as we gather together...

Synod 2021 2023

For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

PRAYER FOR THE UNIVERSAL SYNODAL PATHWAY

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.
All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever. Amen.

Ossory Adult Faith Development
Tel 056 7753624 Email afd@ossory.ie Web www.ossory.ie