



## Jesus and Scripture

There are many gospel passages that speak of Jesus' relationship with Scripture. Raised a Jew, he was steeped in the revealed Word of God. This may seem a strange assertion given that, as John declares in the Prologue to his gospel, Jesus **is** that Word! *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word was made flesh."* Jesus is the very incarnation of the Word of God – all the more reason for us to follow the maxim of Saint Jerome: "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ."

As Emmanuel, God-with-us, at the age of 12, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem with his parents. When he doesn't return to Nazareth with them, they go looking for him and find him in the Temple among the teachers of the Law, *"listening to them and asking them questions"* (Luke 2:46). This tells us something about Jesus' early fascination – humanly speaking – with the intricacies of Scripture. Remember, he "emptied himself to become as all people are", as Paul tells the Philippians (2:7), which includes sharing in our own gradual growth in knowledge and understanding of the Bible.

Jesus' intimate relationship with Scripture, and the fact that he identifies himself with the Word "in the beginning", is highlighted in his dispute with the Pharisees in John 5. To them – who claimed exclusive authority over the interpretation of the Bible – he declared: *"You have never heard [God's] voice, you have never seen his shape, and his word finds no home in you because you do not believe in the one he has sent."* (John 5:37-38). By this statement

Jesus dismisses any sense of ownership people may think they have of the Word of God. He takes a dim view of bible-punching as a form of emotional and intellectual abuse. He goes on to claim that the Pharisees are blinded by their own arrogance, so much so that they fail to see that it was for Jesus that Moses prepared us. *"If you really believed him you would believe me too, since it was I that he was writing about"* (John 5:46).

Finally, let's turn to Luke 24 and the beautiful sketch it gives of Jesus and Scripture. What's very special about this passage is that it mirrors our own Catholic liturgy which is divided into: (1) the Liturgy of the Word; and (2) the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In his walk with two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus first gives them a Bible study, and then, when he is invited into their home, he breaks the bread with them after which their eyes are opened. Word followed by Sacrament.

Jesus starts his Scripture lesson with a little reprimand, admonishing these two disciples for being *"so slow to believe the full message of the prophets"* (v. 25). After that wake-up call (which we all need from time to time!), he goes on more gently: *"Starting with Moses then going through all the prophets he explained to them the passages throughout the Scriptures that were about himself"* (v.27).

Next time you pick up your Bible, first hold it silently, praying to Jesus-the-Word to reveal himself through it to you. Then invoke the Holy Spirit who *"reminds us of everything Jesus taught"*.

## SUNDAY MASS

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

All peoples, clap your hands. Cry to God with shouts of joy!

**FIRST READING:** 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Psalm 89.

### RESPONSE:

*I will sing forever of your mercies, O Lord.*

1. I will sing forever of your mercies, O Lord; through all ages my mouth will proclaim your fidelity. I have declared your mercy is established forever; your fidelity stands firm as the heavens. **R**

2. How blessed the people who know your praise, who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face, who find their joy every day in your name, who make your justice their joyful acclaim. **R**

3. For you are the glory of their strength; by your favour it is that our might is exalted. Behold, the Lord is our shield; he is the Holy One of Israel, our king. **R**

**SECOND READING:** Romans 6:3-4, 8-11.

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

*Alleluia, alleluia. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation; declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Alleluia.*

**GOSPEL:** Matthew 10:37-42.

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all within me, his holy name.*

## THE WEEK AHEAD

# Live the Word

### Mon 29 Jun SS PETER & PAUL, APOSTLES

Acts 12:1-11; Psalm 34; Matthew 16:13-19

If we want to be followers of Jesus we must learn the art of surrender. All our agendas and plans must be cast aside. Do not wait until everything is in perfect order in your life, but be willing to live without certainty.

### Tue 30 Jun (The First Martyrs of the Church of Rome)

Amos 3:1-8; 4:11-12; Psalm 5; Mt 8:23-27

As our lives change and lurch in unexpected directions, try to cast fear aside and see it as a time to nurture faith. Instead of complaining, pray: 'Here I am Lord. I'm glad you're in charge and not me. What's next?'

### Wed 1 Jul Liturgy of the Day

Amos 5:14-15, 21-24; Psalm 50; Matthew 8:28-34

We resist discipline because it is humbling and painful. Yet we know that obedience is impossible without discipline. The weaknesses in our characters can only be refined through the Holy Spirit.

### Thu 2 Jul Liturgy of the Day

Amos 7:10-17; Psalm 19; Matthew 9:1-8

God calls us to freely and generously respond to God's grace. God sees in us who we are but also who we can become. God's grace is free, but it is we who have to act or respond.

### Fri 3 Jul ST THOMAS, A

Ephesians 2:19-22; Psalm 117; John 20:24-29

When we encounter a homeless person, or try to heal fractured relationships, or help relieve a loved-one's pain or anguish, we are encountering Jesus in his wounds among us – the risen Jesus, here and now.

### Sat 4 Jul (St Elizabeth of Portugal)

Amos 9:11-15; Psalm 85; Matthew 9:14-17

Prepare for the day ahead or reflect on the day gone by with the word of God. The daily Scripture readings beckon to us to bend close and listen for the word of God so that, hearing it, we can do God's will.

### Sun 5 Jul 14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Zechariah 9:9-10; Psalm 145; Matthew 11:25-30

*To really know our 'nothingness' we must also love it. And we cannot love it unless we see that it is good. And we cannot see that it is good unless we accept it – Thomas Merton.*

(KEY: SOLEMNITY; FEAST; Memorial; (Optional Memorial) A=Apostle)

This is a revised edition of the ever-popular Redemptorist Pastoral Publication, "Learn to Pray: Discovering different forms of prayer." The title itself evokes the incident in the Gospels where the disciples petitioned Jesus: "Lord, teach us to pray!"

Throughout the Christian centuries, subsequent disciples of Jesus have also wanted to learn how to pray, and have developed different techniques of praying. This booklet gathers together some of the many different possible ways of praying.

**Price: R40.00 plus postage**

**Order from our website [www.rpp.org.za](http://www.rpp.org.za) or email [orders@rpp.org.za](mailto:orders@rpp.org.za)**

