

Read - Think - Pray

Third Sunday of Advent, 12-16 December 2011, Prepared by: Angus Kelly

Monday

Psalm

Psalm 126

Think:

This song celebrates Israel's return from exile. Can you remember a moment when your dreams came true?

Have you paid attention to the fact that some of your dreams HAVE come true and you were too busy to notice?

The Psalmist celebrates, but is also mindful of those who are still suffering: 'May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.'

Pray:

Give thanks to God for the work done in our lives; think of those who are suffering - pray that they would know the joy that the Psalmist promises. Pray for Jesus to come into our world.

Tuesday

Old Testament

Isaiah 61:1-4 & 8-11

Think:

'They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.' - Isaiah 61:4

This passage from Isaiah reminds us of Jesus first sermon. It also reminds us - as 'Christ Followers' that we are called to be 'healing people' - people who make whole. Healing includes restoring the places in which people live.

Pray:

In South Africa - as we pray - we can remember the squatter camps and dusty townships attached to nearly every town or city. And pray that we would find ways to bring healing to those communities.

So that - those who have sown in tears, may reap with laughter.

Wednesday

Epistle

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Think:

21 - 'Test everything; hold fast to what is good...'

Paul reminds his readers to live a positive kind of Christianity; giving thanks, praying, being open to the Spirit and heeding the words of the prophets. His prayer is that God would 'sanctify us - finish the work of realising his image in us.'

Pray:

Paul reminds us to pray, and to give thanks in all circumstances; how about some 'thanksgiving' prayer today?

Thursday

Gospel

John 1:6-8;19-28

Think:

Verse 8 - 'He came to testify to the light.'

Thinking of Jesus as 'the light' is quite a common expression; so common that we often gloss over it; but its a powerful idea. Light enables us to see everything clearly and honestly.

Do we really want the 'lights' turned on?

Pray:

Pray that we would be brave enough to let the light shine directly into our hearts and lives; so that we can see what needs mending, what needs quitting and what needs nurturing.

Friday

Next week's gospel

Luke 1:26-38

Think:

'He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' - 31,32

These words spoken to a peasant girl about the child in her womb. Her son will be a king forever.

God enters into our lives in all their mundane simplicity; and brings us his son, our King.

Pray:

Help us to recognise your potential to transform the ordinary.