



Pick Up : SCRIPTURE

Jesus said “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Nothing can grow your faith more than reading, studying, and praying the Bible. It’s not just a book about God, but it’s in God’s own words. In fact, it is not just a book, but a library of 73 books composed over 1,000 years by men as well as women. It contains dozens of literary structures, like poetry, narrative, parable, chronicle, fable, and hymns as well as letters. The 27 books of the New Testament are arguably the most impactful words ever written.

The Christian Bible is unique because it is not just a collection of wise sayings by some mountaintop guru, but is essentially historical. It’s God’s history with his people, Israel. Thus, the Bible is not meant to sit on a shelf collecting dust. For God’s Word to be living and effective in your life, you need to dive deep into the text itself. Don’t know where to start? The answer is always start with one of the four Gospels.

This Lent the Church is in cycle A of her liturgy, which means we are principally reading the Gospel of Matthew. For our spiritual discipline together, we want you to spend one week reading just two chapters of the Gospel of Matthew: 26 and 27. This is called “The Passion Narrative,” meaning it connects us to the events of the Last Supper, the trial, crucifixion and the burial of Christ. It’s the most important part, and is our focus during Lent.

How to Pray Scripture as a Spiritual Discipline:

Wake up 30 minutes early and get your coffee. We all need caffeine when starting a new spiritual practice like this! Sit down with your Bible opened to Matthew, chapter 26. Take a deep breath, close your eyes, make the Sign of the Cross, and ask the Holy Spirit to move your mind and heart as you read the text nice and slow.

Pause frequently, asking yourself one question: What do the words and/or deeds of Jesus reveal to me about God the Father’s love for me? Read for at least 15 minutes. If you should finish the 2 chapters within the 7 days, simply start back over and prayerfully reread the chapters again. This helps cement the readings in your mind. You’ll hear these readings again on Palm Sunday as the Church proclaims the Passion of Jesus.

After these 7 days, maybe start at the beginning of Matthew and begin a practice of reading the life of Christ continuously. Move on to the next gospel when you finish and then start back over. This practice is somewhat common in the Dominican Order today and is called *lectio continua*.