

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT PRAYER MEETING 29-4-20

This week we started by sharing either things we are grateful for or “signs of the times” – what God may be doing through the present extraordinary circumstances.

Signs of the times:

- People are becoming more friendly, kind and open. Non Catholics are saying they have visited a streamed Mass and are showing interest. It has been a time to reflect on our lives and what is important “Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life” (John 6:27)
- People have shown an interest in our prayer meeting.
- The Lord wants us to enter into a new relationship/partnership with Him – to experience growth, wisdom and revelation of the authority we have in Christ. He wants to work through us to reach those who have become bereaved or unemployed in the crisis. See next page for full details of this word, plus a prayer we can say over ourselves based on *Ephesians 1: 17 – 24*
- Discussion on WhatsApp about the challenges of the daily Mass readings. Suggestion that we start a WhatsApp for the prayer group – see covering email.
- People are discovering new abilities through taking up new hobbies or becoming proficient with new technology; using creative gifts given by God; others are discovering they can do without unnecessary things and live more simply or travel less. These will all have long term effects on the way we live our lives.

Gratitude:

- Sing to the Lord a new song (Psalm 96:1 and 149:1) St Augustine says that if we live good lives, we ourselves will be the praise of God
- Be thankful for families being together, for the beautiful weather, for the garden... for everything we have. See the positives even in routine things – see them as a gift.
- John 6 passage on the bread of life. Even though we cannot currently receive Jesus Eucharistically, he is feeding us in other ways: we can receive him through his word in Scripture – he is the living word. Take time to chew over the words in the readings, to read them prayerfully.

Intercessory prayer

- For people who have been affected in unexpected ways e.g. the convents in Kenya and elsewhere who make altar breads and rely on the money they make from this.
- For us to use all the gifts and opportunities God has given us to spread his good news more widely.
- For all those who are fearful because of having to go into work
- For families living in small flats and unable to get out, that they will experience calmness and protection
- For those in hospital: that they either be ready to meet the Lord, or recover and give thanks to God.
- When we talk to others, that we use the language of faith to encourage them.
- For Fr Niven and all priests, especially when they visit the sick and dying in hospital, that they are protected in their ministry and give strong witness to faith.
- For all elderly and vulnerable people to remain well and safe.
- For all who are fearful, especially the young and carers, doctors and nurses; that God’s strength will uphold them and comfort them and bring them hope.
- For the government and the civil service, for the wisdom in making important decisions and for a spirit of political cooperation rather than conflict.

God is calling us into partnership.

I feel the Lord wants us to enter into a new and deeper relationship with him. The world has no map to navigate the uncharted seas that are ahead and I sense that the times will be difficult. He is wants us to go deeper in our relationship with him because he is calling us into a new PARTNERSHIP to work with him in the times ahead. This time of lockdown is an open time of grace and preparation; of personal growth and transition, when he is asking us to surrender all our earthly dependencies and trust completely in the promises of God. He wants to give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation so that, as children of God, we can truly know that we are seated next to him in the heavenly realms. He wants to open the eyes of our hearts so that we can take hold of the authority and the inheritance that we have in Jesus, which is far above all rule, authority, power and dominion, not only in this age but the age to come. Then, through the Holy Spirit, in glorious partnership with Jesus, we will be ready to take hold of his mighty power; the same power that raised Christ from the dead, that has been given to us.

Jenny Osterfield 29/4/20

Prayer adapted from Ephesians 1: 17 - 24

May the glorious Father, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, give me the strength to surrender all my dependencies and to trust completely in him. May he give me a spirit of wisdom and revelation and open the eyes of my heart so that I may truly know the authority he has given to me, through being seated with him in the heavenly realms, that is far above all rule, authority, power and dominion, for this age and the age to come. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, and in glorious partnership with Jesus, may I be made ready to take hold of his mighty power, the same power that raised Christ from the dead, that has been given to me.