

SESSION 2 / THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE

God our Saviour, desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3-4)

Theme As Jesus has loved us, so we are called to love one another. This, and love of God above all things, summarises the will of God (cf. CCC 2822).

Welcome: We Pray and Share Together (15 mins)

O God,
send forth your Holy Spirit
into our hearts that we might perceive,
into our minds that we might remember,
into our souls that we might meditate.
Inspire us to speak with love, holiness,
tenderness and mercy.
Teach, guide and direct our thoughts and senses
from beginning to end.
May your grace help us to see with your eyes
and to act with your love and light in our hearts.
May we be strengthened with wisdom from on high
for the sake and glory of your kingdom.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

In a period of calm and a space of trust, each one of us is invited to share briefly one thing that has happened in the past week. It could be one thing that has given you cause for concern, something shared during the last time you met as a group or something that has given you cause to celebrate.

In this moment of peace and fellowship, we pray for the good of the group. Each member is invited to offer up any personal intentions. We also pray for the good of the Church, for wisdom in our country and for the common good. Let us also bring to mind the poor, the sick and those who have died.

We join together in praying: Our Father...

Read the Word Haggai 1:2-13 (5 mins)

Note: The Book of Haggai records events in 520 BC, some 18 years after Cyrus had conquered Babylon and issued a decree in 538 BC, allowing the captive Israelites to return to Judea. The restoration of the Temple was vital to the people, after the exile.

‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD.’ Then the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, ‘Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house. Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labours.’

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD.

Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the Lord’s message, ‘I am with you, declares the LORD.

Meditate on the Word Haggai 1:2-13 (20 mins)

Once the Scripture passage has been read you are asked to choose a word or phrase that has struck you. Underline it with a pen or you might wish to simply hold it in mind. You will be invited to share the word or phrase with the group.

Another person will then read the passage. While you listen attentively, repeat the process of holding onto a word or phrase, making a note and sharing it. In doing this, you are invited to consider the following questions:

How have these words or phrases resonated in my heart and in my mind?

What is the Lord saying to me at this very moment in my life?

In what way has my reading of this passage of Holy Scripture changed me?

How has it helped me to resolve to be more Christ-like in the coming days?

You are encouraged to re-read the Holy Scripture during the coming week, revisiting these questions.

Explore and Reflect on the Theme (25 mins)

Quite often prayer is experienced as a simple, almost transactional, request for God to bless a decision we have already made. Lord, we ask, please allow my plans to come to fruition; please help me in my efforts; please support my strength and my resolutions. But what would our lives look like if we genuinely, in each and every decision, sought to follow God's plans for our lives?

The prophet Jeremiah, when writing from Jerusalem to those in exile, reminds us that God wants to be sought, wants to be found and wants us to flourish:

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

In the scripture passage we read from the prophet Haggai, that the Israelites have returned from exile, with Jeremiah's words in their ears, yet they focus on the rebuilding of their own homes while the Temple still lies in ruins. Each new day is an opportunity to choose either our 'houses', our design or to affirm our desire to give glory to God, to rebuild his Temple.

It is this choice that shows that we are followers of Christ to those around us. It is the Holy Spirit that gives us the particular gifts to follow his path. Through Baptism and Confirmation, we are anointed with the Spirit and these gifts (Isaiah 11:1; CCC 1831). The gifts, permit us to live out a life of grace; that is to share in the divine life (CCC 759 and 1997). These gifts help us to choose the Lord's will and to see signs of the Kingdom, glimpses of heaven, the Lord with us, in our daily lives. They enable us to live as the family of God.

Each and every day, the Lord's Prayer is recited in countless languages and diverse cultural settings. Its familiarity provides a sense of unity for Christians worldwide, fostering a shared spiritual language. In some simple way, it recalls the prophecies of God's reign over the nations (e.g. Zechariah 14:9 and Psalm 47). Is not life, for Christians from every nation, the struggle between doing God's will and doing our own?

When prompted by his disciples to eat, after his encounter with the woman at the well, Jesus gave a cryptic response. Jesus told his disciples that doing his Father's will is what truly sustains him (John 4:34). He shows us that this line of the Lord's Prayer is not a passive request but an active engagement with God's plan for salvation (cf. CCC 2822). The Father's will is done perfectly in heaven; Jesus teaches us to pray that everyone on earth – ourselves included – join the angels and the saints in serving the king, revering his holy name and doing his will perfectly, as it is in heaven.

Responding to what has been heard

By committing ourselves to action we are saying that we want to make a difference in our lives and in the lives of others. We are committing to make the words of the Lord's Prayer resonate in our lives. What have you heard today that you find challenging? What do you find affirming? What is your response to God's offer of eternal life? Please share if you feel comfortable. What are you going to do about what you have heard today?

Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord (10 mins)

You are invited to close with a time of meditation on Psalm 40 (39). Read it slowly, pause between verses, reflect on its meaning for your life and your journey in faith, hope and love. You may also wish to conclude with the Lord's Prayer, another prayer of your own choosing or a moment of silence.

A: I waited, I waited for the LORD,
and he stooped down to me;
he heard my cry.

B: He drew me from the deadly pit,
from the miry clay.
He set my feet upon a rock,
made my footsteps firm.

A: He put a new song into my mouth,
praise of our God.
Many shall see and fear
and shall trust in the LORD.

B: You delight not in sacrifice and offerings,
but in an open ear.
You do not ask for holocaust and victim.

A: Then I said, 'See, I have come.'
In the scroll of the book it stands written of me:
'I delight to do your will, O my God;
your instruction lies deep within me.'

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

A blessing taken from the Liturgy of the Hours is included here.

May the Lord bless us and keep us from all evil
and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Offering praise & seeking the LORD's will

The first series of petitions carries us toward him, for his own sake: **thy** name, **thy** kingdom, **thy** will! It is characteristic of love to think first of the one whom we love. In none of the three petitions do we mention ourselves; the burning desire, even anguish, of the beloved Son for his Father's glory seizes us: 'hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done...' These three supplications were already answered in the saving sacrifice of Christ, but they are henceforth directed in hope toward their final fulfilment, for God is not yet all in all (CCC 2804).

Asking the Father that his name be made holy draws us into his plan of loving kindness for the fullness of time, 'according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ,' that we might 'be holy and blameless before him in love.' (CCC 2807)

By a discernment according to the Spirit, Christians have to distinguish between the growth of the Reign of God and the progress of the culture and society in which they are involved (CCC 2820).

By prayer we can discern 'what is the will of God' and obtain the endurance to do it (CCC 2826).

What would he not give to his children who ask, since he has already granted them the gift of being his children?

St Augustine

[Catechism 2816-2827]



Meditate on Sacred Art: Visio Divina (2)

Describe what you can see, what is happening?

What does this picture say about the power of the Holy Spirit?

In Confirmation, you received the fire of the Spirit. How do you respond?

How might you live in this powerful reality in the coming days?

The Heavenly Jerusalem (1375-1397) by Jacobello Albergno / Hermitage, Saint Petersburg