Bread for the Journey

Daily Readings and Prayers on the Revised Common Lectionary

Monday, August 29, 2011

READ - The Psalter: Psalm 148

Considered one of the "Hallelujah" psalms because it begins and ends with the Hebrew word which means "Praise the Lord!", this psalm invokes all of creation to offer praise to God for his mighty works - not just human beings, but the angels and all living things God created.

REFLECT –

- Read the psalm aloud, using your imagination to bring to mind the images described in each verse. Focus on praising God for all the many ways in which he has blessed you today. Hallelujah!

PRAY -

Lord, I offer you my praise and thanksgiving together with all your glorious creation. Amen.

Tuesday, August 30, 2011

READ - The Old Testament: Exodus 12:1-14

As Moses prepared to lead the people out of Egypt at God's direction, in one final defining blow against the oppression of the Pharoah, God secures their release AND tells the Israelites that they must always remember this day and the events as part of their worship of the Lord.

REFLECT –

- What things do we do as part of our study and worship to remember the great and mighty works of God and the life and teachings of Jesus? Are they just empty rituals or do they help you to remember who you are as a Christian? Have you read for yourself the great stories of the Bible like this one which show so clearly the power and direction of God in human affairs?

PRAY -

O God, teach me through worship and the study of your holy scriptures that I may know your great works and use me just as you used Moses in the accomplishment of your will in this world. Amen.

Wednesday, August 31, 2011

READ - The Epistle: Romans 13:8-14

The context of this conversation between Paul and the Roman church is their questions about meeting worldly obligations such as paying taxes, serving in the Roman military and obeying Roman laws. Paul instructs them to take care of all those things, but their primary focus should be loving God and one another in preparation for Christ's return.

REFLECT –

- Sometimes we may feel that we cannot focus on God because of all the other things involved in living our lives – jobs, raising children, paying our bills, maintaining a home. Yet Paul would tell us that a spirit of love should undergird all those things – in the way we treat other people and how we use our resources and our time.

PRAY -

Father, thank you for loving me and help me to share that same love with all whom I encounter in my daily life. Amen.

Thursday, September 1, 2011

READ - The Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

The unity of the early Christian church and the integrity of its members were critical to the health of that body and its ability to share the gospel in a credible way with others. Those who sinned and were unrepentant undermined the entire body of the church and Jesus here outlines a step-by-step process for dealing with that issue.

REFLECT –

- This process for confronting sin and offering forgiveness and reconciliation seems foreign to us in our culture in which we feel that our sin is only between us and God. It's not the church's business. But just as in a family, the sin of one in the community of faith has a ripple effect on all others. If we really care about one another, it IS the business of the church.

PRAY -

O God, help me to be ready to confess my sin, ask forgiveness from those I may have wronged and to lovingly help others to do the same. Amen.

Friday, September 2, 2011

ACT -

Focus Verse: Matthew 18:20

Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

Jesus reinforces in this passage the importance of Christians getting together regularly to study, read scripture, worship and to share one another's joys and burdens. The Holy Spirit can do remarkable things in small groups of Christians who meet together regularly. Are you part of a small group within the church? Perhaps a Sunday School class, bible study group or other intentional Christian gathering. If not, seek one out. If you're already in such a group, invite others who need that Christian nurture to be part of that group.