

Formed in Prayer

For use in personal or staff prayer



1. Beginning

- Be still and ask the Holy Spirit to be with you.
- Give thanks to God for the blessings in your life.
- Ask for forgiveness and surrender worries to God.
- Pray the opening prayer.

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, I/we ask that you be present in this space. I/we pray that you speak to us through the words of scriptures, forming us through this prayer. I/we ask that the Holy Spirit guides us closer to your likeness.

2. Listening to the Gospel - Sunday 2nd August

Mt 14:13-21

When Jesus received this news he withdrew by boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves. But the crowds heard of this and, leaving the towns, went after him on foot. So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them and healed their sick. When evening came, the disciples went to him and said, 'This is a lonely place, and time has slipped by; so send the people away, and they can go to the villages to buy themselves some food.' Jesus replied, 'There is no need for them to go: give them something to eat yourselves.' But they answered, 'All we have with us is five loaves and two fish.' So he said, 'Bring them here to me.' He gave orders that the people were to sit down on the grass; then he took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing. And breaking the loaves he handed them to his disciples, who gave them to the crowds. They all ate as much as they wanted, and they collected the scraps left over, twelve baskets full. Now about five thousand men had eaten, to say nothing of women and children.

3. Reflection and Quiet Time

To place ourselves in the full context of this scripture today, we must visit the previous passage. The 'news' that Jesus had received was that His cousin, John the Baptist, had been imprisoned and now beheaded by King Herod. Christ, in His shared humanity, grieves and withdraws with His friends.

When we encounter tragedy, our human experience may be to withdraw and withhold. We tend to withhold our suffering from others, withhold our time, our mercy, our generosity, and withhold our heart from receiving a healing grace.

What we see in Jesus in His response truly goes against the grain. Rather than being subject to feelings of injustice and acting out through the lenses of contempt, revenge, hatred, and bitterness, we see a lived response of openness, shared suffering, seeing the good in others, and death to self for the good of those who need mercy.

The natural human response, even to the disciples, after giving extra of themselves, was to rest and to "send the people away," to be left in peace, to relax and to mourn. But Jesus called them even further to say, "there is no need for them to go," there is more we can do for them, follow me, be with me.

What is this love that so overtly wills the good of the other? It is a love that can only be lived through God's grace, in participation with the Holy Spirit, through a relationship with Jesus and leading by following Him who created you.

4. Pray for Your Intentions

- Yourself, family and friends
- School or ministry
- Strength, courage or guidance
- Any other needs

5. Closing Prayer

Jesus, move my heart to love as you do.
Open my eyes to see your face in others.
Help me to empty myself to make my life less about me and more about you and how I can love your people.

"The world offers you comfort. But you were not made for comfort. You were made for Greatness!"

- Pope Benedict XVI