



## Praying the Sunday Gospel

### A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (4:12-23)

Hearing that John had been arrested, Jesus went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled:

*'Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali!  
Way of the sea on the far side of Jordan,  
Galilee of the nations!  
The people that lived in darkness has seen a great light;  
on those who dwell in the land and shadow of death  
a light has dawned.'*

From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' And they left their nets at once and followed him. Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. At once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him.

He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people.

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For the prayer, overleaf is a structured sequence which may help.

*It is really important that there should be no pressure on anyone during these steps. Respectful listening is the key, because this is a time of prayer, not a bible study session. If someone prefers to take part in total silence, that is okay. It should all take around 45 minutes. The times given are only an indication.*

### *1. Opening Prayer (about 2 minutes)*

Loving God, we come together in your presence to listen to your word. Open our ears, our minds and our hearts that we may hear your living word. Speak, Lord, your servants are listening. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### *2. Reading 1 (about 5 to 10 minutes)*

The Gospel is read and period of silence is kept.

Then, people are asked to read out loud any word or phrase which spoke to them. If desired, people can briefly say why this particular word touched them.

### *3. Reading 2 (about 5 to 10 minutes)*

The Gospel is read a second time and period of silence is kept.

At this point, if there is anything in need of a word of explanation, people can ask questions. The notes in a study bible would be helpful here or perhaps someone could prepare beforehand so as to be able to respond to people's questions. (It is always possible to say "I don't know"!)

### *4. Reading 3 (about 5 - 10 minutes)*

The Gospel is read once more and period of silence is kept.

At this point, people could be asked a more challenging question: how would I personally enter into and pray this Gospel passage?

### *5. Reading 4 (10 minutes at least)*

The Gospel is read a fourth time and a longer period of silence is kept.

This is really a time for personal prayer. After about ten minutes, the silence could be concluded by a brief sharing on what came up for each individual.

### *6. Reading 5 (about 5 minutes)*

The Gospel is read a final time and period of silence is kept.

At this point, people are asked to pray "out of" the Gospel passage – responding in praise and petition to what we have heard.

### *7. Closing Prayer (about 3 minutes)*

The Lord's Prayer.

We give you heartfelt thanks, loving God, for your word of life. May this word penetrate our hearts and help us on the path of discipleship, as we follow your Son, Jesus, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

