

Study Group for Sunday Readings

As many Catholic Leamington parishioners know, in 2023 the second stage of our 'Walking Together' programme examined four areas identified in stage one as priorities for the Church in general, and in particular for our own parishes, to improve our practice as a truly Christian community:

- building community by getting to know one another better and to recognize our gifts;
- becoming more inclusive and welcoming;
- deepening and sharing our faith; and
- prioritizing young people

In our discernment sessions last May we listed a large number of practical actions we could take to put these objectives into effect, many of which have been implemented since then

In the area of deepening and sharing our faith, two suggested actions were to set up a *Bible study group*, which I am glad to say has already started at St Joseph's, and a *group studying the following Sunday's mass readings*, which I would like to get going early in 2024. For it to work I think we need a core of four or five people who would hope to attend every week, at least for the first four months. Then we can be quite flexible in accommodating others who would like to turn up occasionally, provided they give me (or the group leader in my absence) advance notice of when they are coming. In broad terms, I could hold these meetings on Wednesday afternoons or evenings or any time on Fridays. The meetings could be in St Peter's Parish Hall or possibly at my home depending on how many want to come and the availability of a suitable room

The format I envisage is: a brief introduction by me (or an alternative group leader) of the background or context of the scripture passages; then a reading and short discussion of each in turn of the first reading, second reading and Gospel for the following Sunday, focussing on what the inspired writer was trying to convey to his readers or listeners at the time; finally a short 'Conversation in the Spirit' (as practised in our Walking Together sessions, and at the Synod of Bishops in Rome last October) sharing our ideas on what God is saying to us today in any or all of the passages

This approach has some of the merits of traditional Bible study in learning more about the books of the Bible and their relevance to us today, but also gives us new insights as others share how the Holy Spirit has interacted with their experiences in understanding what the scriptural passages are telling them, and also deepens our engagement with the Liturgy of the Word in the Sunday Mass

If you would like to join this group on a regular basis, please contact me at jaholden@virginmedia.com or 01926 420045 and let me know which day and time would suit you best

Jonathan Holden

