Here’s a text if you’ve only a minute …

- O God, hear my prayer; listen to the words of my mouth.
- I have God for my help \[ Psalm 53 \]
- I am the light of the world, says the Lord, anyone who follows me will have the light of life.
  \[ Gospel Acclamation \]

Father guide us, as you guide creation according to your law of love. May we love one another and come to perfection in the eternal life prepared for us.
  \[ Old Opening Prayer \]

This week’s readings:
Wisdom 2:12.17-20; Psalm 53; James 3:16-4:3; Mark 9:30-37

The wisdom that comes down from above is essentially pure

The 1st reading from Wisdom tells of how those who ignore God conspire against a just man because he stands as a testament to gentleness and compassion, in stark contrast to the values they uphold.

In the Gospel Jesus foretells of his passion and resurrection and turns the values of the world upside down. He teaches his disciples and us, that when we welcome and serve the least ones among us; we are welcoming God.

The 2nd reading from the letter of St James warns of how ambition and jealousy can distort our relationships with each other and with God. We are invited to pray for the wisdom “that comes down from above” in order to restore peace, compassion and holiness.

Psalm 53 encourages the believer to keep trusting in God despite the difficulties that are faced in life.

The Collect
O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbour, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.
Second Reading Letter of St James: 3:16-4:3

Wherever you find jealousy and ambition you find disharmony and wicked things of every kind being done; whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially pure; it also makes for peace, and is kindly and considerate; it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. Peacemakers, when they work for peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness. Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Isn’t it precisely in the desires fighting inside your own selves? You want something and you haven’t got it and your are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you can not satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force. Why you don’t have what you want is because you do not pray for it; when you do pray and don’t get it, it is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge your own desires.

I take time to slow my mind and settle into God’s presence. I read and reread the text, stopping at words or phrases that strike me. Towards what is the Lord drawing me today?

I may look into my heart and quietly observe, without judgement, what feelings or thoughts are contradictory to Jesus’ way. I ask him to grant me insight and patience with myself.

Perhaps I think about wisdom. What sort of wisdom do I wish for? Am I drawn to God’s wisdom? Can I see its fruit in my life or in that of others whom I admire?

I speak to the Lord about this and maybe ask him to give me the spirit of wisdom, of compassion and peace.

I turn to pray for the needs of others and the world. I place all these needs before the Lord, asking him to make my prayer pure before him.

I draw my prayer to a close by saying: Glory be.............

The Gospel: Mark 9:30-37

After leaving the mountain Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, “The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again.” But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him. They came to Capernaum and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” They said nothing because they had been arguing which of them was the greatest. He then took a little child, set him in front of them, put his arms round him, and said, “Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.

As I slowly enter my prayer, I take time to use my whole imagination to discover the depths of this Gospel passage. I picture the scene, the time of day, the conversations and moments that are shared amongst Jesus and his disciples as they travel to Capernaum. If I so choose I also enter this scene as the story unfolds, perhaps as a disciple or a bystander or as the little child. Am I as baffled as the disciples when Jesus tells them that he must suffer and die? Can I relate to the stunned silence of the disciples? Even as a Christian living in the 21st Century do I understand Christ’s suffering? What do I need to say to Jesus now? Maybe the only response, like the disciples, is to stay in silence. Can I relate to the disciples’ need to feel important? How does Jesus respond?

Who are the “little children”- the people without power or status today, that Jesus invites me to welcome: the homeless, the unemployed, the sick, a migrant fleeing war and poverty?

When I am ready I finish by making the sign of the cross prayerfully: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.