

**NOVEMBER** from the Eparchial Office of Evangelization and Religious Education...

***“But seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”-Matthew 6:33***

Last month we discussed the importance of prayer. This second lesson in our 3-part series on seeking the Kingdom of God focuses on how to live out an active Byzantine Catholic faith by

### **READING SACRED SCRIPTURE**

You may say to yourself, “Who, me? I don’t know how to interpret Scripture! Bishops, priests and people who study theology are supposed to do that.” While this is true, each individual Catholic must also know the teachings of Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit in Sacred Scripture.

St. Jerome in the 4th Century taught that, “Ignorance of Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.” St. John Chrysostom wrote, “...but when you are at home, persevere continually in reading the Divine Scriptures.”

In prayer, you communicate with God. Through Sacred Scripture, God communicates Himself to you. This is why so many great Saints of the Catholic Church stressed its importance.

You do not have to be afraid of being unable to interpret Scripture. The Holy Spirit guides you as you read thoughtfully and prayerfully. Begin with the New Testament. Read a small portion of the Gospels daily. Take a few moments at the beginning to ask the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart to receive God’s Word, to love God’s Word, and to live God’s Word.

In addition, there are numerous great resources that can help you understand God’s Word and how to apply it to your daily life.

If you have a Bible, read it. If you do not have a Bible, purchase a good Catholic version, such as The Catholic Study Bible or The Ignatius Study Bible. Both of these have excellent footnotes, maps, charts and useful commentaries to help with your understanding and application.

Attend a Catholic scripture study class in your parish or start one in a small group.

For further study, The Bible and the Holy Fathers is a patristic commentary that follows our Church's daily scripture readings. In addition, The Catholic Bible Dictionary by Scott Hahn is a wonderful resource.

You may ask, “What will reading Scripture do for me in the long run?” If you persevere in prayerful meditation on God’s living Word in Sacred Scripture, this will happen:

- During difficult trials, the Holy Spirit will remind you of stories in Sacred Scripture that can help you decide how you are to react and respond.
- Your prayer life will change. The words of Scripture will enrich your daily prayers and you will begin to pray more for others.
- You will grow in holiness and in mercy.

Sacred Scripture reveals the hidden, incredible mystery - that God became man, fully human and fully divine, one person without confusion. It instills the truths of the human condition and how much God loves you in spite of your weaknesses and failures.

- You will be reminded that sin is to be avoided at all cost. It is very easy to lose focus on God in the middle of daily activities, and to fall into sick behaviors. The soul responds to whatever it receives. Just as you need good food and exercise for your body to be healthy, the same goes for your soul. By feeding your soul with Sacred Scripture each day, you open your heart to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit, and gain the strength and wisdom to live a life of love and virtue.
- You will have the desire to share your faith in Jesus with others, so that they too can experience His love and mercy.

Next month we will conclude our lessons on seeking the Kingdom of God by learning “How to live a Holy and Eucharistic Life.”