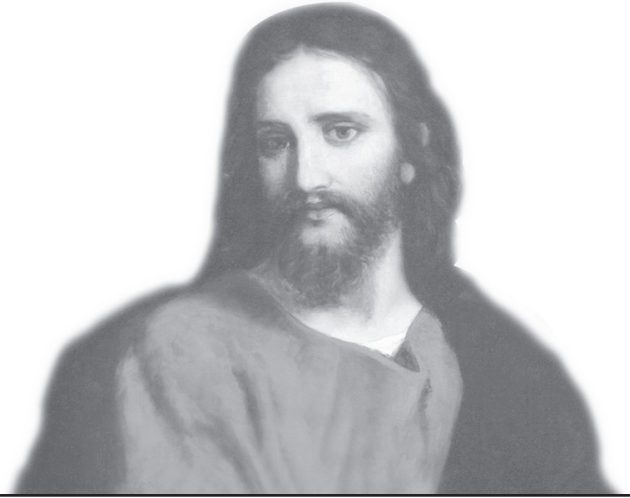


DISCOVER

the Joy of Christ



Why is spiritual reading essential?

Why would we want to set aside ten minutes each day reading a Bible story or a book that relates a truth about God when our lives are already too busy? It is part of our nature to want to hear stories. If told well, we are especially drawn to stories that relate to God's love for us. The message strikes an inner chord, touching the desire for God that is written in our heart. Let's take a closer look.

Before providing reasons why spiritual reading is so vital, finding the right choice of book or article is essential as it needs to draw our attention and hold it. We are wired in such a way that we enjoy a good story and the narrative can impact us profoundly. We may find ourselves thinking about what we read for several days and the experiences can resonate with our personal lives.

Spiritual reading is valuable because we can read about another person's expounding on a truth of God through their own experience and how it changed their life. This personal experience of God can help the reader to understand better an event from the past, something that is currently happening or an event in the future.

In reading the life of a saint or the story of personal conversion, it is easy to see how God is active in a person's life. This fact brings hope as the reader understands that God is also working with him personally. Further, this consideration of the things of God leads to an opening of the heart, which may draw one to spontaneously and naturally converse with Jesus, the Father, or the Holy Spirit.

The value of spiritual reading is also evident in that it leads to a desire to read Sacred Scripture, the very Word of God. Reading stories about Jesus lead us to want to read the very words that He spoke. Moreover, in reading a passage of Scripture, the Holy Spirit makes the connection of that passage to our own life. The Diocese promotes the use of a simple handout

available on the website. Go to www.dioceseoflacrosse.com, click on Office and Ministries, followed by Catechesis and then "Praying with Scripture." There are further directions to help guide the process.

Another benefit of spiritual reading is that when we develop a habit of spiritual reading, it will also lead to a commitment to daily prayer. We can learn about God through hearing the teachings of the Church such as in the homily at Mass. This information in the mind will open the heart to love Christ in a personal relationship only when there is daily communication. This relationship of love can then lead to the "obedience of faith" and living by the truth of Jesus Christ. The end result is a life lived in Christ that translates into a life of joy.

With all these great benefits, let us set aside time on a daily basis for spiritual reading and encourage others to do so as well.

