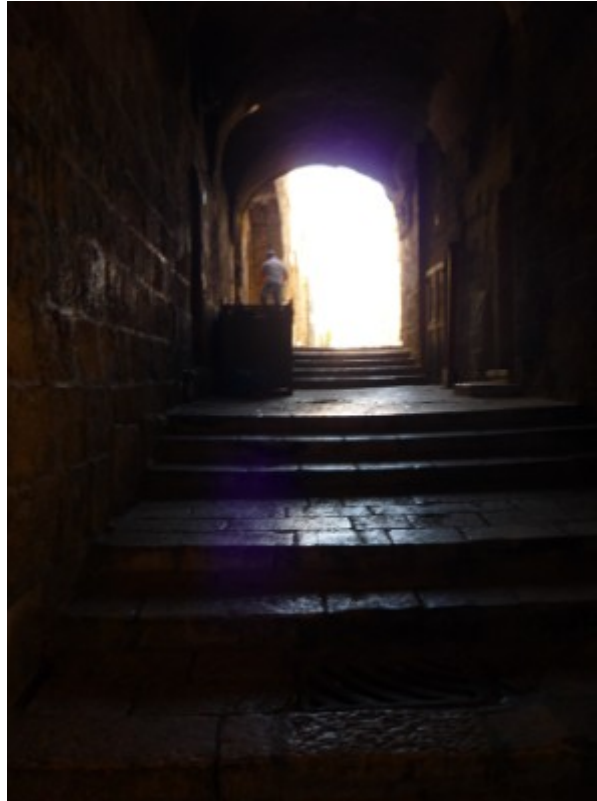


TFTD 23.7. Weds Mar 1st St David's Day
Matt 6.1-18 The secret space



Jesus said, Whenever you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6.6

“The rest,” says T.S.Eliot, “is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.” Not a very attractive list, you might think — though Lent is as good a time as any to think about the practices, the daily habits that sustain our walk with God. Having taken us up to the spiritual heights, given us a glimpse of the scary, impossible values of God’s Kingdom, Jesus brings us down to earth. So how on earth (that’s the point!) can we live up

to Jesus' impossible standards?

Jesus lists here three ways of putting your faith into practice and helping it to grow: nothing fancy, each one tried and tested but still demanding a different sort of discipline. Giving — praying — fasting.

Giving (vv.2-4): not for show, not to get brownie points, just trying to make a difference in a quiet, hidden way.

Fasting (vv.16-18): not to look pious, or make an impression, or even to lose weight. Just a secret, hidden pattern of personal obedience. (Giving something up for Lent is a start!)

Praying (vv.5-15): at the heart of the spiritual life, that essential rhythm of daily prayer, making a “secret space” in the life of every day to be quiet and open, to be fully yourself, with God. It doesn't matter when or where. First thing in the morning or last thing at night work for many people, but if that's when the baby wakes up, find a quiet space over coffee when things have quietened down. (I used to say my prayers on the train going to work.)

What's important is to make the time — even if it's only a few minutes — to create that “secret space” (what St Teresa called your “interior castle”) to be alone with God. Light a candle, sit in the garden, go for a walk. Try it today — and tomorrow — and the next day (but don't

worry if some days it just doesn't happen!). You'll find it becomes a habit, a more and more important part of your life — even though you sometimes wonder why you bother.

Prayer really works — not because we've learnt some special technique, but because God is real — and God is always there. Prayer is tuning in to the hidden reality at the heart of our lives — but we have to slow ourselves down to listen to his heartbeat.

God of stillness, help me to find that secret space, in the busyness — or the emptiness — of my life. Thank you that you are always there, waiting in the stillness. Amen.

God bless, Loveday

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Almighty God,
who called your servant David
to be a faithful and wise steward of your mysteries
for the people of Wales:
in your mercy, grant that,
following his purity of life and zeal for the gospel of
Christ,
we may with him receive the crown of everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

