

Imaginative Contemplation – The Call of Jesus



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Introduction

The most frequent way of praying that Saint Ignatius uses is that of imagining ourselves in a Gospel scene. We imagine ourselves as a character in the story. We take part in the story, seeing Jesus and all the other people, being aware of what's going on and how we are feeling. The purpose of praying with the imagination is to allow Christ in the Scripture to speak to us. To bring the Gospel stories to life for us. We are not trying to recreate history. It doesn't matter if your imagination takes the story off in a different direction to the Scripture. It doesn't matter if the story takes place in 1st century Palestine or where we live now in the 21st century. What is important is what God wants to say to us through this passage.

Let us sit and relax so that together we can contemplate the Gospel using our imagination.

Prayer

We acknowledge we are in the presence of God so let us say together:

Direct O Lord and guide and influence all that is happening in my mind and heart during this time of prayer: all my moods and feelings, my memories and imaginings; my hopes and desires; may all be directed and influenced to your greater glory, praise and service and to my growth in your Spirit.
Amen

Let the Spirit enter our hearts and enlighten our minds so we too can hear the call of Jesus in our lives and be ready and willing to respond to that call.

Reading Mark 1:14-21

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God.
'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

As he was walking along by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net in the lake - for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men'. And at once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on a little further, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending their nets. He called them at once and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him.

Contemplation

In last Sunday's Gospel, we saw Jesus calling his first disciples. In today's Gospel, we again see Jesus calling four fishermen to to be his disciples. The setting of today's gospel occurs immediately after Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan, when he received the affirmation of his Father and was filled with the Spirit of God. Now that John has been arrested, and is no longer in active ministry, Jesus knows that this is the start of his public ministry. So let us enter the scene and watch the response of these disciples to the call.

- Who are you in the passage? Are you Simon or his brother Andrew? James or his brother John? Are you a passer-by who

overheard the call? Perhaps someone not mentioned in the passage?

- As you were fishing, did you notice Jesus passing by or were you too busy with your nets? What was it about Jesus that made you drop your nets and follow him?
- Had you already encountered Jesus? Perhaps you had witnessed his baptism? Heard him in the synagogue? Noticed him when you were at the lakeside? Were there when he first preached the coming of God's kingdom? Did you already sense what Jesus was about? Did you realise that in Jesus' mission and ministry he was going to need disciples?
- Do you wonder why Jesus chose you considering there were many fishermen along the shore of the Sea of Galilee that day? Do you feel that there were others who may have been better qualified? Others with better skills? Others that were more intelligent and had more money?
- Is there something about Jesus' invitation that intrigues you? Excites you? Do you wonder what being a fisher of men could mean? Why are you willing to risk all considering you have no certainties about what being a follower of Jesus could mean? Why do you drop everything for someone you don't know that well? Why do you walk away from your security? Are you afraid of not knowing what the future holds and not having any idea where your journey with Jesus will take you? What was it about Jesus that makes you surrender yourself in a complete act of trust?
- Have you come to a point in your life where you feel ready to step outside your comfort zone? Are you ready to cast away the nets that are limiting your freedom to go into the unknown?
- You were there when Jesus "proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'" Do you drop everything because you want to be part of Jesus' teaching that will bring people to a new way of living in truth, love, freedom and justice?
- What about your friends and family? What do they think about you giving up everything to be a "fisher of men"? Do you go with their blessing or are they disappointed that you will no longer be part of their fishing community? Do they understand? What do you tell them?

As we spend 10 minutes in quiet contemplation, speak to Jesus about his call to you and ask to have the freedom and courage to follow the call and to be ready to go wherever he is asking you to go.

Sharing

Let us now share what we thought, felt etc. only if you are comfortable to do so.

End Prayer Suscipe of St. Ignatius of Loyola

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,

my memory, my understanding,

and my entire will,

All I have and call my own.

You have given all to me.

To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what you will.

Give me only your love and your grace,

that is enough for me.

Scripture texts: from the Jerusalem Bible 1966 by Dartington Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd