

## Imaginative Contemplation – They brought Him all who were sick.

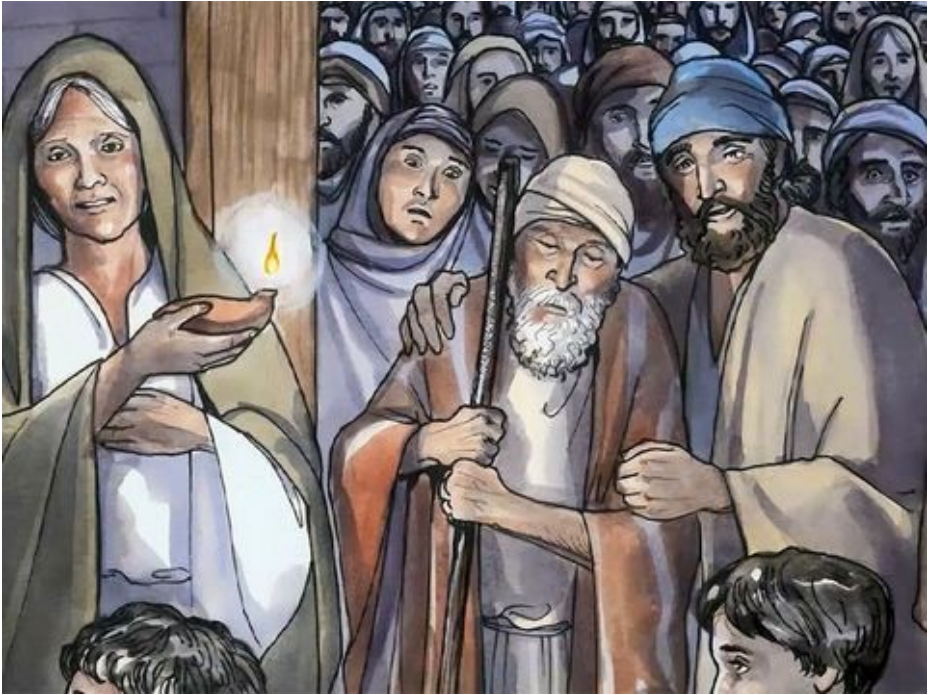


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### Introduction

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 that our faith, like that of Jesus' shines through in the midst of the difficulties of everyday life. We pray that, like Jesus, we have the eyes to see what needs to be done and have the strength and conviction to go and do it.

## **Reading      Mark 1:29-39**

On leaving the synagogue, he went with James and John straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. Now Simon's mother-in-law had gone to bed with fever, and they told him about her straight away. He went to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to wait on them.

That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door, and he cured many who were suffering from diseases of one kind or another; he also cast out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was.

In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there.

Simon and his companions set out in search of him, and when they found him they said, 'Everybody is looking for you'. He answered, 'Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can preach there too, because that is why I came'. And he went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out devils.

## **Contemplation**

In last Sunday's Gospel, we saw Jesus beginning His ministry – a mission of healing and teaching. In this Sunday's Gospel, we see Jesus going straight from the Sabbath service in the synagogue to the house of Simon and Andrew where he continues his healing ministry. Let us enter the

scene and watch as Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law and then the many sick who were brought to Him.

- Who are you in the passage? Are you James or John, Simon or Andrew? Are you Simon's mother-in-law? Perhaps someone who followed Him from the synagogue? Perhaps a sick person who came to him for healing? Maybe an on-looker?
- Why do you think that Jesus went with James and John to the house of Simon and Andrew? Do you think they had been invited by Peter and Andrew to participate in a Sabbath meal? Or do you think Jesus had heard that Simon's mother-in-law was ill?
- Jesus cures Simon's mother-in-law. Why do you think she starts to serve them? Is it because it is a woman's job in that culture? Or could it be now that she has been healed, it enabled her to become once again an active, serving member of the community?
- Do you think Jesus managed to get a bit of down time that afternoon before he was inundated by the sick and possessed? What do you think He and His disciples talked about? What is the mood like in the house?
- How do you feel when you saw the sick crowding round the door of Simon's house? How do you react? Do you want to send them away because there are too many? Because they are interrupting some private time with Jesus? Do you want to give them some refreshments because they are sick? How does Jesus react to the large number of ill people?
- Why do you think people came to Jesus to be healed once it was dark? Could it be because it was the end of the Sabbath Day and people felt free to move around? Because they were not restricted by the laws laid down to them by the Scribes and Pharisees? Because now that the Sabbath was over they would not be condemned by the Pharisees for leaving their home?
- Could it be that the sick and possessed were marginalised by society at that time and could not participate in community gatherings e.g. in the synagogue on the Sabbath? Do you think these people had been excluded from society because of their ailments?
- Do you think that by healing the sick and those possessed by evil spirits, Jesus is showing us that the Good News of God consists of what He wants to do in the life of people? That he wants to show us by his example that we too should accept those who are marginalized and excluded from our community and help them to be included once more into society?

- Why do you think Jesus leaves and goes to the hills to be alone and to pray? Is it to have some time alone? To have time with His Father? To maintain His awareness of His mission? To renew his spiritual energy? Are you surprised that Jesus feels the need to pray? That his answer to his ministry is prayer?
- Why do you think that Jesus' disciples go looking for him? Is it because they feel important and want to take Him to those who are looking for Him? Do you think they are surprised when Jesus tells them that he wants to go elsewhere because other people also need him? Do you think they are surprised that Jesus is trying to tell them that they should not be wrapped up in the results they obtained in Capernaum but to open to the Father's mission and be prepared to move on? Are you excited about moving on or would you rather stay in a place where you may be looked up to because you are part of Jesus' inner circle.

As we spend 10 minutes in quiet contemplation, let us ask Jesus to help us be available for those in need, to help us be generous with our time and also help us to spend some quality time with God so that we can be discerning regarding our priorities.

## **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