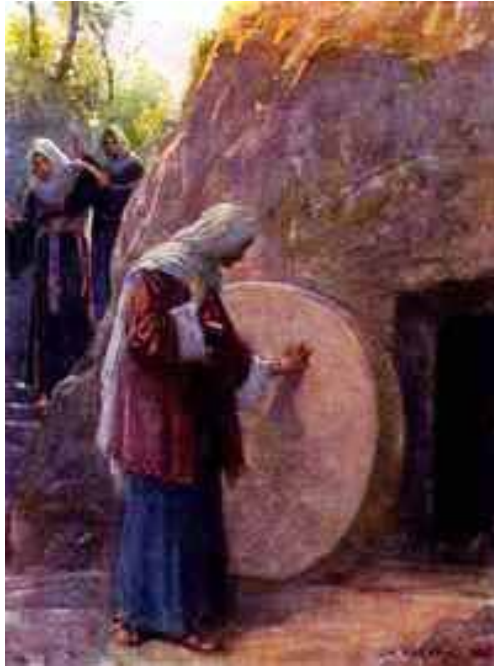


## Imaginative Contemplation – He is Risen



### 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.

Sit and relax by focussing on your breathing for a few minutes so that you can contemplate the Gospel using our imagination.

## **Prayer**

Acknowledge you are in the presence of God by saying the following prayer:

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 guide and enlighten our minds as we celebrate the mystery of the Resurrection, proclaim our faith and hope, and give thanks for these graces.

## **Reading      John 20:1-9**

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb' she said 'and we don't know where they have put him.'

So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in.

Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

## **Contemplation**

Today we celebrate the mystery of the Resurrection of Jesus. This is a day full of joy because sin and death have been conquered. Today we proclaim our faith in the belief that Christ triumphed over evil and

the confidence that nothing can shake his goodness and love. So with this in mind, imagine finding the empty tomb and find a place within the scene. With the help of the Spirit, let the story unfold in your imagination.

- Who are you within the story? Are you Mary of Magdala, one of the disciples; one of the guards? Perhaps a person or thing that is not specially mentioned in the story? You may even be the stone in front of the tomb.
- Where are you? Who is with you? Do you feel afraid to venture out in case you suffer the same fate as Jesus?
- How does your heart feel? Heavy with grief? Filled with sorrow? Do you feel let down that your friend has left you? Do you feel that you let him down by running away? Do you feel angry that Jesus allowed himself to be taken without defending himself? Do you feel he deserted you when there was so much more to learn from him? Do you feel you cannot go on without him to instruct you?
- If you are Mary, why do you go to the tomb? Could you not sleep wondering why Jesus had to die? Do you feel you need something to do so you decide to tend to Jesus' mortal remains? Imagine your shock when you see the stone rolled back. Imagine your grief as you think that someone had stolen Jesus' body. Did you consider that Jesus may have risen from the dead? Is this the reason you run to tell Simon Peter and John?
- If you are Simon Peter and John, why do you run? What do you expect to find? Are you tired when you arrive at the tomb? Out of breath? Physically and mentally drained?
- What is going through your mind when you see the stone rolled away? Do you enter the tomb or do you stand back? Are you afraid of what you might find when you reach the tomb or are you full of hope that Jesus' death may not have been the end although you witnessed his death?
- What do you see inside the tomb? How do you feel when you find it empty and seeing the linen cloths rolled up? Confusion because you saw Jesus die? Joy at realising that Jesus' promise to rise on the third day was actually true?

- Does what Jesus said during the past three years begin to dawn on you? Perhaps nothing that Jesus had said could have prepared you for the reality of the Resurrection.
- Can you imagine what it was like for the disciples? What does finding the empty tomb mean for you? What does it say to you? How do you feel? What is going on inside you?

Talk to Jesus about any 'resurrection' experiences you might have had in your own life.

### **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.