

Imaginative Contemplation – Quiet now! Be calm!



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 enter our hearts and minds filling us with trust so that we can see Jesus present in the midst of the storms of our own life bringing calm to the turbulence.

Reading Mark:4:35-41

With the coming of evening that same day, Jesus said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side'. And leaving the crowd behind they took him, just as he was, in the boat; and there were other boats with him. Then it began to blow a gale and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped. But he was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep.

They woke him and said to him, 'Master, do you not care? We are going down!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Quiet now! Be calm!' And the wind dropped, and all was calm again. Then he said to them, 'Why are you so frightened? How is it that you have no faith?' They were filled with awe and said to one another, 'Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.'

Contemplation

As we continue with the Scripture readings of Ordinary time, St Mark describes in vivid pictures, the life and works of Jesus showing that he is indeed the Son of God. In last week's readings we see how Jesus teaches in parables and then explains the meaning of these parables to his disciples. In today's reading we read how, after teaching the crowds, Jesus takes his disciples away from the crowds to the opposite shore. Let us now put ourselves in the boat with Jesus and allow yourself to be part of the whole experience.

- Who are you in the scene? One of the apostles? Perhaps you are the boat? Or one of the storms in your life?
- Notice what is going on around you. Notice your mood and the mood of the other disciples. Are you happy to be invited by Jesus to accompany him in the boat? Does it make you feel special? Are you please to get away from the crowd to spend some quality time with Jesus and your friends? Did you feel at peace in the boat after being with the crowds as you slowly make your way to the other side?
- How does the mood in the boat change when a sudden storm erupts? How do you feel when the wind starts to blow a gale making the waves buffet the boat and come over the side? Are you terrified because you know of fishermen who have been drowned by these sudden storms? Do you think you may perish in the storm?
- Are you annoyed with Jesus who is sleeping peacefully on a cushion at the stern of the boat? Do you feel annoyed that he can sleep though this turmoil? Do you wonder how he can sleep amidst your cries for help? Are you more troubled by the storm or Jesus' apparent inattentiveness to your needs? Do you feel that if he was awake, he would know what to do? Or do you feel that he was asleep because he trusted you, experienced fishermen, to manage the boat?
- Are you the one who wakes Jesus? Why do you reproach Jesus for the storm? Do you feel it is his fault? What do you expect him to do? Do you really feel that Jesus doesn't care? Or do you have the confidence of knowing that you can turn to Jesus in your time of need? That he will hear you in the midst of the storm?
- How do you feel when Jesus calms the storm? When he says, 'Quiet now! Be calm!'. How do these words make you feel? Do they make you feel safe? Comforted? A feeling that Jesus is in charge? Do you feel at peace? Relief that the storm has been calmed?
- Do you feel embarrassed when Jesus asked you why you doubted? Can you see now that how easily Jesus' voice can be drowned out by what is going on around you? Do you now realise that Jesus is always on the lookout for you despite appearing to be asleep?

- Do you too ask “Who is this man”. Do you now feel that Jesus is indeed a mystery?

Feel what is going on inside you as you listen to these words of Jesus, 'Quiet now! Be calm!' Is there anything you want to say to him about what you have just witnessed? Talk to him about your fear and the storms in your life.

Let us now spend ten minutes in quiet contemplation

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.