

Imaginative Contemplation – This is my Body



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 as we are invited to reflect on the great gift Jesus has given us in the Eucharist, the gift of his own Body and Blood which is Spiritual food for our journey.

Reading Mark 14:12-16.22-26

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, his disciples said to Jesus, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the passover?" So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and say to the owner of the house which he enters, 'The Master says: Where is my dining room in which I can eat the passover with my Disciples?' He will show you a large upper room furnished with couches, all prepared. Make the preparations for us there." The disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover.

And as they were eating he took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to them, "Take it," he said "this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them, and all drank from it, and he said to them, "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many. I tell you solemnly, I shall not drink any more wine until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God."

After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives.

Contemplation

Today, on this second Sunday after Pentecost, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, otherwise known as Corpus Christi (Latin for Body of Christ). This Feast marks our return to Ordinary time and in the Reading, we hear about the preparation for the Passover meal and the celebration of the Passover meal itself during which Jesus institutes the Holy Eucharist. So, with this in mind, place yourself in the scene.

- Who are you in the scene? One of the apostles who has gone to prepare the Passover meal? One of the apostles who waits behind with Jesus? A servant girl at the Passover meal? The owner of the house?
- What is the mood of you and your companions? Are you excited because the Passover feast is a great celebration? Are you afraid because you know that there are those out to condemn Jesus? What do you notice about what is going on around you?
- If you are one of the two disciples who is following Jesus instructions to make preparations for the meal, what time of day do you set out? What is the weather like? Do you have to walk far the city? When Jesus gives you the instructions for setting up the room, do you find them easy to follow? Do you think that a man carrying a pitcher of water would be easy to spot since that is usually a woman's job? Do you wonder why a man would be carrying the water? Were your instructions as Jesus said?
- What is the room like? Do you think it is suitable for the Passover meal? Do you hope that Jesus will like it? Do you try to prepare it as best you can to receive Jesus? Is there anyone to help you make the preparations? Perhaps one of the serving girls?
- If you are one of the remaining disciples, when do you leave to go to the prepared room? Are the preparations as you expected? What do you notice about the table set for the Passover meal? Can you smell the aroma of the food? Does it make you feel hungry?
- As you are eating, what are you thinking when Jesus takes the bread, breaks it and says 'Take it. This is my body',? Do you understand what he means? Do you understand that by

partaking in this bread, you will become part of the Body of Christ? Perhaps this is something you will reflect on later after Jesus has given his life for you.

- When Jesus says, “This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many”, what is going on inside you? Do you understand what Jesus means? Do you understand that the “new covenant” means that a new relationship is forming between God and humankind and is dependent on the shedding of Jesus’ own blood? Again, is this something you reflected on later and understood what Jesus meant only after he gave up his life for us? Also, on reflection, did you notice that Jesus poured himself out for everyone at the table, even although he was betrayed, denied and abandoned by all present? How does that make you feel?
- As Jesus offers you his body and blood, what do you see as you look into his eyes? Do you see his look of love as he gives of himself to you? Do you feel you want to share this with others?

Feel what is going on inside you as you listen to these words of Jesus. Ask him how to best prepare your heart and make it ready to receive him in the Eucharist. Thank him for his amazing gift that is given to you each time participate in the Celebration of the Mass and receive Holy communion.

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.