

## Imaginative Contemplation – Who touched me?



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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.

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 so that we too can be filled with the trust to be able to reach out humbly to Jesus in moments of need.

## **Reading      Mark:4:35-41**

Now there was a woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years; after long and painful treatment under various doctors, she spent all she had without being any the better for it, in fact, she was getting worse. She had heard about Jesus, and she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his cloak. 'If I can touch even his clothes,' she had told herself 'I shall be well again.' And the source of the bleeding dried up instantly, and she felt in herself that she was cured of her complaint.

Immediately aware that power had gone out from him, Jesus turned round in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' His disciples said to him, 'You see how the crowd is pressing round you and yet you say, "Who touched me?"' But he continued to look all round to see who had done it. Then the woman came forward, frightened and trembling because she knew what had happened to her, and she fell at his feet and told him the whole truth. 'My daughter,' he said 'your faith has restored you to health; go in peace and be free from your complaint.'

## **Contemplation**

In today's Gospel from St Mark, we continue to catch a glimpse of Jesus' divinity by reading about two stories of his healing power; that of a father's plea of help for his dying daughter and that of a desperate woman who risks everything to seek Jesus' help. In both

stories, the request for healing is different but both are steeped in faith and courage and depict the suffering of each person. In this contemplation, we will only reflect on the woman with the haemorrhage because this woman is representative of so many people today who are marginalised, suffering and afraid of their fate. So let us put ourselves in the scene and watch the story unfold.

- Who are you in the scene? One of the disciples? One of the crowd? The woman with the haemorrhage? Perhaps you are someone or something not mentioned in the story.
- Notice what is going on around you. Notice your mood and the mood of the crowd around you? Is it a large crowd? Where are you in it? Near Jesus? At a distance? Can you see him where you are? What do you notice about Jesus.?
- If you are the woman with the haemorrhage, what was it that made you seek Jesus' help that day? Was it despair because you had been ill for twelve years? Despair because you had been a social outcast for twelve years? Despair because you were now impoverished because you had spent all your savings on medical treatment? Did you have hope that Jesus would be able to cure you of your ailment? Hope that you would be accepted back into society if you were cured?
- Why were you afraid to ask Jesus personally to help you? Was it because you knew you were unclean and that you shouldn't be amongst others? Did you think that by trying not to be noticed, no-one would find out you had broken the law?
- How did you feel when you touched the hem of Jesus' cloak and the source of your bleeding dried up? Were you surprised when Jesus asked who touched my cloak when there were so many people crowding around you? Were you tempted to say nothing?
- Why did you confess when Jesus persisted? How did you feel when you were standing in front of the crowd with them staring at you? Afraid you may be castigated by the crowd? Or did you feel confident that now you were well and felt part of society? Did Jesus loving gaze fill you with confidence, particularly when he said your faith had saved you and to go in peace? What feelings are going on inside you?

- If you are one of the crowd, what is going on in your mind when Jesus asks touched him? Do you wonder if it was you because the crowd is so dense?
- When the woman with the haemorrhage comes forward, do you know her and recognise her as being unclean? How do you feel? Angry that she has broken the law by venturing out and mingling with society? Happy that she found the courage to go to Jesus because you know how much she has suffered? Are you happy that she is now part of society once again? Will you accept her back into the community? Do you think that she will be accepted by others into the community? Will you help her to be and feel included?
- If you are one of the disciples what is going on in your mind when Jesus asks you touched him? Frustrated with him because of the size of the crowd? Do you feel he is wasting time because Jairus' daughter is sick and he should not be concerned with trivialities? Do you just want him to drop the matter? Do you think he is over-reacting?

Feel what is going on inside you as you listen to these words of Jesus, Your faith has saved you, go in peace. Tell Jesus what ailment you wish to be cured of and ask him for faith in his love for you.

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.