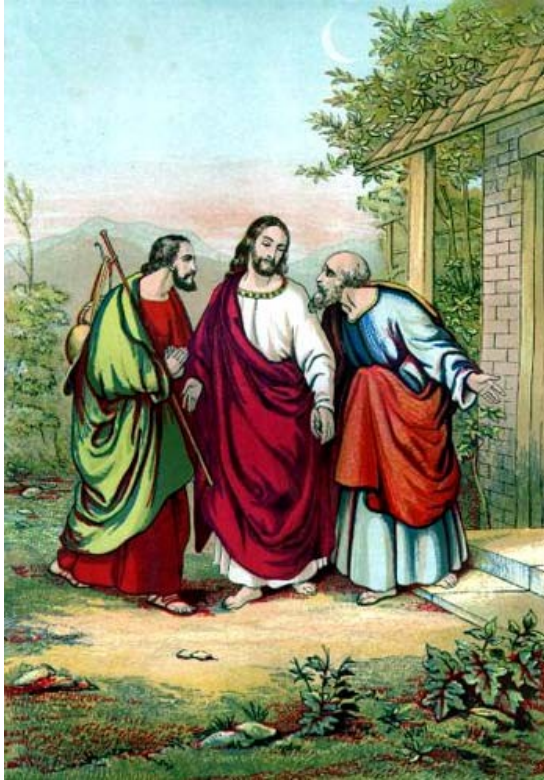


Imaginative Contemplation – Can you drink the cup that I must drink?



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 we may understand that the meaning of real greatness is indiscriminate love, service and care of others.

Reading Mark 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached him. 'Master,' they said to him 'we want you to do us a favour.' He said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' They said to him, 'Allow us to sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory'. 'You do not know what you are asking' Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup that I must drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I must be baptised?' They replied, 'We can'. Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I must drink you shall drink, and with the baptism with which I must be baptised you shall be baptised, but as for seats at my right hand or my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted'.

When the other ten heard this they began to feel indignant with James and John, so Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

Contemplation

As we continue reading the Gospel of St Mark on this the 29th Sunday of Ordinary time, we continue to follow Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem. Let us enter the scene and listen to what Jesus tells his disciples in order to prepare them for what will happen to him in Jerusalem.

- Who are you in the scene? Are you one of the disciples in particular James or John? Yourself? Someone not mentioned in the passage?

- Notice what is going on around you. What is the mood like – of the disciples, of Jesus, of James or John? What do you see and hear? What strikes you about the general atmosphere? What are the surroundings like?
- If you are James or John, why are you anxious to take the first places in heaven with Jesus? Do you want to make your request first before any of the other disciples make the same request? Are you seeking power and prestige? Are you acting out of self interest? Do you think you are honouring God if you take these places? Do you really understand what you are asking? Do you understand that the cup Jesus asks you to share is in fact his suffering? Would you have been ready to accept this cup if you realised how Jesus would suffer and die?
- If you were one of the other disciples, how do you feel about James and John's request? Indignant because you feel that the brothers had gone behind your back? Angry because they had got in their request first? Do you feel cheated? Do you too share that same ambition but feel that James and John pulled a fast one on you?
- If you are observing the scene, how do you think Jesus feels at being approached with this request? Do you think that their request leaves him dispirited because they still have not understood what he has been telling them about the fact he will die? Do you think he may also be amused at James and John's willingness to share his cup which they obviously don't know entails?
- Do you notice that Jesus invites them to share his cup and doesn't put it upon them? Do you notice that Jesus, despite him soon being put to death, still has time to instruct the disciples telling them that his kind of leadership is not based on power and position but based on service and care? That greatness is not what we have or our position in society or what we can get from others but what we can give of ourselves to others? That we cannot be true followers of Jesus unless we are sharing his word and bearing witness to it in our daily lives?
- Do you find Jesus' explanation of what it means to be great uncomfortable? Countercultural? Do you start to question yourself as to how you exercise authority? Do you start to wonder who you model your position of leadership on? Who and in what ways do you give service to those in your life?

Speak to Jesus about what is going on in your mind and heart regarding true greatness and what it means for you to be a servant to all. Speak to

him from your heart and tell him about the difficulties you may have sharing his cup of suffering.

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