

## Imaginative Contemplation – He has anointed me



### 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 to enable us to continue the mission of Jesus by bringing the good news to the poor, healing the sick and bringing freedom to captives.

## **Reading      Luke 1:1-4;4:14-21**

Seeing that many others have undertaken to draw up accounts of the events that have taken place among us, exactly as these were handed down to us by those who from the outset were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, I in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning, have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that your Excellency may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received.

Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him. He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,  
for he has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,  
to proclaim liberty to captives  
and to the blind new sight,  
to set the downtrodden free,  
to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen'.

## **Contemplation**

The Gospel reading of the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time C opening verses of St Luke's Gospel in which Luke sets out his reasons for writing

about the life of Jesus is joined with Jesus' first public appearance in Nazareth. In doing so, we have jumped from Chapter 1 to Chapter 4 in the narrative. Although St Luke never met Jesus personally, he wants to ensure us that his account of Jesus' life, death and resurrection is based on the witness of those who did know him personally. Knowing this, we are now better prepared to read about Jesus' start to his public life and mission. Let us now enter the scene.

- Who are you in the passage? Someone in the synagogue? St Luke writing this account? Theophilus reading this account? Jesus? One of the scribes or Pharisees? Perhaps you are yourself reading St Luke's account.
- What are your surroundings like? Are you sitting in your room reading St Luke's Gospel? As you read this passage what does it tell you about Jesus? Does it make you realise that he lives an ordinary life? That he joined with the community in the worship of God? That he was a faithful Jew and observed their customs and Laws? How does that make you feel as you read this? Do you want to read more and get to know Jesus better?
- Are you in the temple listening to Jesus? Why are you there? Have you heard that Jesus has returned? Have you heard about his reputation regarding his teaching and you want to hear him yourself? Or were you at the Jordan when he was baptised by John and heard the voice from heaven saying "You are my Son, the Beloved" and you wanted to get to know him better?
- Do you watch as Jesus is handed the scroll? What do you notice? Do you look around and see all eyes fixed on him? What is the atmosphere like? Could you hear a pin drop? Is there an air of expectation? Of anticipation? Who hands him the scroll? Do you wait with anticipation as he unrolls the scroll? Do you watch him look for the passage he want to read? Are you surprised that he chooses this passage from Isaiah? Are you familiar with this passage?
- As you listen to Jesus, what is his voice like? Is it gentle? Emphatic? Loud? Passionate? Does the way he speaks draw you into the prophesy of Isaiah? Do you realise Jesus is defining his own ministry in life and what his mission involves? Do you want this Spirit of the Lord so that you too can bring the good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, set the downtrodden free and proclaim the Lord's year of favour? Do you feel he is reaching out to you? Do you feel he is asking you to join him in his mission? Are you excited? Daunted? What are the barriers that prevent you from carrying out this mission? Do you

feel you too need to be set free and given new sight before you can proclaim the Lord's year of favour?

As we spend 10 minutes in quiet contemplation speak to Jesus about your thoughts. Ask him to open your heart to those who suffer in this world. Ask him to help you enable others overcome poverty and oppression.

### **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