

## Imaginative Contemplation – My hour has not yet come



### 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 the joy of celebration; the celebration of being a Christian and knowing how to enjoy life to its fullness.

## **Reading      John 2:1-12**

Three days later there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. When they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine'. Jesus said 'Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet.'  
His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you'.

There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water', and they filled them to the brim. Draw some out now' he told them 'and take it to the steward.' They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from – only the servants who had drawn the water knew – the steward called the bridegroom and said; 'People generally serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink; but you have kept the best wine till now'. This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him. After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and the brothers, but they stayed there only a few days.

## **Contemplation**

Having left the Celebration of Christmastide, we enter into Ordinary time. However, it is by no means "Ordinary".because we will hear in the Sunday Gospels the mystery of Christ himself. In the Gospel Readings of Ordinary time, Jesus' life and preaching unfold. For many Sundays in this lectionary

cycle (Cycle C), our readings will be taken from the Gospel of Luke. However, today's Gospel, the second Sunday of Ordinary time, we hear from John's Gospel which describes the beginning of Jesus' ministry and the first of his miracles or signs as St John calls them. St John wants us to see that it is not the miracles themselves that are important but the signs they point to. Through these signs we learn who the person of Jesus is and what his mission is. Let us now enter into the scene so that we too can identify who Jesus is to us and join with him in the celebration of marriage.

- Who are you in the passage? Mary? Jesus? One of the disciples? The bride? The groom? One of the wedding guests? One of the servants? The steward?
- Why are you there at the wedding? How do you know the bride and/or the groom? Have you come by yourself? Have you come with a group? Have you travelled far?
- What is the scene around you like? Is it a busy wedding? Are you happy and excited to see some friends there and catch up with them? Are you enjoying yourself?
- As you look around, what is the atmosphere like? Joyful with people chatting, eating and drinking? Do you too feel joyful for the wedding couple and want to share their joy? How do you feel as you take in the scene around you?
- Do you know Jesus? Do you know Mary? Do you think Mary and Jesus are close friends of the couple? Do you want to engage with Jesus and Mary? Do you notice them mingling with the guests? Do they appear to be enjoying themselves?
- Do you hear Mary tell Jesus that they have run out of wine? Do you think that Mary noticed because she was keeping a motherly eye on the proceedings? That Jesus would not have noticed if his mother hadn't pointed it out? Do you think it is unusual that Mary should address her son in public? Do you notice a special bond of love and trust between them and hear the respect with which Jesus addresses his mother by calling her "woman"?
- When Jesus replies that his hour has not yet come, do you detect hesitation in his voice? Do you think he feels he is not yet ready to start his mission? Do you think that Mary instinctively knows that his hour has come so she sets him up to make the move by telling the servants to whatever Jesus tells them? That Mary feels her son has to make a move sometime and what better time than now? Do you wonder if Jesus feels nervous but that he should obey his mother?

- What do you notice as you watch Jesus instruct the servants? Do you watch them filling the stone jars with water? Do you taste the contents of the stone jars? What is going through your mind as you realise you are not tasting water but the finest wine? Do you think other guests have realised what has happened? Do you want to tell them?
- As you reflect on what you have just witnessed, what does this sign tell you about Jesus? Does it bring to mind the scriptures and how wedding feasts and fine wines are used as metaphors to describe God's salvation for us? Do you think that by this sign Jesus has demonstrated God's abundant love for us? That this sign points to Jesus being the Messiah?

As we spend 10 minutes in quiet contemplation speak to Jesus about your experience. Talk to him about what this sign means to you as you try to get to know him better.

### **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