

## Imaginative Contemplation – Lord, I believe



Harold Copping (1863-1932), 'At the Pool of Siloam' (watercolor illustration)

### 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 alive for us. We are not trying to recreate history. It doesn't matter if my 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 heart and enlighten our minds as we listen to and reflect on Jesus curing the blind man. Let us too wash in the pool of Siloam so that our eyes can be opened to the goodness of God.

## **Reading      John 9:1-41.**

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. . His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?" "Neither he nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered, "he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

"As long as the day lasts I must carry out the work of the one who sent me; the night will soon be here when no one can work.

As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world."

Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, "Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam" (a name that means "sent"). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "Yes, it is the same one." Others said, "No, he only looks like him." The man himself said, "I am the man." So they said to him, "Then how do your eyes come to be open?" "The man called Jesus," he answered, "made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, 'Go and wash at Siloam'; so I went, and when I washed I could see." They asked, "Where is he?" "I don't know," he answered.

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a Sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, "He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see." Then some of the Pharisees said, "This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How could a sinner produce signs like this?" And there was disagreement among them.

So they spoke to the blind man again, "What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?" "He is a prophet," replied the man. "Are you trying to teach us," they replied, "and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!" And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Sir," the man replied, "tell me who he is so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You are looking at him; he is speaking to you." The man said, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped him.

## **Contemplation**

Today, Laetare Sunday, we hear like last week, from the Gospel of John. Like last week when we heard about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan Woman, today's reading about the blind man washing in the pool at Siloam, also has many allusions to Baptism. Imagine the scene and find a place within it. With the help of the Spirit, let the story unfold in your imagination.

- Who are you within the story? The blind man,? One of his neighbours? One of his disciples? One of the Pharisees? One of his friends or an unnoticed bystander? You may be a person or thing that is not specifically mentioned in the printed story?
- What time of day is it? What is the atmosphere like? Hot? Oppressive? Crowded? Noisy? What is the location like? Where does this encounter take place?
- What can you see, hear and feel around you? What are the sounds, the smells, and the other details about the location that you notice?
- Who is there? How do they interact? Look around you and notice the expressions on people's faces. Listen to the tone of their voices and what is being said.
- Do you notice the blind man? What is he doing? Is he begging? Do you know him, either personally or by sight? Have you ever spoken to him? Have you ever given him alms?
- Did you hear the question that the disciples asked the Jesus about who is to blame for the man's blindness? What did you make of His answer that no-one is to blame? Are you quick to apportion blame when things go wrong?
- How do you feel when Jesus made a paste with spittle and put it on the blind man's eyes? How do you think the blind man felt? Did someone guide him to the pool at Siloam so that he could carry out Jesus' instructions to bathe his eyes?

- How does the man react after he was cured? How do you think he feels about coming out of the darkness and into the light? Do you think that he not only sees the light of day but the light of faith? Have you ever experienced coming out of the darkness and into the light?
- Were you with the crowd who brought the blind man to the Pharisees? If so what do you feel about their reaction to the blind man's cure? Their doubt? Their suspicion? Do you think it is they who are blind to the goodness of Jesus?
- Do you notice that the blind man has not only received his sight but also the courage to acknowledge that Jesus is responsible for his cure? That he fearlessly acknowledges that Jesus is a prophet? Do you admire him for his courage? Do you feel sorry for him because the Pharisees drove him out? What are you thinking and feeling at this point? Have you ever been driven out for what you believe?
- Do you notice Jesus seeking him out? How do you react at the conversation that takes place between them? How do you react at the blind man's profession of faith? Has there ever been an incidence in your life that has made you say "Lord, I believe.?"
- Is there anyone you want to engage in conversation?

Ask Jesus to give you the courage to witness to your faith. Talk to him about the ways you are blind and ask him to open your eyes to enable you to see God's face in everyone you meet and his goodness in every day life..

We will sit with these thoughts and imaginations for 10 minutes

## **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.