

5th Sunday of Easter – Do not let your hearts be troubled

Do not
let your hearts
be troubled.
Trust in God.
-JOHN 14:1

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 your 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 guide your hearts and enlighten your minds as you read the Gospel and reflect on what it means to envisage Jesus as "the Way, the Truth and the Life. Let the Spirit enter you so that you too can hear the voice of Jesus, our Way to the Father.

Reading John 14: 1-12

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God still, and trust in me.

There are many rooms in my Father's house;

if there were not, I should have told you.

I am now going to prepare a place for you,

and after I have gone and prepared you a place,

I shall return to take you with me;

so that where I am you may be too.

You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

No one can come to the Father except through me.

If you know me, you know my Father too.

From this moment you know him and have seen him."

Philip said, "Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied."

"Have I been with you all this time, Philip," said Jesus to him "and you still do not know me?

"To have seen me is to have seen the Father,

so how can you say, 'Let us see the Father'?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself:

It is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work.

You must believe me when I say

that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;

believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason.

I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father."

Contemplation

In the Gospel of the 5th Sunday of Easter, Jesus says "I AM the Way the Truth and the Life, the 6th of the seven I AM statements. The conversation takes place on the last night before the crucifixion, during the Passover meal. Before this, Jesus had washed the disciple's feet, predicted his betrayal by Judas, predicted his denial by Peter, and told the disciples he would soon be going away. All of this prompted questions about where Jesus was going, and why it was that they couldn't follow with him. So this in mind, imagine the scene, find a place within it. With the help of the Spirit, let the story unfold in your imagination.

- Who are you within the story? Are you one of the disciples? Thomas? Phillip? Perhaps a person that is not specially mentioned in the printed story e.g. one of the servers?
- What time of day is it? Morning? Noon? Evening?
- What about the atmosphere in the "Upper Room". You are celebrating the Passover meal together. Is there a lively atmosphere because you are celebrating? Sombre because Jesus has mentioned he will soon be going away?
- Do you think that Jesus has noticed the mood and atmosphere because he tells you not to let your heart be troubled and to trust in God and him? How does that make you feel? Comforted? Reassured?
- Do you know what he means when he tells you that there are many rooms in his Father's house? Do you find this reassuring?
- Where do you think Jesus is going and where do you think he is preparing a place for you? How do you feel about the fact that he seems to think you know where he is going and how to get there?
- Are you pleased when Thomas tells Jesus that they don't know where he is going so how can they know the way? Are you like Thomas, wanting to know the details of your journey so that you can make plans?
- When Jesus said "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me", what do you think he means? Does it remind you of Scriptures that when God spoke his name to Moses, "I am," so too Jesus speaks his name to you - "I AM the way and the truth and the life."

- Are you pleased when Phillip asks to see the Father so they can be satisfied? Do you too want to see the Father? Are you like Phillip wanting to see direct evidence of the Father?
- What do you think Jesus means when he says that to have seen him is to have seen the Father?
- What is going through your mind when Jesus says “I am in the Father and the Father is in me”? Does it reassure you of Jesus’ close connection with the Father and of yours too?.
- Jesus tells you to think back to the works he has done as evidence. Is there any of these works that specifically comes to mind?
- Do you feel Jesus’ words are giving you direction in your life or are you confused and flustered by his discourse?
- Feel what is going on inside you as you listen to Jesus’ words. Is there anything you want to ask him? Anything you want him to explain?

Approach Jesus and talk to him about what is going on inside you. Listen to what he tells you. Do you feel his words “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me” applies to you here and now?

Sit and imagine the scene and perhaps write down how and what you feel, your emotions – anything that comes into your mind.

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.