

## Imaginative Contemplation – I will not leave you orphans



### 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 our hearts and enlighten our minds so that we will come to the knowledge that it is through the Spirit that God's love will be revealed to us.

## **Reading      John 14:15-21**

Jesus said to his disciples:

"If you love me you will keep my commandments.

I shall ask the Father,

and he will give you another Advocate

to be with you for ever,

that Spirit of truth

whom the world can never receive

since it neither sees nor knows him;

but you know him,

because he is with you, he is in you.

I will not leave you orphans;

I will come back to you.

In a short time the world will no longer see me;

but you will see me,

because I live and you will live.

On that day

you will understand that I am in my Father

and you in me and I in you.

Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me;

and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father,

and I shall love him and show myself to him.

## **Contemplation**

The Gospel of the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter is a continuation of last week's Gospel reading in which Jesus is speaking to his disciples at the Last Supper. In this passage, Jesus is giving his disciples encouragement and reassures them that although he will soon be leaving them, he will not

abandon them. Enter into the scene in the upper room and listen to Jesus' words of encouragement.

- Who are you within the story? Are you one of the disciples? Perhaps a person that is not 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 mentions on more than one occasion that he will soon be going away?
- When Jesus says "If you love me you will keep my commandments". Do you wonder what commandments He means? Do you think he means the commandments given to you by Moses? Or do you think he is referring to the theme that has been running through his preaching – to put love in the heart of everything you do?
- When Jesus says he shall ask the Father, and he will give us another Advocate to be with us for ever, what is going through your mind? Do you understand by it that Jesus is the first Advocate? That he is the one who intercedes for you with his Father? What does the word advocate mean to you? Does it suggest some sort of legal figure? Or do you think that through this Advocate you will be able to live in union with Jesus and his Father? That through this Advocate you will be accompanied by some sort of life-giving and affirming Spirit?
- Or do you feel confused by Jesus's discourse about the Advocate? Do you feel he is talking in riddles?
- Do you feel comforted when he tells you he will not leave you orphans? Reassured that Jesus is aware of the impact that his physical loss will have on you so he tells you that he will send his Spirit to be with you for ever?
- Do you find it difficult to understand what Jesus tells you about him being still alive even after his death? Do you think you will ever understand when he tells you that "on that day that am in my Father and you in me and I in you"?
- Are you comforted when Jesus tells you that when he leaves, you will not have to go it alone but you can show yourself to God who promises to help you and send you his Spirit? How do you feel when you hear his words "anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him."

- 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 how you feel? Listen to what he tells you.

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.