

## Imaginative Contemplation – Good and Faithful Servant



### 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 reflect on whether or not we work for the Lord and use the talents he gave to each of us in his name..

## **Reading      Matthew 25:14-30**

Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man on his way abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one; each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out.

"The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. The man who had received two made two more in the same way. But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

"Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. 'Sir,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made'. His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness.'

Next the man with two talents came forward. 'Sir,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; here are two more that I have made.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness.'

Last came forward the man who had the one talent. 'Sir,' said he, 'I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered; so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is; it was yours, you have it back.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that

I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have recovered my capital with interest. So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the five talents. For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away. As for this good-for-nothing servant, throw him out into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.' "

## **Contemplation**

In this the 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, today's Gospel Reading, the parable of the talents, teaches us that God's judgment will be based on the service we render to God and to one another in accordance with the gifts that our loving and generous God has bestowed on us. Let us now enter the scene and listen to Jesus' discourse telling us how to conduct ourselves as we await the Kingdom of Heaven.

- Who are you in the scene? One of the disciples? One of the crowd? A follower of Jesus? Perhaps one of the servants being entrusted with talents. Someone who is not mentioned in the passage?
- Where are you listening to Jesus? In the temple? In an open space? In the market place?
- Is there a crowd of people around Jesus? If so where are you in the crowd? Why are you there?
- Look around you? What are the people doing? Look at the expressions on their faces? What about the expression on Jesus' face as he begins his parable?.
- As you listen to Jesus telling you that the Kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going to a distant country entrusting his servants with his property and giving them talents according to their ability, take time to think of your talents, your gifts, your charisms; the specific and unique talents you have; where you are being drawn to use them; whether you are using them to your full potential and how you show your gratitude for them.
- Do you feel in your heart that you use your talents to the best of your ability? In what ways are you using them for the service of God and of others? For the building of the Kingdom of God here on earth?
- If you do not use your gifts to their full potential, why? Is it because you are afraid? Is it because you do not like taking risks and do not want to leave your comfort zone?

- Do you realise that you were given talents according to your ability? That God does not overburden anyone with talents that they do not have the ability to use? That your talents are unique to you and that they are to be used to the best of your ability?
- As you continue to listen to Jesus, do you realise your responsibility is to be active in God's service? Do you realise that it is in sharing your gifts and not hiding them away that generates wealth?

Let us spend 10 minutes in speaking to Jesus about what is going on in your heart and mind regarding your talents and how you are to use them. What do you want to say to Him? What is Jesus saying to you? How do you want to respond

### **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