

## Imaginative Contemplation - Father, the Hour has 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.

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 Priestly Prayer of Jesus. As you listen to the words of Jesus, let the Spirit enter you and ask him to allow you to become part of the loving intimacy of Jesus' relationship with God the Father.

## **Reading      John 17:1-11**

At that time: Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

'I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.'

## **Contemplation**

On the seventh Sunday in Easter A, the Gospel Reading from John 17 is also known as Jesus' Priestly Prayer. This is the third part of a discourse which takes place at the Passover meal, his last Supper. As the Passover

meal draws to a close, Jesus prays to God the Father for Himself and as the intercessor on behalf of His disciples. With this in mind, imagine the scene, find a place within it. With the help of the Spirit, listen to Jesus' prayer and notice the feelings his words stir within you.

- Who are you within the story? Are you one of the disciples? If so, which one? Perhaps a person that is not specially mentioned in the printed story e.g. one of the servers?
- Place yourself in the room. Are you beside Peter or John, or standing in the shadows watching Jesus pray? Are you sitting near Jesus, perhaps leaning in to catch every word? Or are you by the door, overwhelmed by the mystery of His prayer?
- Picture the upper room with its dim lighting. Hear the quietness following the long discourse. Observe the expression on Jesus' face—a mixture of sorrow for leaving, yet profound, calm certainty about his mission.
- What is the atmosphere like in the "Upper Room"? Sense the mixture of confusion, exhaustion, and deep love in the room. Some disciples might be leaning back in contemplation, while others look on with anxious eyes.
- Visualise Jesus. Is he standing or seated? Watch him as he "lifted up His eyes to heaven". Observe His posture—is He resolute, calm, or deeply burdened? Listen to the tone of His voice as He addresses the Father with absolute intimacy. What is going on in your mind at that point?
- Watch the disciples' faces. Do you think that they truly understand the magnitude of what Jesus is saying about "eternal life" and His departure?.
- Jesus acknowledges that His mission is reaching its climax. How do you feel hearing Him speak of "glorifying" the Father through what is about to happen? Are you sad because Jesus says his mission is coming to an end? Comforted because he is praying for himself and you? Do you come to the realisation that Jesus is actually leaving you?
- What do you think is going on in Jesus' mind as he prays for himself? Do you think he is sad? Afraid? Does his voice sound desperate? Calm? Resolute? Trusting?
- You hear Jesus say many things that relates to the fact he would not be with you much longer. "Father, the hour has come; I have glorified you on earth and finished the work that you gave me to do;

I am not in the world any longer but they are in the world and I am coming to you". Do you wonder why he has to leave?

- Jesus also says to the Father that He had finished the work that He, the Father had given Him to do. What do you think He means? Do you wonder who will carry on his work?
- Imagine being one of the disciples, hearing Jesus say, "They were yours, and you gave them to me". How does it feel to be someone Jesus loves and protects?
- Imagine being alongside Jesus as he prays for you. What do you notice about Jesus as he prays? How do you feel when you hear him pray lovingly to the Father for you?
- Listen to Jesus mention you as one of His followers. He asks the Father to "protect them" and keep them "one". How does it feel to be the subject of Christ's personal intercession.
- Listen to Jesus as he prays to God the Father for Himself and as the intercessor on your behalf. Do you feel privileged that you are part of this intimate conversation between Jesus and his Father? Do you feel you are standing on Holy ground as you listen to Jesus' conversation with his Father?

Is there anything you want to say to Jesus whose Spirit dwells in your heart? What do you want to say to Him after hearing Him pray for your protection and unity?. Is there a specific challenge in your life you want to bring to Him in light of His promise that "all mine are yours"?

We will sit with our thoughts and imagination 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.