

## Imaginative Contemplation – Let not your hearts be troubled



Christ is our Bridge to Heaven, by Elisabeth Wang (taken from the World Wide Web)

### 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**

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

‘Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.’

## **Contemplation**

In the Gospel of the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, Jesus says “I AM the Way the Truth and the Life, the 6<sup>th</sup> of the seven I AM statements. In this Gospel Reading, Jesus is speaking to his disciples at the Last Supper, shortly

before his arrest. With 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?
- Imagine you are in the "Upper Room." It is evening. The air is warm and smells of bread, wine, and oil lamps. What is the atmosphere like in the "Upper Room". Is there a heavy, anxious mood? Jesus has just told the disciples he is leaving and that one of them will betray him. Feel the tension in the room.
- Notice that Jesus is calm and firm in his love as he talks to his agitated disciples. Hear Jesus say this to you "Do not let your hearts be troubled". Feel your own worries settling down as he directs your gaze away from fear and towards trust.
- Jesus tells you that his Father's house has many rooms and that he is going to prepare a place specifically for you. Imagine what a room prepared by Jesus might look like—filled with things that reflect his love for you. Who might you see there? How does it make you feel?
- Listen to Thomas' voice as he tells Jesus that they don't know where he is going so how can they know the way. Can you feel his frustration or fear of being left behind? Are you like Thomas, wanting to know the details of your journey so that you can make plans?
- Feel the deep reassurance in Jesus's reply: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life". How do these words make you feel?
- Notice Jesus' reaction to Philip when he asks to see the Father so they can be satisfied. Is there a hint of sadness that they still don't fully understand that "To have seen me is to have seen the Father?" Are you like Phillip wanting to see direct evidence of the Father?
- What questions might you have for Jesus? Listen to his answers.
- Witness the intensity of Jesus as he declares his unity with the Father, urging you to believe based on the works you have seen.
- 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 ends by saying that those who believe will do "even greater works" because he is going to the Father. Imagine him looking at your hands as he says this. He tells you to think back to the works

he has done as evidence. Is there any of these works that specifically comes to mind?

Approach Jesus and talk to him about what is going on inside you. Tell him about what part of your heart is "troubled" today. Ask him to show you how he is the "Way" in your current life.

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.