

# Ignatian Prayer

The purpose of Ignatian prayer is to try to make the gospels and the scriptural scenes become so alive and real to you that you can make a personal application of the teaching or message contained in it. A key word describing this type of prayer is “projection.” You will attempt to project yourself into the original events so that you become part of them, personally involved in them.

The sensory imagination is used more fully in Ignatian prayer than in any other type. Ignatius suggests that you try to use all five senses during your imaginary journey back into the life of Jesus or other biblical events. You will try to imagine not only what you would see but also what each of the characters involved would say, what sounds you would hear, what textures you would feel, what smells and tastes you would experience. The purpose of this vivid recall is to make the event as real as possible so that you actually become part of it in your imagination. In this way you will aim to garner some practical fruit for application in your present situation.

Before beginning, choose the passage of scripture that you will use. Action passages from the gospels are especially appropriate. Read the passage slowly and carefully several times, fixing in your mind as many of the details as possible. Then lay the passage aside and close your eyes. Slowly and reflectively walk through the events of the passage, imagining yourself to be an observer on the edge of the action, or putting yourself in the place of one of the main or secondary characters. Get into the scene by imagining all of the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings around you. Then let the action begin to unfold in your imagination at its own pace. Take the time necessary for you to savor to the fullest each event, observation, or conversation.

At the conclusion of your imaginary trip into the scene, continue to sit quietly, allowing your responses to unfold – thoughts, feelings,

## For the SJ Personality Preference

emotions. In your notebook write about your experience. You may write down your thoughts and feelings, or you may continue a written dialogue with Jesus or with God, or with one of the other characters. However you choose to do it, writing is an important part of the process.

### ONE EXAMPLE

Read Luke 10:38-42. Imagine that you are a friend of Mary or Martha. You happen to meet one of them in the village, and you are told that Jesus is coming to visit in Bethany. You express an interest in meeting him and are invited to come to the house the next evening for dinner with him. Try to relive in your imagination, with as many vivid details as possible, what your meeting and conversation with Jesus (and the others who attend) would be like. Draw some practical fruit from it.

### ANOTHER EXAMPLE

Read John 5:1-9a. Imagine yourself to be the invalid lying by the pool. Observe all that is going on around you. What are your hopes for yourself? How do you feel when others are cured while you are left uncured? Notice Jesus approaching you. Imagine your conversation with him. What happens when he tells you to take up your mat and walk? How do you feel? What is the invalid part of you or of your life that needs to be healed? What are you waiting for? What does it mean for you to hear Jesus say, “Take your mat and walk”?