



Contemplative Prayer Exercise



God can speak to us through our imagination. Contemplative prayer is praying with the imagination. Contemplation is a very active way of praying that engages the mind and heart and stirs up thoughts and emotions.

We are going to accompany Jesus through his life by imagining scenes from the Gospel stories.

- I will give you a scripture reading from the Gospels and after reading it, you will close your eyes and visualize the events of the story.
- Before you begin though, express the desire you seek through this contemplative prayer.
- Pay attention to the details: sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings of the event. Lose yourself in the story.
- Literally put yourself into the story. Where are you? Can you see yourself there?

Contemplating a Gospel scene is not simply remembering it or going back in time. Through the act of contemplation, the Holy Spirit makes present a mystery of Jesus' life in a way that is meaningful for you now. Use your imagination to dig deeper into the story so that God may communicate with you in a personal, evocative way.

We might initially worry about going beyond the text of the Gospel. If you have offered your time of prayer to God, then begin by trusting that God is communicating with you.

If you wonder if your imagination is going "too far," then do some discernment with how you are praying.

Where did your imagining lead you: Closer to God or farther away? Is your imagining bringing you consolation or desolation?

Some people find imaginative prayer difficult. They may not be able to picture the scene easily, yet they may have some intuition or gut reaction to the story. Or they may hear or feel the story more than visualize it. Pray as you are able; don't try to force it. Rest assured that God will speak to you, whether through your memory, understanding, intellect, emotions, or imagination.