

A GROUP OF IGNATIAN TYPE PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

The Ignatian Method is to project oneself back into the Biblical scene and to become a part of it by way of imagination. Ignatius suggests that we try to imagine what we might see, what we might hear, and what the persons in the scene might be doing. What changes or challenges does our reflection on the event bring us?

1. (John 21:1-19) Imagine that you are Peter. Read the story very carefully so that you will remember all of the details. Then close your eyes and re-live the scene in your imagination. Try to capture your feelings when Jesus asks you three times, "Do you love me?" Then answer the way you would want to answer rather than merely repeat what Peter said. When Jesus tells you: "Follow me," try to imagine what that might mean in the immediate future of your present life.

2. (Luke 10:25-37) Read the parable of the Good Samaritan and try to imagine yourself, first of all, as the priest who passes by on the other side of the road. What reasons could you give for refusing to get involved? Then try to imagine yourself as the person who fell among the robbers and who was left half-dead by the side of the road. What might you think as you see people pass you by and refuse your cries for help? Thirdly, imagine yourself as the Good Samaritan. Try to envision some situations today where you could act as a Good Samaritan to others in trouble.

3. (Mark 9:14-29) Read the story. Imagine yourself as the father of the possessed boy and apply the conversation between Jesus and the father to your own situation. Instead of an afflicted son, imagine the affliction is some fault of yours which has resisted cure. Bring this affliction to Jesus and ask him to cure it.

4. (Luke 7:36-50) Imagine yourself as the penitent woman who comes to Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee, washes his feet with her tears, and dries them with her hair. Try to imagine why you should be weeping and how you came to be convinced that Jesus would understand and show mercy. Imagine your reaction when you hear him saying to you, "Many sins are forgiven you because you have loved much."

A GROUP OF AUGUSTINIAN TYPE PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

The Augustinian Method is to transpose the Biblical account onto our situation today. In Augustinian prayer, we try to think of the words of the Bible as though they were a personal letter from God addressed to each one of us.

1. (Matthew 5:38-48) Read the passage slowly several times. Try to discern what meaning the words might have if spoken by Jesus to you at this very moment. Whom do you need to forgive? How might Jesus be asking you today to turn the other cheek, to go the extra mile, to give away your shirt as well as your cloak? Feel free to apply these words of Jesus to some other area of life besides material possessions.

2. (Philippians 3:7-16) Put yourself in the place of a person in Philippi who received this letter from Paul. He is writing with you specifically in mind. He knows your situation quite well. How do the words apply to you?

3. (Isaiah 58:2-14) Justice and charity to the poor are the most authentic forms of fasting. How far can these words of God apply to your life? What more can you do to share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless, clothe the naked? Try to imagine God saying these words to you today. What is He asking of you at this time in your life?

4. (Micah 6:8) "You have been told, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: Do right, love goodness, and walk humbly with your God." Consider how these three requests sum up your relationship with God and your fellow human beings. Imagine God speaking these words to you. Close your eyes and repeat them slowly over and over again. Try to apply them to your own situation. What is God asking of you?

A GROUP OF FRANCISCAN TYPE PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

The Franciscan Prayer makes full use of the senses to be open to God. There may be a strong feeling of praying through work or service of others.

1. Read Daniel 3:26-90 [The Prayer of Azariah vs 29-68 *in the Apocrypha*]. Spend the remainder of the half hour composing your own canticle of praise of God for all the beauties of His creation. Include the beauties of the inner world of the Spirit, of one's own nature, of friends, as well as of the physical world.
2. Think of the person in the world that you love the most. Ask yourself the following question: How can I see the presence of God in that person? Spend some time praising and thanking God for giving so much goodness, beauty, grace, etc. to that person. Spend some time thanking God for the gift of love whereby you are able to love that person and that person is able to love you.
3. Think of the person that you least like of all your acquaintances. Try to see something of God's goodness, love, life, truth, beauty in that person. What might you do to foster and increase the presence of God in that person? Prayer is always a way to help another.
4. Go outside; look for two trees: one which resembles the kind of person you would like to be or your goal in life, another which expresses in some way the kind of person you see yourself to be now. Decide what you need to do in order to change from the way you now are to the way you would like to be or the way God would like you to be.

A GROUP OF THOMISTIC TYPE PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Thomistic Prayer pays close attention to the rational process of thinking needed to attain an appropriate conclusion. It emphasises the doctrinal aspects of faith and moves towards the practical outworking of it in daily life.

1. (Mark 8:34-38) Doctrine of the Cross. What does Jesus mean when he insists that in order to be his disciple we must take up our cross and follow him? What are the crosses in your present life? Are you carrying them in the same way that Jesus carried his cross to Calvary? What do you need to change in your present attitude toward your crosses?
2. (Matthew 10:39) "He who seeks only himself brings himself to ruin; whereas he who brings himself to nought for my sake discovers who he really is." What does Jesus mean by the words "bring oneself to nought for my sake"? What do you need to do in your life to put Jesus' concerns ahead of your own? How does self-discipline enable us to "discover who we really are"? Just who are we really? What is our primary purpose on earth? Is it to satisfy ourselves or to fulfil some God-given destiny? What is the ministry God is asking of us?
3. (Matthew 5:20-26 and John 2:13-17) What is the difference between the anger of Jesus and the anger which Jesus condemns in this passage from Matthew? Why is anger so wrong that Jesus equates it with the command against killing? St. Thomas defines anger as the desire to attack violently anyone who poses a threat to something we consider valuable. What about self-defence of our country, our family, ourselves? How far are we justified to go to defend ourselves? Is the anger you sometimes feel a justifiable anger, similar to that of Jesus, or the kind of anger Jesus condemns in the Sermon on the Mount? What does one do about one's anger?
4. (Matthew 6:26-34) Study carefully each verse of Jesus' teaching about Divine Providence. With what of it do you agree? What do you consider not applicable to your present way of life? What justification can you make for the verses you are unwilling to accept literally? What changes do you need to make in your life in order to follow Christ's teachings here?