

The Prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola

Ignatian Contemplation

A form of Lectio Divina (divine reading) that makes use of the 5 senses to bring the Bible to life and apply it to our own lives. Any Bible passage can be used but it is easiest to use something from the Gospels.

1. Pick a topic/bible passage (see back for examples):

Example: Parable of Good Samaritan

2. Read the passage several times, slowly. What words/phrases stand out to you?

Ex. Luke 10:30-37

3. Five senses: What do I see and hear? What do I smell, taste, or touch?

Ex. The lonely, silent, isolation of being all alone, hurt. The rich clothes of the passing priest. The feel of dust entering wounds. The smell of a dying man. The feel of the healing oil of the Samaritan. The taste of blood, teeth all knocked around. The taste of the healing soup of the innkeeper.

4. Who are the characters and what's going on with them?

Ex. The traveler, the robbers, priest, Levite, Samaritan, the host of the inn

5. What role would I play in this story? How would I project myself (either as I am now, or as one of the original characters)?

Ex. Do I feel like the traveler, all bruised (spiritually wounded) waiting for Jesus to save me? Am I the priest, too busy with my own life to worry about others? Am I the inn-keeper, entrusted by Jesus to care for his hurt travelers?

6. If I were Jesus in this story, what would I be thinking, feeling, saying?

Ex. Imagine Jesus, seeing us hurt, broken, moved with compassion and caring for our wounds.

7. Giving free rein to our imagination, we become both watchers and participants in the story. The Holy Spirit makes this story present in our lives today, meaningful now.

Note: You may find your mind wandering. This is very natural and happened to St. Ignatius too, just make sure to bring yourself back to the Bible passage at hand.

To make it easier to imagine, feel free to use other resources like a biblical commentary or reputable biblical movies, like *The Passion of Christ*, or *The Chosen*. Note that these are not a replacement for the Bible, and are simply to help our imaginations as we place ourselves in these scenes.

Note: these are just two forms of prayer on the enormous buffet of options to pray to God. They may/may not work for you; the most important thing is that you do some sort of prayer since that is essential to becoming the saints we are called to be.

Daily Examen:

This is not a checklist but a discernment: What is God telling me? We do this because it can be difficult to see how God works in each moment until we reflect.

1. **Presence:** Place yourself in God's presence. Give thanks for God's great love for you. It's important to bring God in or else this Examen is a simple exercise in being self-critical, instead of an exercise to improve in sanctity and become the best version of yourself.
2. **Grace:** Pray for the grace to understand how God is acting in your life. Lord, enlighten me to see and reflect with the light of Your grace.
3. **Review** your day - recall specific moments and your feelings at the time. Gratitude is an important part of this process, since it is the foundation of our relationship with God. It can be simple things like the food you ate, the sights you saw, the people you talked to. God is in the details.
4. **Reflect** on what you did, said, or thought in those instances. Were you drawing closer to God, or further away?
5. **Choose** one feature of the day and pray from it. This can be any feeling: intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.
6. **Look forward** - think of how you might collaborate more effectively with God's plan. Ask for help with tomorrow's challenges, seek God's guidance.
7. **Our Father...**

This examination can be done at any time. Popular choices include in the morning right as you wake up (reflecting on the day before), at midday (say, from noon to noon), or at night.

There are several guided examens on YouTube, which will walk you through every step. Here is a 10-minute Examen made by Hallow:



Sample Bible Passages to Pray With

Matthew 10:26-33: 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

This is in the context of Jesus sending out the disciples (don't bring money, "I'm sending you out as a sheep among wolves, etc.). How is Jesus comforting us as we go through the difficulties of life? Is there something in the dark right now that I should trust to Jesus to reveal when the time is due? Is there something in our life that is attacking our souls? How are we called to proclaim Jesus' message in our own lives?

John 6:1-15: Feeding 5,000 (*The Chosen* S3 Ep. 8)

Imagine yourself in this scripture scene. What do you see? What do the crowds look like? How many people are around? What is the landscape look like? What does the sea of Galilee look like in the background? What do you hear? Can you imagine the people grumbling about being hungry? What does Jesus' voice sound like to you? What do you feel? What kind of clothes are you wearing? Is it cold out? Are you sitting on the ground? Is it cool it is warm? What do you taste? What does the bread and fish taste like to you? What do you smell? Can you smell the food? Can you smell the fresh air coming off the sea? Compose the place and hope that God will enable you to experience this in a new way through your imagination. Focus on what God wants you to look at? Maybe it's the little boy that comes up and offers the bread. Someone can bring so little and God makes it into so much. God multiplies things in our life (the little offerings of love, etc.).

Mark 9:14-29: Boy Possessed by Impure Spirit

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. Think about how this affliction affects you, brings you down like it brings down the child. Bring this affliction to Jesus and ask him to cure it. What does this say about the importance of prayer? How is God asking you to bring prayer into your life?

Mark 10:46-52: Blind Bartimaeus

Think of yourself as the blind Bartimaeus who hears that Jesus of Nazareth is passing: "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!" Jesus calls you over and asks: "What do you want me to do for you?" "Rabbi, I want to see." "Be on your way, your faith has saved you." We all are spiritually blind. We so often miss the obvious. We are blind to the needs of others. We are blind to our own faults and sins. Say to Jesus: "Rabbi, I want to see." Jesus lays his hands on you and you experience healing. Your eyes are opened and you see that to which you had previously been blind.

Mark 2:1-12: Healing of the Paralytic (*The Chosen* S1 Ep. 6)

Read the story and pick up on the basic things happening. Where is the story? Who is in the story? What is happening? Who is in charge? Are there more people around? What are they doing? What is the setting/environment? What time of day it is? What is the mood? Feel yourself in the story? Are you one of the main characters? Somebody just watching? What are you doing? How do you feel? Are there more sounds/smells that aren't in the text? See where God and the Holy Spirit take you in your imagination. Connect with Jesus and get to know him better.

Matthew 9:9-12: Calling of Matthew (*The Chosen* S1 Ep. 8)

Matthew 13:1-9: Parable of Sower (rocky, thorns good soil) (*The Chosen* S1 Ep. 4)

Matthew 12:1-8: Eating grain on the Sabbath (*The Chosen* S2 Ep. 6)

Luke 1:46-56: Magnificat (*The Chosen* The Messengers)

John 3:1-21 Conversation with Nicodemus (Season 1 Episode 7)

John 5:1-13: Paralytic by the Pool (*The Chosen* S2 Ep. 4)

Matthew 25:1-13: Parable of the 10 Virgins (*The Chosen* S1 Ep. 6)

Luke 15: 1-7: Parable of the Lost Sheep (*The Chosen* S2 Ep. 1)

Luke 10:25-37: Parable of Good Samaritan (*The Chosen* S2 Ep. 1)

John 1:43-51: Call of Phillip and Nathanael (*The Chosen* S2 Ep. 2)

Luke 24:13-21, 28-32: Road to Emmaus

Mark 5:24-34: Woman with Hemorrhage

Luke 5:1-11: Awesome Catch of Fish

Selfish plug: please don't forget to pray for the discernment of Xavier Polisetty and Ryan Pecoraro.