

## **LEARNING TO PRAY IN AN IGNATIAN WAY THE METHOD OF GOSPEL CONTEMPLATION:**

1. Choose a **Gospel text** for your prayer.
2. Prepare for gospel contemplation by being still for a time. Be **aware of God's presence** within you and all around you. With the eyes of your heart, 'look at God looking at you'. Be aware that the Spirit is guiding you in your prayer, even though you feel distracted and without resources.
3. Be aware of yourself in the presence of God, your moods, your desires, your hopes. Out of that awareness try to focus on a **particular grace to ask** of the Lord during your prayer time.
4. **Read and re-read** the gospel passage letting its details settle into your memory.
5. Using the senses of your imagination, **see and hear** the scene in which the event takes place, the people who are there, their expression, their posture, their words. Do not be afraid to let your creativity take over when you do this. How you see and hear will often be how the Gospel passage will touch you.
6. Use your other senses (**smell, taste, touch**) both literally and spiritually. What is the taste, the feel of the interactions in the story, and how do they touch you? Identify with one or other person in the story and in your own way enter into the experience of that person's feelings and reactions. You may also be an added person (by-stander, observer, disciple). You can come back to the story time and time again living it in the position of other persons within the text, including Jesus. Be spontaneous. Enter into your own conversation and interact in your own way with the persons in the story. The Gospel passage becomes the backdrop for your own involvement with Jesus.
7. If at a certain point you feel drawn to **be silent** and to simply enjoy the presence of God, stay there. Do not feel the need to move on.
8. **Gather together the main strands** of your contemplation and spend a few minutes giving attention to the part in the contemplation that most deeply moved you. Also be aware of those parts of the contemplation that have disturbed you or left you cold. There is something in that for exploration another time.
9. Speak to the Lord in a **spontaneous colloquy**. Conclude with the Our Father or some other favourite prayer.