

THE AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE AND THE NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS PRESENT



The Heart of Prayer

A Study with
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*St. Ignatius of Loyola, Peter Paul Rubens /
Restored Traditions*

IGNATIAN SCRIPTURAL PRAYER GUIDE

Know the Scripture verse you will use ahead of time. Find your place of prayer. Open your Bible and find the passage.

1) Preparatory Prayer

“A step or two before the place where I am to contemplate or meditate, I will stand for the space of an Our Father and, with my consciousness raised on high, consider how the Lord my God looks upon me. Then I will make an act of reverence or humility” (St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, no. 75).

Spend the first minute considering how God looks at you.

Ask God our Lord for the grace that all your intentions, thoughts, and actions may be ordered purely to the service and praise of his divine majesty.

2) First Prelude: Set the Scene

This is made by imagining the place. Here we should take notice of the following: When a meditation is about something that can be gazed on, for example, a scene where our Lord is visible, the composition will be to see in imagination the physical place where the event is happening. By physical place I mean, for instance, a temple or a mountain where Jesus Christ or our Lady happen to be, in accordance with what is written.

When a Scripture passage isn't set in a physical place, for example, a psalm, imagine yourself before God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit, and imagine these words being spoken to you or by you.

This step sets the mind/intellect.

3) Second Prelude: Ask for a Grace

Ask God our Lord for what you want and desire. What you ask for should be in accordance with the subject matter. For example, in a contemplation on the Resurrection, ask for joy in union with Christ's joy; in a contemplation on the Passion, ask for pain, tears, and suffering with Christ's suffering.

Ask for what you desire and what you need—"I want to know my sins. I want to taste your love for me."

This sets the will.

4) Actual Meditation

Follow the Lord through the scene and stop when something impacts you. "Look" into the scene at Jesus, his heart, his actions, his words. Further, prayerfully examine the heart, actions, and words of any one person or many persons nearby.

Pay attention to the words and what you notice when you read them or "hear" them in your heart. What do you notice in Jesus or the Father or Mary as these words are spoken to you or by you? Stop when something stands out to you or strikes you.

As soon as you stop because something impacts you, look more deeply into that moment. What do you feel? Desire? Think? What is happening at that moment in the scene or the passage? What is capturing your attention?

5) Communication with the Lord

Speak to the Lord about what you are seeing in him or in others in the scene. Tell him what is happening in your heart because of what you are watching. Relate to him what you feel. Tell him what you desire. Listen to anything that comes to mind as a response from him. Don't be afraid to simply be quiet with him, to let his peace sink into you, to let him repeat to you his words of love and truth.

Repeat steps 4–5 until you feel as though your conversation is "complete" or you have no more time.

6) Final Colloquy (Final Conversation)

A colloquy is made, properly speaking, on the way one friend speaks to another, or a servant to one in authority—now begging a favor, now accusing oneself of some misdeed, now telling one's concerns and asking counsel about them.

The meditation should always end with a colloquy. It is a time to make a commitment to live what has been revealed or to enter more deeply into a truth. It is time to give thanks for what you experienced, or to ask for grace to change. Saint Ignatius gives examples of a colloquy:

- a) Talk with our Lady about what you just saw. Ask for her help and for her to pray for you to her Son.
- b) Talk with Jesus Crucified (or in some other mystery of his life) and ask him to help you in various ways. Ask him to take all of your prayer and life to the Father.
- c) Talk with the Father about what you just saw. Ask him to receive all that you are and help in ways related to what you have just been through in prayer. Tell him that you want to live still more deeply, more completely, for him.

Notes