

Meditation Basics

The Prayer of Consideration

- + Slowly and prayerfully, read and reread the designated text.
- + Consider the words, their meaning and what is implied.
- + Allow the text to draw your mind and heart to Christ.
- + Consider the text and your growing understanding of it.
- + Ask Christ to teach you a deeper meaning of the passage you are considering.
- + Enter into conversation with Jesus in light of the text you have considered and how it may influence the way you live the Christian life.
- + This conversation may take the form of gratitude, praise, petition or sorrow.

Good Interior Life Resources

Getting Started:

A Prayer Primer - Fr. Thomas Dubay, SM

Prayer for Beginners - Peter Kreeft

Opening to God – Fr. Thomas Green, SJ

Further along:

When the Well Runs Dry – Fr. Thomas Green, SJ

Difficulties in Mental Prayer - Fr. M. Eugene Boylan

Seeds of Contemplation – Thomas Merton

Advanced:

The Fire Within - Fr. Thomas Dubay, SM

Christian Meditation - Hans Urs von Balthasar

This sheet describes several methods for individual scriptural meditation: *Lectio Divina* (two versions), “Imaginative Prayer” and the “Prayer of Consideration.”^α

The basic format for the whole time of meditation is as follows:

I. Preparation

- a. Selection of the Material of meditation
- b. Recalling of God’s Presence

II. Meditation

- a. Method of meditation (one of the three below)
- b. Affective conversation with God (as described in each method)
- c. Thanksgiving

III. Post-Meditation

- a. Oblation: Re-offer your life to the love and service of the Lord
- b. Petition: Ask for the grace to apply your meditation to your life.

“The reason meditation does not bear fruit for some souls is that it does not move them to love...they make no practical resolutions for the future based on the mysteries which they have meditated upon...” - St. Teresa of Avila

^α These methods may also be applied to other materials for meditation: books of meditations, Patristic and Saints writings, spiritual reading, etc.

Methods of Meditation

Try each of the methods below. You will see that one method may lend itself better to a particular scriptural passage rather than another, thus it is good to be familiar with each. Knowing all the methods is the best way to be able to pray with different passages as they arise. You will soon learn how to naturally use the method that is most fruitful for your meditation on the particular reading.

Note: For daily individual prayer it makes sense to use one or both of the scriptural readings the Church provides for daily mass. These readings may be found in missalettes in the pews, in the back of some Bibles or through on-line resources.

Lectio Divina^β

- + Read the chosen passage.
- + Read the passage again, either silently or aloud, letting the words sink into your heart.
Listen for a word or phrase that stands out for you.
- + Write down the word or the phrase.
- + Take some time to reflect on the word or the phrase.
- + Read the passage a third time.
Listen for a word or phrase that reflects what Christ is saying to you today.
- + Write down the word or the phrase.
- + Take some time to reflect on the word or the phrase.
- + Read the passage a fourth time.
Listen for a word or phrase that best reflects your response to Christ.
- + Write down the word or the phrase.
- + Take some time to reflect on the word or the phrase.
- + Read all of the words and phrases that you have written down.
- + Let the Holy Spirit lead you in prayer to:
 - express your gratitude; ask for what you need;
 - communicate your sorrow.

^β This method may be simplified as one becomes familiar with it, e.g., not writing down the words.

Simplified Lectio Divina

- + Read the chosen passage.
- + Read the passage again, either silently or aloud, letting the words sink into your heart.
Listen for a word or phrase that stands out for you.
- + Take some time to reflect on the word or the phrase.
- + Re-read the chosen passage as needed.
- + Let the Holy Spirit lead you in prayer to:
 - express your gratitude; ask for what you need;
 - communicate your sorrow.

Imaginative Prayer

- + Slowly read and reread the designated passage from Scripture.
- + Once you have become familiar with the text, put the Bible aside, and begin to imagine the story in detail.
- + Picture the setting:
 - Imagine the scenery, the landscape, the environment.
 - What do the buildings look like? What do you hear?
 - What kind of day is it?
 - What else is part of the setting: animals, plants, other objects, etc.?
- + See the people:
 - Who are the characters?
 - What do they look like?
 - What has been happening to them in their lives?
 - What do they bring to the present experience?
- + Listen to the people:
 - Listen to the narrated dialogue.
 - Pay attention to their tone of voice.
 - Imagine the thoughts and exchanges of the recorded dialogue.
- + Consider what the people do:
 - See and consider what the characters are doing.
 - Observe their actions.
- + Be present to the scene. Perhaps place yourself in the scene.
- + Enter into conversational prayer with Christ or with others in the scene. It may take the form of gratitude, praise, petition or sorrow.