

Retreat Day

...Come with me by yourselves
to a quiet place...

(Mark 6:31)



Our retreat this month continues the theme of Lent, with its emphasis on the suffering and sacrifice of Christ, his death and burial. Again this is a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline. It is often a time of sacrifice and giving, reflecting the way that Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice for us.

Online clip <https://youtu.be/qQhnuxaXlfk>

POURED OUT

Call to worship

The Lord reigns! He is God Most High.
Come into His presence with rejoicing.

Come, with your joys and your sorrows,
Come with your hearts full and your hands empty.

Bow down before Him – He is God Incarnate.
Worship Him – He is Redeemer and Saviour.
Open your heart, your mind and your spirit to Him.



Scripture

After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.
Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors Isaiah 53:11-12

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, though you were in the form of God,
you chose not to cling to equality with God;
But you poured yourself out *to fill a vessel brand new*;
a servant in form and a man indeed.
The very likeness of humanity, you humbled yourself,
obedient to death - a merciless death on the cross!

Help us live with this same attitude, that we too may pour ourselves out in Your name.

You were raised you up to the highest place
and given the name above all.
So when your name is called,
every knee will bow, in heaven, on earth, and below.
And every tongue will confess that you,
Jesus, the Anointed One, are Lord,
to the glory of God our Father!
Based on Phil 2:5-11 (The Voice)

Song

Jesus Christ, I think upon Your sacrifice
You became nothing, poured out to death
Many times I've wondered at Your gift of life
And I'm in that place once again
I'm in that place once again
(Repeat)

And once again I look upon the cross where You died
I'm humbled by Your mercy and I'm broken inside
Once again I thank You
Once again I pour out my life

Now You are exalted to the highest place
King of the heavens, where one day I'll bow
But for now I marvel at this saving grace
And I'm full of praise once again
I'm full of praise once again

And once again...

Thank You for the cross
Thank You for the cross
Thank You for the cross, my friend

Scripture:

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³ Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵ "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." ⁶ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. ⁷ "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. John 12:1-7

Mary: *"My hands tremble slightly as I lift down the flask of fragrant oil. It is heavy in my hands and I carry it carefully, for it is costly. It took me many months' working hard to purchase this. I have been keeping it for something special and now I sense this is the moment I have been waiting for.*

I move into the room, full of noise and conversation. Men stop their talking and stare at me. I pause and then I see Him. He is reclining at the table and I move toward him, holding the flask firmly in my hands. I am no longer aware of anyone else in the room – it is just me and Him. He gazes at me as I come closer. I kneel before Him, still trembling, and I break the flask. The oil flows over His feet. I am moved beyond tears with a deep sense of sorrow and my hair is covering His feet and wiping the oil. I do not even know why I feel such deep sorrow; I just know that I do. This is a sacred moment and I want to sit at his feet, basking in His presence forever. The fragrance fills the room – I know whenever I smell that fragrance from now on, I will in my mind be back at the feet of Jesus".

Imagine yourself in that scene. The room is full of people talking, laughing, and enjoying good food and company. As you come in, with a flask of oil in your hands, the voices die down and people stare at you as you approach Jesus. What do you feel? Hear? Think? What does it feel like to anoint Jesus' feet? How does He respond to you?

Prayer

Lord, we offer ourselves to you today. You gave yourself so willingly for us. As the perfume flask was broken and the oil within was poured out, your body was broken and your blood was poured out for us. We too want to sit at your feet and immerse ourselves in your love. Help us to live every moment of this day with a deep sense of your presence and an awareness of the immensity of your sacrifice for us.



Scripture

I am **poured out** like water, and all my bones are **out** of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. Psalm 22:14

Silence

Song

Jesus, all for Jesus,
All I am and have and ever hope to be.
Jesus, all for Jesus,
All I am and have and ever hope to be.

All of my ambitions, hopes and plans
I surrender these into Your hands.
All of my ambitions, hopes and plans
I surrender these into Your hands.

For it's only in Your will that I am free,
For it's only in Your will that I am free,
Jesus, all for Jesus,
All I am and have and ever hope to be.

Scripture

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matthew 26:26-29

Prayer

O Christ, pouring yourself out,
love drained to the last drop, **we adore you.**

O Christ, kneeling as a servant, washing the disciples' feet,
shocking in your humility, **we adore you.**

O Christ, taking bread and wine, crystal-clear in your awareness
of the work you must complete, **we adore you.**

O Christ, entering Gethsemane, falling on your face to pray,
uncontainable in your broken heart, **we adore you.**¹



¹ Ashwin, A. (2002). *The Book of a Thousand Prayers*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI.
O Christ, pouring yourself out... Angela Ashwin, p. 3367

Song

How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure
How great the pain of searing loss,
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the chosen One,
Bring many sons to glory

Behold the Man upon a cross,
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice,
Call out among the scoffers
It was my sin that left Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom
(REPEAT)



Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be poured out on you abundantly,
along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

May your love be poured out as an abundant offering to glorify the living Lord Jesus.

(based on 1 Timothy 1:14)



SONGS

Once again - Matt Redman (The Best Worship Songs Ever, CD 3, Track 12)

All for Jesus – Robin Mark (The Best Worship Songs Ever, CD 1, Track 6)

How deep the Father's love – Stuart Townend (The Best Worship Songs Ever, CD 2, Track 9)

GOING DEEPER

Here are some suggestions that may help you in your time of reflection.

- **Reflect:** Read through Mary's Reflection again. What words or actions stand out for you? Put yourself in that position – how does Jesus respond to you? How do you respond to him?
- If you enjoy being **creative**, use some pens, crayons, paints, clay or collage to express how you would like to offer yourself to God? Alternatively, explore ways that you can express what it means for you that Christ poured Himself out for you.
- **Reflect** on the words "poured out as an offering". What words, thoughts, images come to mind? Allow these to shape themselves into a prayer to offer back to God.
- Go for a **walk**. What do you notice as you walk? Where do you see God at work?
- If you are **sharing** this retreat day with someone else, spend some time sharing your reflections on what it means to be poured out – or how you would like to experience being poured out for God. Pray for each other.
- If you like to **journal**, make a note of what you have experienced during this retreat time in your journal. A simple way to do this is to:

Thank God for Who He is and what He is doing in your life

Notice what is happening around you and in you

Respond to what God has shown you, by thanking Him, repenting, or recommitting yourself to Him

- **Simply sit in His presence.** We don't have to do anything to enjoy being in His presence! We are in His will when we are fully and completely in His presence, with our hearts focussed on Him.
- Following are some further **reflections from Scripture** you may like to use as Easter approaches:

Martha - Selected Passage: John 11:17-27; Focus verses: 25-27

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles^[b] from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Martha speaks:

"Finally He is here. My heart is filled with sorrow, and I admit that I don't understand why He didn't come earlier. He could have saved my brother's life - so easily. Yet now, I look into His eyes and see His love for me and for my brother. We speak of life and resurrection - and while I know that one day my brother will rise again, I cannot bear the thought of him lying in his tomb and no longer being with us. But then the full impact of the Lord's words hit me: He is not talking symbolically about life and resurrection, He is making a proclamation. He is the Resurrection and the Life! Something bursts in my heart and I am filled with joy. He is promising new life!"

We pray:

Lord, we acknowledge You today as the Resurrection and the Life, the source of all life and all hope. You bring us eternal life and abundant life, right where we are. In moments of darkness and death, in times where there seems to be no light and no life, help us to see that there is more going on than we are aware of and that You can bring life into all sorts of circumstances. Out of the darkness of the tomb You bring life and hope - help us to live in the light of that awareness. Amen.

Lazarus - Selected Passage: John 11:38-44; Focus verses: 43-44

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." ⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Lazarus speaks:

"Can this be true? I hear a voice. Out of oblivion, out of darkness and silence, out of stillness and aloneness, a voice is breaking through. This is a voice I know... Can it be true? I feel something stirring within me. I feel movement flowing through my body, and a warmth that comes from the place where my heart once beat with life. Again it beats. I strain against the cloths that bind me and find I can move, I can stand. I come out into the light, blinking against the brightness that dazzles my eyes. And I am free! I am alive! Astoundingly, amazingly alive!"

We pray:

O Lord, You have called all of us out darkness into light, out of death into life, and not just a life that is temporary or fleeting. The light and life You offer us is forever and touches every part of who we are. Forgive us when we slip back into ways of living that move us away from Your light and Life. Help us to daily hear Your call toward life and light that we might truly experience the abundant life You have given us. Amen

Peter - Selected Passage: John 13:1-9; Focus verses: 8-9

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"⁷ Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."⁸ "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."⁹ "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

Peter speaks:

"I don't understand. He is not a servant, yet He kneels before us, takes our feet in His hands and washes them clean. I can't bear to have Him do that to me. Why would he want to? What does this mean? He is coming closer to where I am sitting. He cannot wash my feet! Yet how can I refuse Him? If this is what I have to do to keep Him as my Lord, then all of me, wash all of me. I don't want to hold anything back. I am yours, Lord".

We pray:

Lord, we long for Your touch, yet we are also hesitant. We want You to come near, yet we are so aware of our own unworthiness. It is we who should serve You, but how can we not receive Your ministry to us? We echo the desires of Peter's heart as we pray, "All of me, Lord, take all of me". Wash me and cleanse me, whiter than snow. Amen.

Judas - Selected Passage: John 13:18-30; Focus verses: 27-30

After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."²² His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant.²³ One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him.²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."²⁵ Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.²⁷ As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly."²⁸ But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him.²⁹ Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor.³⁰ As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

Judas speaks:

"He knows. But how can He know? I was so careful. He will tell them all and they won't understand. Nobody understands. This isn't how it was meant to be. We had such great plans. We could have changed the world. But He just doesn't get it. I feel Him gazing into my eyes as He hands me a piece of bread. I cannot look at Him. His soft words take me by surprise. He knows and yet He does nothing to stop me? I stumble from the room - can I really do this? It is too late to go back now. I am in darkness."

We pray:

Lord, it is easy for us to condemn Judas, but we too sometimes allow the darkness to overtake us, or our own plans and priorities to blind us to what Your way for us is. Please give us Your strength when we are tempted to believe that our way is the right way when it isn't, and protect us from the Enemy that seeks to blind us and lead us away from Your plans for our lives. Amen

Thomas - Selected Passage: John 14:1-7; Focus verses: 5-6

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Thomas speaks:

"This has been such a strange evening. In fact, I've been feeling out of sorts all week. "Do not let your hearts be troubled", He says. But it is late, I am tired, there is a heaviness in the air and my heart is very troubled. I can't concentrate and my eyes keep closing. I don't understand what He is saying. I don't know where He is going. Are we going with Him? I look around and we are all confused. But something in His words soothes my soul. I still don't understand, but this is not the first time He has said things we didn't immediately understand. Perhaps this too will make sense eventually."

We pray:

We've heard Your voice before, Lord. Your words are simple words but sometimes we don't really understand what You mean. We are so good at seeing things through our own perspective that we can't always let that go and see the meaning behind Your words. Help us to understand and accept Your truth, and to know that it is okay if we don't always 'get it' right away. If we keep close to You, Your Spirit will guide us into all truth. Thank You, Lord. Amen.

Pilate - Selected Passage: John 19:4-16; Focus verses: 8-10

Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him."⁵ When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"⁶ As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."⁷ The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."⁸ When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid,⁹ and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer.¹⁰ "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"¹¹ Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."¹² From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free...

Pilate speaks:

"Honestly, I don't know what I am supposed to do with this man. I can't see that He has done anything wrong. It feels like a conspiracy somehow. Even my wife is disturbed about this. If I do what they say, I am condemning an innocent man to death - and who wants to die like that? Yet if I don't do what they say, it could spell political disaster. Things are always so touchy here. I'll give them one more chance - I can offer clemency. But if they don't take it, I don't know what else I can do. A man can only do so much, I guess."

We pray:

Lord, give us courage. When we are faced with doing the right thing at great cost, or doing the wrong thing that seems so easy, give us Your wisdom and courage to act with justice and integrity. Remind us that there is a bigger picture than we can see and that in times of great moral struggle You will be our Guide. Forgive us for decisions made out of fear or selfishness that have hurt others. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

John - Selected Passage: John 19:25-27

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman,^[b] here is your son," ²⁷ and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

John speaks:

"There is a strange stillness here, despite the noise and dust and people coming and going. I look around to see His mother, and others who have followed Him these past years. Our hearts are breaking. How could it have come to this? And what do we do now? Where do we go? I gave up everything to follow Him and now it is finished. His mother holds her hands to her face and I know she is exhausted but will not leave until the very end. From the cross, He places her in my care. I step closer to her and feel the sobs shuddering through her body. Her pain must be worse than mine, and mine feels unbearable. We support each other in the darkness of this afternoon and we wait.

We pray:

Again, Lord, Your tender love shines through, amid the dust and blood and horror of that dark afternoon. You remind us not to wrap ourselves in our own sorrows and grief, but to be open-hearted and reach out to others in pain. We can only do this when Your love flows through us. Please fill us anew with Your love so that even when we experience pain and darkness we can share Your love with others in need. Amen.

Joseph of Arimathea - Selected Passage: John 19:38-42

³⁸ Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.^[e] ⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Joseph speaks:

"This is my final gift - the last thing I can do for Him. I've been so afraid, yet always He has treated me with grace and compassion. And now, in these worst of moments, He has not been afraid. There is nothing more we can do for Him, except this final act of respect. I no longer care what they might do to me. This great injustice can not end here and I must do what I can to give Him a fitting burial. I hold His broken body in my arms and wrap Him in cloths. My tears fall upon the dried blood and I hold on to the words He spoke to me so long ago, about being born again. I don't understand how this can happen when His body now is broken and torn, yet I believe He has spoken truth and I long to see the fulfillment of His words.

We pray:

Sometimes, Lord, You call us to wait in the darkness until things make sense or promises are fulfilled. So as we wait, we offer ourselves again to You. We serve You in the only way we know how, using the gifts You have given. Sometimes our service is offered with heavy hearts, or we offer our obedience, without understanding what it means. But we too hold on to the words You have spoken, knowing that a time will come when all will be fulfilled and we will rejoice fully and freely with You.

Mary Magdalene - Selected Passage: John 20:1-2 and 11-18; Focus verse: 16

¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.¹³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.¹⁵ He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

Mary speaks:

"He is not here! The tomb is empty and someone has taken Him away. I just can't hold it together anymore. I am sobbing and I feel my heart being torn again into shreds. How cruel! I didn't think they could be any more cruel! Is there no end to this? I slump against a rock and a shadow crosses in front of me. "Do you know...?" And then He speaks and I know His voice! He knows my name and I know His voice! With tears still drying on my cheeks I want to wrap my arms around Him and fall down and worship Him at the same time. But for now, I can only rejoice and my heart is bursting with love and joy and hope and 1000 other things! He is alive and I am running to share this good news with everyone!"

We pray:

Lord, we too rejoice at Your resurrection! We too know the joy and love and hope that is ours because the tomb was empty and the grave-clothes laid aside. You have drawn us out of the darkness and brought us to where there is light and life. Our hearts are bursting with joy at what this means. Fill us with the desire to tell others of this good news so they too can share in our joy. Let us live each day by the truth of Your resurrection and the fulfilment of Your promises. Amen

EVEN DEEPER

LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is an ancient spiritual practice from the Christian monastic tradition. Its title derives from the Latin words meaning reading and divine/holy. In Lectio Divina, we seek to experience the presence of God through reading and listening, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. Lectio Divina can be practiced both by individuals and in groups.

Practicing Lectio Divina Individually

1. Text

Begin by choosing a section of Scripture that you would like to read and pray. You can choose the text randomly or use a liturgical book, such as The Book of Common Prayer. Try not to set a goal for how much content you will cover; the goal is to listen for God and to experience his presence.

2. Preparation

Do what you must to quiet and prepare yourself to hear from God. If you need to find a quiet room, sit in silence for several minutes, or sit in a comfortable chair, take whatever posture will help you prepare to receive and experience God's presence.

3. Reading/Listening

When you sense that your heart is prepared, begin by slowly reading the passage of Scripture that you have selected. Move slowly through sentences and phrases. As you read, pay attention to what word, phrase, or idea catches your attention.

4. Meditation

Begin to meditate on the word, phrase, or idea that has captured your attention. Repeat it again and again.

Consider:

What thoughts come to mind as you meditate on this word, phrase, or idea?

What are you reminded of in your life?

What does it make you hope for?

Meditation is no easy task—as you try to concentrate don't be disappointed if random thoughts enter your head. As they do, offer them to God.

5. Prayer

Now begin to speak to God. Tell God what word, phrase, or idea captured your attention and what came to mind as you meditated upon it. How is God using this word, phrase, or idea to bless and transform you? Tell God what you have been thinking and feeling as you've listened and meditated. Tell God how you hope this word, phrase, or idea will change your heart to be more like His.

6. Contemplation

Finish by focusing your attention on the fact that God's presence is with you. If as you try to focus on God's presence you sense a need to read the text again, to continue meditating, or to simply continue talking with God, allow yourself to do so. As you do, know that you are in the presence of God.

THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Finding the movement of the Spirit in our daily lives as we review our day.

1. Recognize the presence of God

Be still and know that you are with God.

2. Look at your day with gratitude

Acknowledge God in the big and small things of life.

3. Review your day

When or where in the past 24 hours did you feel you were cooperating most fully with God's action in your life? When were you resisting?

Ask yourself

- What habits and life patterns do I notice?
- When did I feel most alive? Most drained of life?
- When did I have the greatest sense of belonging? When did I feel most alone?
- When did I give love? Where did I receive love?
- When did I feel most fully myself? Least myself?
- When did I feel most whole? Most fragmented?

4. Reconcile and Resolve

- Seek forgiveness
- Ask for direction
- Share a concern
- Express gratitude
- Resolve to move forward