

Taking the Next Step in Love (Ignatian Contemplation)

This is an adaptation of the Ignatian Contemplation.

Imagine yourself at the scene depicted. You might see yourself as an observer, Peter, or another disciple. Enter into the scene with all your senses by visualizing the landscape, seeing the people, hearing the dialogue and observing what occurs. You might engage in the dialogue and actions yourself. Let the story come alive and you are part of what is happening.

Notice what resonates or moves your heart, that is, any feelings or affects emerging as you are imagining. If something catches your attention or touches you at a deeper level, stay there and let things be. Don't move on until you are ready. Allow an intimate conversation/exchange with God or Jesus to take place about what arises within.

Background: Jesus was revealed to his disciples for the third time after being raised from the dead. He empowered them to catch a huge amount of fish and invited them to a breakfast he had already prepared on the beach.

"When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' He then said to him a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' (Jesus) said to him, 'Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.' He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, 'Follow me.' " (John 21:15-19)

Remember to have an intimate conversation with God/Jesus...

Taking the Next Step in Love (Imaginative prayer)

*Note: Apply the imaginative prayer below to address **one or two** of the following suggestions to draw you into a conversation within and with God.*

1. Which habit(s) regarding self-care, fostering spiritual practices such as regular prayer or going to Mass, or outreach to the poor and marginalized might God be inviting you to cultivate in the coming days?
2. Bring to mind a difficult or significantly good relationship, particularly one that has surfaced during this retreat. Dialogue with God how you can intentionally grow in love (becoming more fully alive, true, interiorly free, generous in self-giving) - in cultivating another person's spiritual growth.
3. Converse with God about two relationships in your life that may be at odds with one another? Ask God how you might more fully respond in love through each of those relationship.

Imaginative prayer: To see and love as Jesus does

- Take time to be aware of God's presence through rhythmic breathing (exhaling and inhaling slowly & fully) ... Ask God for the grace to see with as God "sees" and to feel as God "feels."
- Picture the person (or yourself) engaged in a typical activity or set of activities that he or she normally does Imagine Jesus being present to the person, perhaps next to the him or her ... Notice how Jesus looks at the person, ... notice how Jesus sees the person's unique needs and current struggles ... See how Jesus treats the person, observe how Jesus cares for the person in his or her present needs and struggles... .. notice how he loves the person deeply and freely ... *(Take 5-7 minutes just to observe Jesus looking at and relating to the person)* ...
- Ask Jesus if he wants you to help him directly in caring for and loving the person. *(Don't answer for him. Allow him to respond. Try not to project your own wants)* ... Ask Jesus how he invites you to concretely cooperate with him in caring for and loving the person. *(At times, he may invite you to indirectly love the person from a distance)*
- Spend time just being with Jesus, resting in him.
- Thank him for this time of learning to see, care for, and love the person as he sees and cares.