

# **PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE**



**Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption**



## Praying with Scripture

"The books of scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error the truth which God wanted to put in sacred writings for the sake of our salvation." (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)

"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness." (2 Tim 2 18:17)

"God's Word is alive and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword." (Hebrews 4:12)

### **Lectio Divina**

This method of prayer goes back to the early monastic tradition. There were not bibles for everyone and not everyone knew how to read. So the monks gathered in chapel to hear a member of the community reading from the scripture. In this exercise they were taught and encouraged to listen with their hearts because it was the Word of God that they were hearing.

When a person wants to use Lectio Divina as a prayer form today, the method is very simple. When one is a beginner, it is better to choose a passage from one of the Gospels or epistles, usually ten or fifteen verses. Some people who regularly engage in this method of prayer choose the epistle or the Gospel for the Mass of the day as suggested by the Catholic Church.

First one goes to a quiet place and recalls that one is about to listen to the Word of God. Then one reads the scripture passage aloud to let oneself hear with his or her own ears the words. When one finishes reading, pause and recall if some word or phrase stood out or something touched one's heart, **mediatio**. If so, pause and savor the insight, feeling, or understanding while praying, **oratio**. Then go back and read the passage again because it will have a fuller meaning. Pause again and note what happened, **contemplatio**. If one wants to dialogue with God or Jesus in response to the word, one should follow the prompting of one's heart. This kind of reflective listening allows the Holy Spirit to deepen awareness of God's taking the initiative to speak with us.

## **Gospel Contemplation**

The early Christians did not waste a lot of energy looking back and wishing they had been born a hundred years earlier so they could have walked with Jesus. Instead they focused on coming to know Christ in three powerful ways: through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist; the stories and emerging writings about Jesus; and his powerful presence when they gathered in his name. Saint Ignatius Loyola invited a person when an individual made a retreat in the pattern of his Spiritual Exercises to pray to come to know Christ so that one may love him in a more real way and following from this knowledge and love become a more faithful disciple. In order to grow in this faith knowledge, Ignatius invited the retreatant to engage in a prayer method called contemplation. This is not some kind of mystical prayer but a prayer form in which one uses his or her senses in an imaginative way to reflect on a Gospel passage. One uses the senses, seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling to make the Gospel scene real and alive.

1. Select a passage from one of the Gospels in which Jesus is interacting with others.
2. Read the Gospel passage twice so that the story and the details of the story become familiar.
3. Close one's eyes and reconstruct the scene in one's imagination. See what is going on and watch the men and women in the scene. What does Jesus look like? How do the others react to him? What are the people saying to one another? What emotions fill their words? Is Jesus touching someone? As one enters into the scene, sometimes there is the desire to be there. So a person can place oneself in the scene, perhaps as an observer, as one lining up for healing, or as one helping others to Jesus.
4. Some people's imaginations are very active so they construct a movie-like scenario with a Gospel passage. Others will enter the scene with verbal imagination, reflecting on the scene and mulling over the actions. Vividness is not a criteria for the effectiveness of this kind of prayer. Engagement is and the result is a more interior knowledge of Jesus.
5. As one finishes this time of prayer, one should take a moment to speak person to person with Christ saying what comes from the heart.

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Shown below are some categories of Bible verses to use during our Praying with Scripture

### The Big Stories

<b>The Annunciation</b>	Luke 1:16-38
<b>The Nativity of Jesus</b>	
Matthew 1:18-2; Luke 2:1-14; John 1:1-5, 14-18	
<b>The Baptism of the Lord</b>	Matthew 3:13-17
<b>The Last Supper</b>	
Matthew 26:20-31; Mark 14:22-31; Luke 22:14-23; John 13:1-20	
<b>The Crucifixion</b>	
Matthew 27:33-56; Mark 15:22-41; Luke 23:26-43; John 19:17-37	
<b>The Resurrection</b>	
Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18	
<b>The Ascension</b>	
Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-11	
<b>Pentecost</b>	Acts 2:1-13

### Stories about Discipleship

<b>Call of Levi</b>	Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32
<b>Call of the Disciples</b>	Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11; John 1:35-42
<b>Call of Phillip and Nathaniel</b>	John 1:43-51
<b>Jesus and Nicodemus</b>	John 3:1-21
<b>I Am the Bread of Life</b>	John 6:22-59 (Feel free to read this in chunks)
<b>Walking on Water</b>	Mark 6:45-52
<b>Carry your Cross</b>	Mark 8:31-38
<b>The Cost of Discipleship</b>	Luke 14:25-33; John 8:31-38
<b>The Rich Young Man</b>	Matt 19:16-26; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 18:18-30
<b>The Summary of Jesus's Teaching</b>	John 12:44-50
<b>The Way, Truth, and Life</b>	John 14:1-14
<b>Doubting Thomas</b>	John 20:24-29
<b>Appearance on the Sea Shore</b>	John 21:1-14
<b>The Great Commission</b>	Matthew 28:16-20
<b>Life of the Early Church</b>	Acts 2:37-47

### Stories about Healing

<b>Healing of the Paralytic</b>	Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26
<b>Man with the Withered Hand</b>	Mark 3:1-6
<b>Healing Jairus's Daughter/Woman with the Hemorrhage</b>	
Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56	
<b>Healing the Official's Son</b>	John 4:46-54
<b>Healing a Blind Man</b>	John 9 (Short Version: Jn 9:1-12, 35-41)
<b>Healing the Deaf Man</b>	Mark 7:31-36

<b>Healing the Crippled Woman</b>	Luke 12:10-17
<b>Healing the Ten Lepers</b>	Luke 17:11-19
<b>Raising of Lazarus</b>	John 11:1-44

## **Stories about Mercy**

<b>The Woman at the Well</b>	John 4:1-42
<b>Pardon of the Sinful Woman</b>	Luke 7:36-49
<b>The Good Shepherd</b>	John 10:1-18
<b>The Good Samaritan</b>	Luke 10:25-37
<b>Prodigal Son</b>	Luke 15:11-32
<b>The Lost Sheep</b>	Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:1-7
<b>The Pharisee and the Tax Collector</b>	
Luke 18:9-14	
<b>Zacchaeus</b>	Luke 19:1-10
<b>Simon, Do You Love Me?</b>	John 21:15-19

## **Stories about God's Power**

<b>Calming the Storm</b>	Mark 4:35-41
<b>Feeding of the 5,000</b>	Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:34-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15
<b>Wedding Feast at Cana</b>	John 2:1-11

## **Stories about God's Justice**

<b>The Unfaithful Servant</b>	Luke 16:1-13
<b>Lazarus and the Rich Man</b>	Luke 16:19-31
<b>Parable of the Talents</b>	Luke 19:11-27
<b>The Widow and the Unjust Judge</b>	Luke 18:1-8
<b>Wedding Feast at Cana</b>	John 2:1-12

## **Stories about the Kingdom of God**

<b>Parable of the Sower</b>	Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23; Mark 4:1-8
<b>Who is the greatest in the Kingdom?</b>	Matthew 18:1-5
<b>The Narrow Door</b>	Luke 13:22-30
<b>The Banquet</b>	Luke 14:15-24

## **Stories about Faith**

<b>Parable of the Mustard Seed</b>	Matthew 13:31-32
<b>Peter's Confession</b>	Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-27
<b>Healing of a Boy with a Demon</b>	Matthew 17:14-21; Luke 9:37-43
<b>The Syrophenician Woman</b>	Mark 7:24-30