

## FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES

### IMAGINATIVE MEDITATION: A SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FROM ST. IGNATIUS

*Note: This spiritual exercise and its instruction, is taken almost exclusively from the book "Inner Compass" by Margaret Silf. The material below can be found inside chapter 14 entitled "To Love You More Dearly."*

"Ignatius teaches us how to open ourselves up to intimacy with God through Gospel-based meditation, through which we can, in our prayer, become participants in the life and ministry of Jesus and discover its reality for us where we are here and now."

#### SUGGESTED METHOD

1. Ask God to reveal himself to you; express your desire to experience Him.
2. Chose a passage from the Gospels. Read the passage several times until it is familiar and you feel at home with it.
3. Imagine that you are an active participant in the scene. What role do you find yourself taking in the scene? [For example, are you one of the disciples, a bystander, a person being healed etc]
4. Talk with the characters in the scene, especially with Jesus. Ask questions of them.
5. Listen inwardly to what God is showing you through your role in the scene.
6. Journal your thoughts.

#### THERE ARE ALWAYS TWO RULES:

1. Never moralize or judge yourself
2. Always respond from your heart and not from your head...our purpose in prayer is not to defend or condemn ourselves or to come up with any kind of analysis or sermon, but simply to respond, from our inmost depths, to what God is sharing with us of himself.

#### HOW CAN I BE SURE?

How can I be sure that this is prayer and not just a flight or fantasy? How do I know my experience is of God? To answer that question you may find it helpful to apply these simple tests:

1. Has my meeting with the Lord in this way made any difference to my way of being present in the world? Has it opened my eyes in any way, either to my own ways of acting and responding to others, or to the needs and vulnerability of other people around me? Remember that evidence of a good prayer life is not abundant experiences of God, but rather growth in the fruit of the Spirit. Experiences of God have to lead to action; they have to make a difference in your own life and in the life of this community.
2. Is there a sense of consistency between what I feel I have been shown in this prayer time and the way I feel the Lord is dealing with me in my life in other ways? If your prayer seems to send you off on a tangent and suggest a decision that is out of line with your personality or commitments, then it is wise to be cautious. God's ways are usually [but not always] gentle, and they are reliably consistent.
3. Does the prayer leave me feeling basically at peace [even though it may have confronted me with hard challenges] and does the sense of peace continue as time goes on? When we follow our daydreams the sense of satisfaction is invariably short lived. When the dreams are God's dreams for us, the peace is a lasting one, which will keep recurring and strengthening in our prayer.

#### FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS

The more time you put into these spiritual exercises [like Imaginative Meditation or the Examen of Consciousness] the more you will begin to see God all around you in your everyday life. "There is a marvelous bonus waiting for those who entrust themselves to God in intimate prayer...steadily, he will open up more and more of himself to you – or rather, he will increasingly open up your inner vision, to notice him in everything around you and to recognize his presence in every moment."