

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT



Daily Offering

Holy Spirit, you fill me with joy today. Help me to share that joy with the people I meet.

Stephen Noon SJ

Entering into Prayer

This is only possible if you have somewhere you can walk right now.

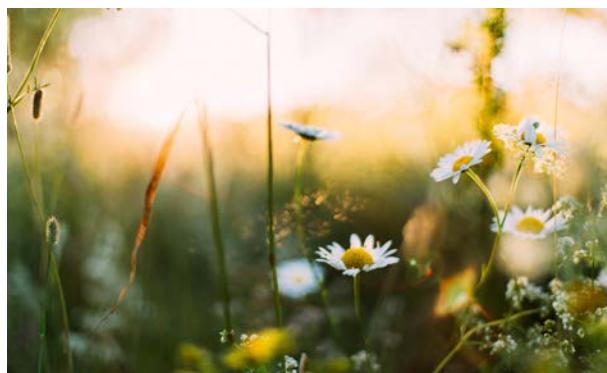
If you are in a church building, is it possible to slowly walk around it without disturbing others? If so, do so. Walk slowly with awareness of whatever comes to you: the surroundings, thoughts, feelings, how your body is.

If you are outside, do similarly. It usually helps to walk more slowly than usual and to pay attention to what is around you.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Luke 9: 28-36

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.





The Transfiguration
by
Alexander Ivanov

Image for the Day

What does this image say to you?

How do you think it felt to be one of the disciples on that day?

How do you think the disciples reacted?

Food for Thought

The Transfiguration happens after Jesus speaks about what will happen to him on the cross and Peter's refusal to accept Jesus' warning. The sight of Jesus in his glory encourages the disciples to persevere with what will happen next. Jesus' physical appearance changes, his clothes become bright, which points towards the resurrection, and coupled with the warning beforehand, Jesus indicates that they will have to go through great strife before receiving abundant glory.

While Peter suggests making tents so they may dwell there longer, the voice from the cloud tells them all to listen to Jesus. Indicating that Jesus is their teacher, they are to learn from him and he will support them.

Suggestions for Prayer

Jesus prays beforehand, in this passage. He does this on only a few occasions in the Gospels, particularly before his arrest in the garden. Think about your prayer life. When do you do it? What prayers work best for you? What makes you unwilling or uneasy to pray? What times can you think of where prayer has really helped you?

After Jesus warns them of the bad days ahead, they are reassured about who he really is. What things worry about the future? Think about why they worry you and tell God about them.

What can you do to prepare for whatever comes next in your life?

Go back and think about everything you learned from the readings and prayers over last week. What did you learn and took away from them, about you, your relationship with God and other people? What would you like to thank God for? What else do you need from God. Tell God about it.

Jesus not only appeared in all his glory, showing his transcendent nature, he is also someone who was deeply human, relational and personally knows you. How does knowing Jesus' transcendent nature and his personal nature make you feel? What would you like to tell him?

How are you going to respond today?

Look back over the previous week as if you are rewinding a film. Notice how you have changed over that time. Thank God for what you have received and think about what you need from God to help you for the rest of the retreat.

Examen (review of prayer)

Feel free to try an examen from our website PathwaysstoGod.org or use any of the examens already used.

When you come towards the end of your time of prayer, or at the end of your day, talk to God about what has come up for you, what went well and what didn't.

End with a formal prayer, such as the Lord's Prayer/Our Father.

MONDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK



Daily Offering

After planting seeds, literal or figurative, I have been waiting – thank you, Creator God, for tiny signs of life.

Geoff Te Braake SJ

Entering into Prayer

Choose a method of entering into prayer that you are comfortable with, or if the mood takes you, try something different. If you're finding it difficult, talk to God about the things on your mind.

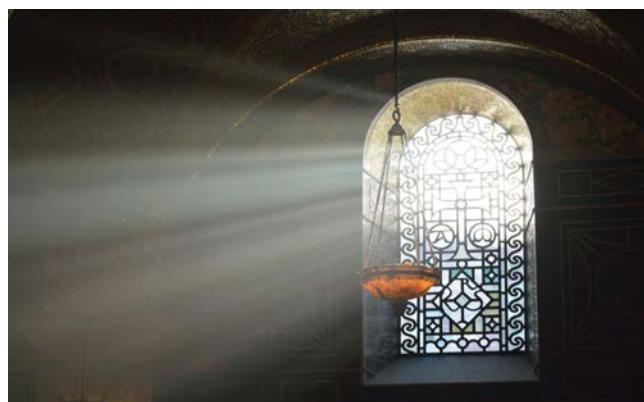
TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Daniel 9: 4-10

I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying,

‘Ah, Lord, great and awesome God, keeping covenant and steadfast love with those who love you and keep your commandments, we have sinned and done wrong, acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and ordinances. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land.

‘Righteousness is on your side, O Lord, but open shame, as at this day, falls on us, the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. Open shame, O Lord, falls on us, our kings, our officials, and our ancestors, because we have sinned against you. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by following his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.





Daniel and the Lions
by Briton Riviere

Image for the Day

What does this image say to you?

Have you ever felt like Daniel, surrounded by lions?

Who do you think are the prophets of our day?

Food for Thought

Israel's history, much like our world today, is marked by disaster and then rescue. The Jewish people lived as slaves in Egypt until they were freed by God through Moses. Centuries later, after their exile in Babylon, another disaster loomed. Israel was surrounded by danger. The Greek king Antiochus Epiphanes wanted the Jewish people to lose their identity, to not be themselves, to embrace the Greek culture, at the cost of their own heritage, law and customs. Israel had nowhere else to turn to.

Suggestions for Prayer

The Old Testament book of Daniel dates from this time, and the first reading is a prayer of sorrow made by the people who were and asking for mercy in hope of being rescued from this crisis. Israel's leaders knew that they themselves do not have all the answers. They prayed to God to help the whole people. This prayer is one of many in the Bible where everyone, the people and their leaders, ask for God's help. When you face a daunting situation, what do you pray for? The people of Israel expected their leaders to pray for them and their work, they did so knowing of the previous times where they had been rescued. When you pray, recall all the gifts and help you have received over the course of your life? Who has helped you? Where would you be without that help? The God addressed in the prayer in Daniel is above all the God of compassion, what would you like to tell God that you have not told anyone else?

How are you going to respond today?

What is weighing upon you at the moment? How might you invite God's help? If there is a person you have offended, perhaps you can consider ways to show how sorry you are?

Examen (review of prayer)

Some people find it helpful to keep a prayer journal to help them review their prayer. Keeping a reflective prayer journal can be a great aid towards growth in the spiritual life. Over time it offers a record of experiences that you have had, and what you and God have made of them as they happened. This means that looking back it becomes easier to see how and where you have changed, in outlook or in patterns of behaviour. Such changes are often so slow and almost imperceptible that they can easily go unnoticed.

One way of understanding what to record in such a journal is to ask yourself: 'What has stirred me up, has moved me, over the period that I am considering?' This puts you in touch with what Ignatius Loyola would call 'movements of spirits', and which he saw as being indicators of God at work in a person's life. What has moved you might be a conversation you have had; a book that you've read; a situation that you have encountered; a piece of work that you have done; etc.

The journal offers you a chance to explore in more detail, with God, what the happening meant to you.

TUESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK



Daily Offering

Heavenly Father, as I begin this day in honour of Saint Joseph, husband of Mary, help me to imitate his gentle care for others and silent witness to your love. Grant me the grace to live the Gospel with my whole heart, my whole soul, my whole mind and my whole strength. I offer you this day.

[Via Click to Pray](#)

Entering into Prayer

Choose a method of entering into prayer that you are comfortable with, or if the mood takes you, try something different. If you are finding it hard to make time to pray, don't forget that God is there with you in everything you do.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:16, 18- 21, 24

Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife.





Joseph's Dream
by Anton Raphael Mengs

Image for the Day

How do you think it felt to be Joseph?
Have you ever felt different after a dream or time of sleep?
What would you like to say to God today?

Food for Thought

Joseph went above and beyond in protecting his family and raising a child with Mary. He was obedient three times to the warnings given to him in dreams. He accepted Mary and her child as his own; he went to great lengths to protect them, first by going to Egypt and then going to Galilee. Joseph was following the will of God long before Jesus was calling his followers to do the same. Joseph exercised a “justice that exceeded that of the scribes and the Pharisees” and treated Mary with humanity and mercy when he could have just as easily interpreted the law strictly with rigor and cruelty.

Suggestions for Prayer

Joseph did not just help Mary and Jesus at arm’s length, but remained married, accepting them, staying with them and spending the rest of his life with them. Imagine being with Mary and Jesus, staying with them. When we are invited in people’s homes, we get to really see them, and they see us, in a way that wasn’t possible before. We allow ourselves more and more to be known. What did Mary, Joseph and Joseph do together? What did they chat about? How were they when they ate together? How would you spend the day with Jesus?

Originally, Joseph wanted to informally divorce Mary, to spare her publicity. Maybe recall a time when you have been spared hurt and anxiety. How did it feel to be protected? How would you like to respond to that person now?

Joseph accepted what was asked of him by the Lord, even though it would require a lot of work and would change his life forever; yet, ultimately it was an extremely noble and life-giving act. When have you decided to follow the more difficult path, but one that allowed you and others to flourish? How did it feel after the decision was made? How did it sit with you? Did your hope, trust and faith in others increase or decrease? Do you notice the same feelings in when you make other decisions?

How are you going to respond today?

If you are a father, today is a good day to reflect on how you can be more like Joseph. If you are not a father, perhaps you can pause to give thanks for the ‘fathers’ in your life – your own, or other father-figures and consider ways to be more like Joseph, who put his trust in God.

Examen (review of prayer)

Feel free to try an examen from our website PathwaysstoGod.org or use any of the examens already used.

When you come towards the end of your time of prayer, or at the end of your day, talk to God about what has come up for you, what went well and what didn’t.

End with a formal prayer, such as the Lord’s Prayer/Our Father.

WEDNESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK



Daily Offering

Lord, I offer you my sadness, may it lead to seeing the beauty in the past, present and future.

Peter O'Sullivan SJ

Entering into Prayer

A place for prayer

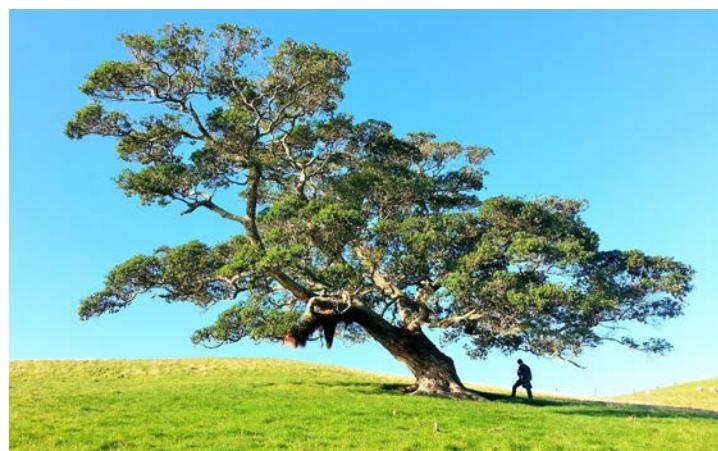
Recall a place where you feel at peace ... imagine it if you can ... or in some way get a sense of it ... what do you notice about it ... let the Holy Spirit be there with you ... in the breeze or the air you breathe ...

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 18: 18-20

Then they said, 'Come, let us make plots against Jeremiah—for instruction shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, let us bring charges against him, and let us not heed any of his words.'

Give heed to me, O Lord,
and listen to what my adversaries say!
Is evil a recompense for good?
Yet they have dug a pit for my life.
Remember how I stood before you
to speak good for them,
to turn away your wrath from them.





Jeremiah Lamenting
by Rembrandt

Image for the Day

How do you think it felt to be Jeremiah?
Have you ever felt ignored, ostracised or even that people plotted against you?
What would you like to say to Jesus about this?

Food for Thought

At the beginning of the book of Jeremiah, the Lord called Jeremiah and gave him a mission “to tear up and knock down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant”. He was not promised success; today, we learn of the plots his enemies made against him. He would end up languishing in a dungeon. Later legends tell us that these enemies put him to death. Many have recognised him as a predecessor of Christ. Today we listen to Jeremiah at prayer. Even though he knew that they deserved the consequences of their actions, he still understood that it was his duty to plead to God on behalf of his people.

Suggestions for Prayer

You may wish to read today’s Gospel passage (Matthew 20: 17-28) and compare Jeremiah’s request with the request that the mother of the sons of Zebedee made to Jesus in today’s Gospel. She wanted them to have places at the right and left of Christ in his kingdom. Her misguided prayer receives a rare statement from Jesus which states the purpose of his mission. He had come not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

What words or phrases from today’s readings stand out? Have you ever felt like Jeremiah, beset by difficulties, with people against you? How did you move past that feeling?

Lent is a good time to pray that we may listen to the words of Jesus, not only when they attract us, but also when they are difficult and remind us how much following him might cost as we try to change what is rotten in our society, and to build up and plant the noble and good.

In today’s prayer we may wish to consider how we can serve others. Do we plead for others in our prayer life, or think only of ourselves? Do we think only of the causes of those we know well, or do we also consider the needs of the world and the building of a fairer world?

How are you going to respond today?

During Lent, we try to raise the quantity and quality of our prayer. We should try to pray not only for ourselves, but for the whole world, and especially for those for whom prayer finds no place in life. Through prayer and generous self-giving, we place ourselves together with the distinguished company of the prophets and beside Jesus himself.

Examen (review of prayer)

When you come towards the end of your time of prayer, or at the end of your day, talk to God about what has come up for you, what went well and what didn’t.

End with a formal prayer, such as the Lord’s Prayer/Our Father.



THURSDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK



Daily Offering

Set me free this day my God from all that holds me back from compassion, all the fear, the hesitation and the doubt. Grant me the grace to show your caring face to one unexpected person today.

Philip Harrison SJ

Entering into Prayer

The Jesus Prayer

Listen to each phrase and then add your voice to it ... 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me, a sinner ... Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me, a sinner ... Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me, a sinner ... continue on your own with this ... the phrase may shorten naturally ...

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Luke 16:19-31

¶ **T**here was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames." But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us." He said, "Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house – for I have five brothers – that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment." Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them." He said, "No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."'

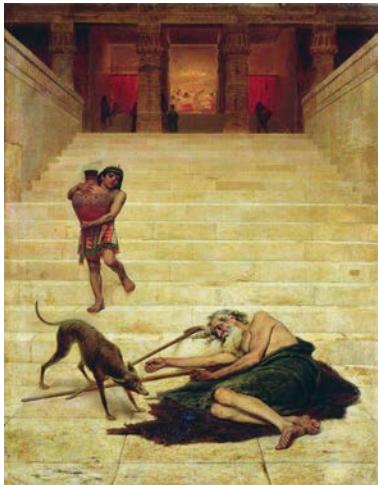


Image for the Day

How does this image make you feel?
 Have you ever felt a little like Lazarus?
 What would Jesus say to comfort you?
 What can we learn from the story?

Food for Thought

There are many good rich people in Luke's writings: Joseph of Arimathea who buried Jesus; Zacchaeus who invited Jesus to his house and undertook to give half his wealth to the poor; women who supported Jesus and his disciples with their resources as they travelled to Jerusalem. In Philippi, the wealthy trader, Lydia, gave hospitality to Paul. But it was the poor and those on the margins who benefited from Jesus' healing ministry and his resources. However, in this Gospel, Jesus is telling an old story; warning those who were lovers of money. Dives, was rich and prosperous, but not blessed, because he failed to notice the beggar Lazarus starving at his gate; he had a heart turned aside from the Lord. The beggar Lazarus, was blessed by God, despite his sores and his hunger, since at his death, angels carried him away.

Suggestions for Prayer

As shown by the many mentions of generosity of people in the Gospel, the attitude towards wealth is more important than having it in the first place. Instead of being in his bubble, how might Dives have changed his ways if he spoken with Lazarus, gotten to know him and then gone on to help him? How would Lazarus have responded? Perhaps think about the times you have been on the receiving end of incredible generosity: how did it feel? Was there anyone who helped you, but you were unable to say thank you? If you had the chance how would you respond to them now? In Jesus' story, Dives would have walked past Lazarus many times, yet did not get to know him. What people do we regularly see or walk past every day or every week or live nearby, and have not gotten to know?

Parables are meant to make us pause and think. Jesus contrasts a rich man, who enjoys fine food and wondrous garments, with a starving beggar, whose only companions are ravenous dogs. Paradoxically the second figure receives a blessing and the first is cursed. What blessings have you received and given? What hurt have you received over time and what hurts have you inflicted on others? Tell God about those emotions and memories, those things that weigh you down.

How are you going to respond today?

Though he was rich, says Paul, he became poor. Lent is a good time to reflect on our own attitude to money and on the use that we make of it. We must not lose sight of the Lazarus who lies outside our gate, company of the prophets and beside Jesus himself.

Examen (review of prayer)

Feel free to try an examen from our website PathwaysstoGod.org or use any of the examens already used.

When you come towards the end of your time of prayer, or at the end of your day, talk to God about what has come up for you, what went well and what didn't.

End with a formal prayer, such as the Lord's Prayer/Our Father.

FRIDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK



Daily Offering

Lord, help me to be open to your presence in others today.

Stephen Noon SJ

Entering into Prayer

Choose a method of entering into prayer that you are comfortable with, or if the mood takes you, try something different. If you're finding it difficult, talk to God about the things on your mind.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, 'Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.' He answered, 'Here I am.' The man said, 'They have gone away, for I heard them say, "Let us go to Dothan." ' So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. They said to one another, 'Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.' But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, 'Let us not take his life.' Reuben said to them, 'Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him'—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to his brothers, 'What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.' And his brothers agreed. When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.



Joseph sold by his Brothers
by
Giovanni Maria Bottala

Image for the Day

How does this image make you feel?

Have you ever felt betrayed like Joseph? What would Jesus say to comfort you?

What can we learn from the story?

Food for Thought

We find time on this day of Lent to consider the story of Joseph because for the Christian, Joseph is a figure of Christ. Stephen, the first martyr, in his long speech in the Acts of the Apostles, proves this at length. The parable which Jesus tells in today's Gospel about the wicked tenants of the vineyard who killed the agents and eventually the son of its owner, also echoes the Joseph story because Joseph's brothers plotted to kill him.

In fact, Joseph was not killed. Like Jesus in his infancy story, he was taken down to Egypt.

Through his various adventures, God kept him safe until he became the saviour of his brothers who were driven from their country by famine. All this anticipates what Christ would achieve by his death and resurrection for all humanity. And this includes each of us; with Paul, we can say that Christ loved us and gave himself for us.

Suggestions for Prayer

Today is a good day to reflect on the innocent suffering that goes on in our world, particularly in countries where government is bad and where corrupt legal systems result in miscarriages of justice. The fact that Joseph was persecuted by his own brothers, reminds us too of the problems of family breakup and divisions. The subsequent exaltation of Joseph and the resurrection of Jesus, console us that human situations are not the end of the story and encourage us to hope.

We might reflect on our own families and other communities. Have there been times of strife or enmity? Were we part of the cause or were we peacemakers, more like Reuben?

Even though Joseph was persecuted and Jesus died on the cross, both returned, but not to seek vengeance against those who killed them, but appearing in love to those around them. No matter what you have done, who in your life loves you regardless of what you have done? What would like to say to them? Looking back over your prayer over the past few days and when you have been reminded of your faults and failings, how does it feel that they love you no matter what?

Knowing that others love you no matter what, what commitments would you like to make in your life or what commitments would you like to make efforts to keep?

How are you going to respond today?

We pray for all those who struggle on behalf of the innocent and we pray for all those unjustly condemned or punished, mindful of Jesus who, though innocent, accepted death.

Examen (review of prayer)

When you come towards the end of your time of prayer, or at the end of your day, talk to God about what has come up for you, what went well and what didn't.

End with a formal prayer, such as the Lord's Prayer/Our Father.

SATURDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK



Daily Offering

Jesus, help me to slow down and reach out to others today.

Stephen Noon SJ

Entering into Prayer

Choose a method of entering into prayer that you are comfortable with, or if the mood takes you, try something different. If you're finding it difficult, talk to God about the things on your mind.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Then Jesus said, ‘There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, “Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.” So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, “How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” But the father said to his slaves, “Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!” And they began to celebrate. ‘Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, “Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.” Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, “Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!” Then the father said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.”’



Image for the Day

The Prodigal Son
Washington National Cathedral
by Heinz Warneke

How does this image make you feel?
Spend some time imagining the loving father's embrace today.

Food for Thought

In his parable about the father who had two sons, Jesus gave a portrait of this God of faithfulness and mercy. The father was watching out for his unfaithful son; he ran to greet him; he refused to allow him to complete his speech of repentance. Instead he rewarded him with a robe, a ring and sandals, and put on a lavish banquet as well. But his other son had been far too busy in the fields to watch out for his brother, so the father had to go off in search of him, and when he found him, was treated more like an employer than a father. This elder son had to be cajoled to return to the family to which he belonged. We still do not know whether he went into the banquet and shared its joy.

Suggestions for Prayer

Lent invites us to check out how we view God and sin. Do you repent like the younger brother, or by a spontaneous sympathy for the elder; do we resist the appeal of the father to take our place at the banquet of the kingdom and to share in the joy of the Father?

Take a few moments to become still and quiet and ask God to work through your imagination as you pray with the passage about the Prodigal Son.

Ask God for what you want, perhaps "To know you more clearly, love you more dearly, follow you more nearly".

Read through the text two or three times until you are thoroughly familiar with the story.

Then let the scene gradually build up in your mind's eye.

Take your time, see everything that is around, maybe hear the celebrations or sounds of people working in the fields, feel the dust beneath your feet, smell the fattened calf being cooked, or taste the husks.

From what angle are you watching the scene in your mind's eye?

Take your own place in the unfolding scene. You may start as a bystander, or one of the central characters, or simply enter into the action as yourself. Let yourself be drawn naturally into conversation with one or other of the participants, or with Jesus after the story has finished.

Stay in the scene for as long as you have chosen to, and then draw the prayer to a close.

How are you going to respond today?

Knowing all the love that God has for you, despite everything you have done, is there someone in your life who has disappointed you? Can you forgive them and reach out to them? Perhaps you, like the older brother, feel resentment that another person is unjustly favoured. Can you let go of feelings of bitterness and resentment and learn to be loving and merciful like the Lord?

Examen (review of prayer)

When you come towards the end of your time of prayer, or at the end of your day, talk to God about what has come up for you, what went well and what didn't.

End with a formal prayer, such as the Lord's Prayer/Our Father.