

A Written Meditation On Scripture

(Drawn from work of John Veltri, SJ)

Writing can sometimes raise our awareness of ourselves in the context of scripture stories or images. It is a fitting mode of prayer. The process for Scripture is very much like that for personal experience. Here are some guidelines to help you get started.

1. How shall I call upon my God?

The first step in entering upon the meditation is to reflect upon how God appears to you in the passage to be contemplated. What name or image do you wish to use in your personal dialogue? Great Spirit, Teacher, Healer, Life, Light, Mother, Suffering Servant, Beloved, Friend, etc?

Addressing the Holy One by a personally chosen name begins to focus your thoughts and feelings and establish a sense of presence.

2. State the heart of the matter.

Write a brief, general statement of what is happening or being expressed in the passage. Try to capture the overall tone or quality and the essential point of the passage.

3. Describe the context, background, and inner feelings involved in the situation in greater detail.

Allow your imagination to freely create an environment and a historical background to the scene. This allows for subjective feelings, memories, and associations (consciously or unconsciously) to become part of this prayer exercise. Respect the facts, but don't be afraid to elaborate on them creatively.

4. Ask for what you want.

What I want to understand more deeply is ... What I desire to be freed of is ... For example, "Divine Friend, help me to understand my own blindness (paralysis, pharisaical hypocrisy, etc.) and heal me of it."

5. Looking and listening.

Focus upon different aspects of the passage such as physical details, persons, words, the event of healing, forgiveness, death, etc., and let thoughts, images, feelings, and other associations present themselves. Keep returning to the word, image, or event. As you concentrate on these, what presents itself to your mind? Record what comes to you in writing. Sometimes the connections are obvious and direct. At other times they are more obscure. Record them all without judgment. Be aware of symbolic connections. For example, is there a storm in my life? Am I like the leper, or Lazarus, or the blind an in some way? The point is not to analyze, but to make associations and connections as they arise.

6. Dialogue.

Feel or imagine God's presence and then begin to speak with one another in a totally open way. Say what is on your mind, and then allow God to speak to you. Sometimes it may help to imagine what God would say as you give space for God to speak with you. Record the dialogue as it comes to you.

7. Remember and evaluate.

Review in your mind the sequence of feelings, free-flowing thoughts and experiences involved in this prayer exercise. Record these.... Then re-read the whole meditation and note the emotions that arise as you read and also how you feel about the experience as a whole.