

Guide for Daily Prayer

Establish your schedule for daily prayer and stick to it as much as possible. Set some dates when you can share the fruits of your prayer with a friend or small faith-sharing group.

- A* Select a time and place that is best for your daily prayer.
- B* As you begin your prayer time, realize that God is really present and wants to draw close to you.
- C* Ask for the light of the Holy Spirit to guide and inspire you.
- D* At the beginning of your prayer time, pray this or a similar prayer:

Here I am, Lord, standing before you just as I am at this moment.
I sit in your presence, Lord, in peace and tranquility.
I am in your presence and allow myself to be directed by you.
I open myself to you who are near.
You are the font of life, the force of life which permeates my very being.
You are my breath which maintains me in existence. Let peace dwell within me.
Give me the grace to let myself be cleansed by you,
to be a shell filled only with you, my God.
Let all my thoughts and feelings, my will and liberty,
be totally directed to your honor and service. Amen.

- E* Here are two ways to pray using the suggested scriptural texts (see scriptures week 1-6):

Ignatian Contemplation (IC)

(This one can be used with either Old or New Testament Readings, but especially with events in the life of Christ.)

- Recall the story and use your imagination to enter into the Gospel scene.
- Try to see, contemplating each person in the scene. Give a prolonged look, above all, to the person of Jesus himself (if that is the case). Just look without trying to explain or understand.
- Try to listen, paying attention to the spoken or implied words. What might they mean? What if they were directed to you?

- Observe what the people in the scene do. They have names, histories, sufferings, personal quests, joys. How do they react? Note the gestures, feelings, and attitudes, above all, of Jesus himself.
- Place yourself actively in the scene. Allow yourself to be involved in what is happening. Besides seeing and listening, try to touch and feel the flavor of what happens during prayer. In reflection try to benefit from everything that happened in this time of prayer.
- End this time with an intimate farewell to God, using the words of the Lord's Prayer. On the completion of the time of prayer, do not forget to do a brief review. (See step 5.)

Prayerful Reading (PR)

- Read the entire text once (see scriptures week 1-6); reread it slowly, verse by verse.
- Ask yourself: What does the text itself say?
- Stop wherever God speaks to you interiorly. Do not rush; learn to savor things. Ask yourself: What does the text say to me?
- God is a Father who loves us much more than we could ever be loved by anyone else. Ask yourself: What does the text make me want to say to God? These can be praises, petitions, thanksgiving, adoration, or silence.
- Continue to gather whatever comes to mind, whatever touches your heart: desires, lights, appeals, recollections, inspirations. Ask yourself: What is it that this text and everything I have experienced through it made me savor and live?
- End the prayer with a loving goodbye. Pray the Lord's Prayer. On the completion of this time of prayer, do not forget to do a brief review. (See step 5.)

F Review of Prayer

When you complete each period of prayer, ask yourself:

- What word of God touched me the most?
- What feeling, sentiment, emotion, or effect predominated?
- Did I feel some calling, a desire, or an inspiration?
- Did I experience some difficulty or resistance?
- If possible, write in a journal about the answer that seems most significant. Formulate it in a prayer of petition or thanksgiving. These same questions can be used in the faith-sharing group or in spiritual conversation with another.

*G The Prayer of Loving Attention
(Also known as Examen of Consciousness)*

At the end of the day, give a few minutes to the Prayer of Loving Attention (also called Examen of Consciousness or simply Examen), presenting yourself to the Lord as someone who was graced by him during the day.

- Thank God for everything that was good for you and for your brothers and sisters.
- Invoke the power of the Holy Spirit, asking for light to discern how to use your liberty, how to decide wisely.
- Take note of the situations, circumstances, and events of your day in which you allowed God to act, to be present in your life. Review your actions that were signs of God's presence and love for others.
- Ask for forgiveness from Jesus, your faithful friend, for the good you did not do and for not allowing yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit.
- Entrust yourself and the coming day to the Lord and experience the joy and hope that come from putting all these matters into his hands.

The text is based on Advent Retreat 2011 of the Loyola Institute for Spirituality in Orange, CA and Adventtiretriitti 2020 (www.hiljainentila.fi). Both may be copied as long as the purpose for its use remains the same, that is, to promote Spiritual Exercises in everyday life.