

Imagine that!!

Something I learned to do on retreat and something that is very Ignatian is to use your imagination and enter into a biblical scene of the life of Jesus. You have to imagine that you are actually in the scene as if it were actually occurring and you are a participant in the event. You have to try to sense the atmosphere, smell the air, see the countryside etc. and allow yourself to be part of the crowd or a bystander, or a disciple. This is not, as it were, like watching a video, it is actually being part of the video. You are actually trying to relive the event. Where are you in the video? Is Jesus there as well? Does he speak? Do you have a conversation? This method takes time to develop. You need to give yourself at least half an hour.

Some people say they have no imagination yet they can imagine lying on a tropical beach or being stuck in a traffic jam. Others say when they are silent nothing seems to happen. Sometimes nothing does happen! However, we have made ourselves available to God. It is up to God if and when he discloses himself. The one thing we cannot do is control God.

This kind of contemplation is not easy and is not for everybody. It may be a case of 'if at first you don't succeed then try again'. You will probably fare better at a second attempt.

Some people object that this is not a theological or an historical way of approaching the gospel narratives. This may well be but nevertheless the method is a way of making the text come alive and for many people it works. By being present in the scene and often by identifying with one of the participants, they become aware of their own feelings and what it means to be present with Jesus.

Of course the meditation must be entered into in an attitude of faith, in the belief that God only desires that which is good for us and that God is ready to speak through our hearts.

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