

LOYOLA PRAYER SHEETS

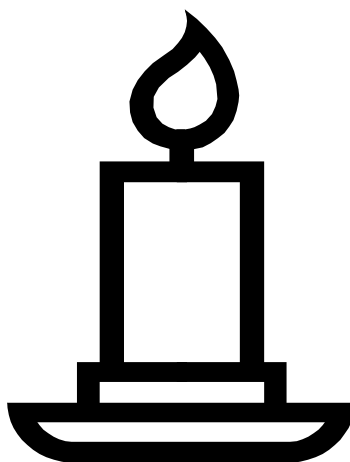
COME AWAY AND REST AWHILE

Entering into a Retreat

It takes time to enter into a retreat. Time to begin to allow yourself to feel at home in new surroundings. Time to adjust to the change of pace. Time to let your deeper hopes and desires come to the surface. Time to meet God in this place.

The good news is that there is all the time in the world available. Even on the shortest of retreats, there is time enough to relax and let God do everything that God wants to do. So don't rush, but enter into the retreat asking God for the gift of whole-hearted confidence and trust in God's care, especially during these days.

The rest of this prayer sheet offers a number of suggestions that might help you during the beginning of this retreat. Use whatever you find helpful, and leave aside anything that doesn't appeal to you at the moment. Above all, take things easy!



I take time to ask God to show me the *me* that I am bringing into this retreat. How are God and I interacting at this point in my life? What have been the high and low points recently?

Am I coming into this retreat with worries and concerns? I ask God to help me to recognise and name them so that they can be offered for light to be shed on them when God is ready.



People need to start retreats very slowly. Going into retreat involves a change of tempo, a slowing down. Don't be surprised if your tiredness catches up with you, and you feel tired and sleepy. You may even find yourself falling asleep when you try to pray. This is normal, the body's response to the change of pace. Don't expect too much of yourself ...

- Give yourself an easy timetable initially
- Include maybe a couple of (shortish) prayer periods
- Build in some times of rest - early nights, siestas
- Get plenty of exercise
- Perhaps explore the leisure room

Deliberately slow down, spend more time on everything you do. Consciously relax, take longer, deeper, breaths, walk more slowly. Do things more gently, for you are waiting on God, who is to be met in stillness, and stillness takes a little time. Simply wait on God. Meanwhile ...

Try to be aware: become aware of everything around you - the sounds, the patterns of light, the feel of things, their roughness or smoothness. The scents and aromas carried through the air, warmth and coolness. Take trouble to notice even the taste and texture of your food. It has all come to your senses from God. Touch the trees and walls. Feel and smell the flowers and the leaves. Through this creation God speaks to you, sings to you. Ask the Lord to open your senses, open them wide, that you may learn to listen to the voice of God.

No: it is not yours to open buds into blossoms.
Shake the bud, strike it; it is beyond your power to make it blossom.
Your touch soils it, you tear its petals to pieces and strew them in the dust.
But no colours appear, and no perfume.
Ah! it is not for you to open the bud into a blossom.

He who can open the bud does it simply.
He gives it a glance, and the life-sap stirs through its veins.
At his breath the flower spreads its wings and flutters in the wind.
Colours flush out like heart-longings, the perfume betrays a sweet secret.
He who can open the bud does it so simply.

From *Fruit-Gathering*
by Rabindranath Tagore



SCRIPTURE TEXTS

You might find it helpful to use a passage of scripture to move you into the prayer of the retreat. However, all that is outlined above still applies. Take it slowly, and choose no more than *one* of the passages below for your prayerful reflection until tomorrow. Pick whichever first catches your attention - it doesn't matter if it is very familiar, or if it's a passage which is new to you.

Psalm 139 Thank you for the wonder of my being

Isaiah 49: 1-16 I was thinking, "I have toiled in vain"

Isaiah 55: 1-11 Listen, and your soul will live

Luke 11: 1-13 Ask, and you will receive

Luke 18: 1-8 Pray continually and never lose heart

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