

Mantra

Repeat a word or phrase.

It might be your own personal motto.

It might be one of the short sayings from Scripture such as

“I am the way the truth and the life.”

“I believe, help thou my unbelief.”

“The Truth will set you free.”

“Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!”

The aim of the mantra is to quieten and move into a still space within.

The Rosary

The Rosary can also be a form of Mantra. The ‘Hail Mary’ forms a rhythmic quietening background to the meditations on the ‘Mysteries’ of the Rosary.

The mysteries are events from the life of Christ and Mary taken from Scripture and tradition.

Saying Prayers

Take a favourite prayer or poem.

Either:

Become aware of your breathing,

Say the prayer, one word with each breath.

Or:

Take the first word on its own, repeat it a few times,

Think about it from all angles.....all its possible meanings.

What impression does it make on you, how do you feel?

What may God be saying to you through it?

When its meaning is completely exhausted for you move on to the next word.

Continue until the end of your prayer time

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PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Since the early days of the Church the Scriptures have been used as a means of coming closer to God in prayer. The Bible contains many books which can help stimulate our thoughts and meditations and raise our minds and hearts to God. The Divine is revealed in a very special way on its pages, none greater than in the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth in the four Gospels.

In this leaflet there are four tried and tested ways of using Scripture in your personal prayer.

- Lectio Divina
- Imaginative Gospel Meditation
- Mantra
- Breathing in the word

As with all forms of prayer, what matters is communication with God.

There is no one “best” method.

Whatever seems to bring us closer to God is best for us now.

Entering into Prayer - Stillness

Whatever way of praying you choose it is good to begin with a period of stilling (quietening or centring). Many people find it helpful be alert and grounded sitting with back straight and with both feet on the ground.

Body Awareness: going from toe to head become aware of each part of the body in turn for the space of three slow breaths: Awareness of whether it is warm or cold, the feel of the clothing, the movement of breathing, itching, pain or other sensations. Where there is tension feel it then let it go.

Listening to sounds: Become aware of sounds inside and outside your room. Don't dwell on any particular sound but listen for as many different sounds as possible, particularly the subtle sounds.

Slow Breathing: Consciously take deep and slow breaths. You might imagine yourself breathing in the Spirit of God and breathing out this same spirit to others or you might breathe out all that you want to be rid of e.g. jealousy, fear, bitterness.

Lectio Divina

A PRAYERFUL PONDERING OF SCRIPTURE

This is a centuries old method of praying with Scriptures.

A method especially suited to praying the psalms, parts of the prophets, wisdom literature, and the epistles.

First, choose the passage you intend to pray.

Then choose a time, it may be anything from five minutes to an hour.

Dedicate the whole of this time to God and don't give up if you feel you are not getting anything out of it.

Enter into the prayer in a quiet place in a comfortable yet attentive posture.

Mark the start of the prayer by recognising you are in the presence of God.

Be aware of your own needs-what grace do you want to ask of God?

- 1. Slowly read the passage.**
- 2. Stop where a word or phrase strikes you. Savour it as long as there is something in it for you. The passage may trigger off thoughts on your life-that is OK.**
- 3. Talk to God in your own words**
- 4. Stay in silence before God.**
- 5. Move on to the next phrase when you are ready, or if you become distracted, and again, stop when something strikes you.**

Take your time.

When your prayer time is finished, end with a short formal prayer such as the **Our Father**, or **Glory be...**

The idea is not so much to think about the passage as to let it engage your feelings, emotions and life.

The questions to ask when looking back on the prayer are:

What struck me? How did I react and feel

? Does this tell me anything about God, myself, or the way I relate to

IMAGINATIVE GOSPEL CONTEMPLATION

This is a way of entering into the Scriptures, particularly the Gospels.

Use a story from scripture that allows you to be part of the action.

As in dreams, you might find interesting and unexpected things come up.

Choose a story from a Gospel; read and get to know it.

Wherever you are, remember you are in the presence of God, become aware of this.

Offer yourself, your time and your imagination to God.

Ask God for what you need today, what you desire.

This could be for a greater understanding of Jesus, in words such as:

Jesus, may I know you clearly, love you more dearly and follow you more nearly.

Set the scene from your scripture passage.

Take your time, see all that is around, hear, feel, taste and smell.

What is the setting of the story in your imagination?

Become a character in the story..... Who are you?

It may be a central character or someone on the sidelines.

Let the scene unfold naturally. You may imagine it in the present day or 2000 years ago. You may be involved with people you know.

The story might depart from the gospel scene and take on a life of its own.

That's fine, trust God, everything human is appropriate material for prayer.

When the story has ended you may want to talk to Jesus in your own words, as one friend to another.

End the prayer with a formal prayer like the "Lord's Prayer"

When you have finished look back over the prayer.

See how you reacted and felt.

Is this saying anything about you, the way you see others or God?

Did anything surprise you?

Is there anything that needs healing?

Is there anything you need to pray about in future?