

Brother Dave opened his eyes.

"Before you go, can I pray a blessing for you?" he said.

"Sure" I replied, sliding forward in my chair to get close enough for Brother Dave to wrap both his hands around mine...

*May you recognize in your life
the presence, power, and light of your soul.*

*May you realize that you are never alone,
that your soul in its brightness and belonging
connects you intimately with the
rhythm of the universe.*

*May you have respect for your
individuality and difference.*

*May you realize that the shape of your soul is unique,
that you have a special destiny here,
that behind the façade of your life there is
something beautiful and eternal happening.*

*May you learn to see yourself
with the same delight, pride, and expectation
with which God sees you in every moment.*

"Amen,"



All Saints Ballito

Do not be Afraid



The Steps of Ignatian Contemplation

From The Inner Chapel by Becky Eldredge

Ignatian Contemplation is a prayer method St. Ignatius recommends when praying with the life of Jesus. It not only allows us to hear and read the words of Jesus but also moves what is going on in the Scripture into our imaginations. This helps us not only hear Jesus but also watch the way he moves and acts.

Here are the steps of Ignatian Contemplation, or imaginative prayer.

1. Select a Scripture.

Pick a passage from one of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

2. Read.

Read the passage several times slowly so that you almost know the story well enough to share with another person.

3. Imagine the Scene.

Close your eyes and imagine the scene. Imagine what the scene looks like. Who is in the scene? What are they doing? Where are they located? What do you notice about the environment? What smells are there? What sounds? Let the Holy Spirit guide this unfolding in your mind for you.

4. Put yourself in the scene.

As the scene begins to take shape in your mind, put yourself in the scene. Notice where you are.

5. **Notice what happens:**

Let the story unfold in your mind. Stay with it until you feel nudged to move to reflection.

6. **Respond and rest.**

Share with God what you noticed and experienced. Then rest in God and let God speak to you.

7. **Reflect.**

Reflect back on what you experienced in prayer. What did you learn about Jesus? About God? About another character in the scripture?

Do Not be Afraid...

Wake Up

"What we don't know about ourselves can and will hurt us, not to mention others," he said, pointing his finger at me and then at himself.

"As long as we stay in the dark about how we see the world and the wounds and beliefs that have shaped who we are, we're prisoners of our history.

We'll continue going through life on autopilot doing things that hurt and confuse ourselves and everyone around us.

Eventually we become so accustomed to making the same mistakes over and over in our lives that they lull us to sleep.

We need to wake up."

Waking up. There wasn't anything I wanted more.

Waking Up

TAKEN FROM THE ROAD BACK TO YOU

(Ian Morgan Cron – Suzanne Stabile)

"I want to read you this Thomas Merton quote I found," I said, leafing through the pages of my journal.

Brother Dave rubbed his hands together and nodded. "Ah, Merton".

"Here it is," I said, finding the page where I had written down the quote. I cleared my throat.

*"Sooner or later we must distinguish between
what we are not and what we are.
We must accept the fact that we are not what we would like to be.
We must cast off our false,
exterior self like the cheap and showy garment that it is..."*

I slowed, surprised by the knot in my throat that was making it hard for me to continue.

"Go on," Brother Dave said quietly.

I took a deep breath.

*"We must find our real self, in all its elemental poverty,
but also, in its great and very simple dignity -
created to be the child of God,
and capable of loving with something of God's own sincerity
and his unselfishness."*

I closed my journal and looked up, flushing from embarrassment at how emotional I had become.

Brother Dave tilted his head to one side. "What was it that Merton said that moved you?" I sat quietly, uncertain how to answer. The monastery's church bells rang outside, calling the monks to prayer.

***"I feel like I've been asleep for a long time,
but maybe now I'm beginning to wake up,"***

"At least I hope so."