

Examination of Conscience

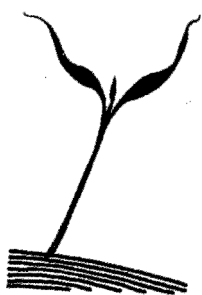
This practice is inspired by a night prayer used by the Student Christian Movement of Canada.

Bring to mind the ways that you have practiced compassion, solidarity, peace and justice today, this week, this year.

Bring to mind the times today, this week, this year, when you have fallen short of your values, hurt others, harmed the environment, or neglected to take action.

Pray the following prayer as you go:

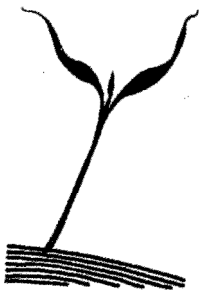
Loving God,
In our broken world, heal us.
In our injustices, re-form us.
In our mistakes, forgive us.
Amen



A Prayer at the Door

Pause for a moment and remember all the people who will pass through this door.

Christ, in our coming
and in our leaving,
be the Door and the Keeper for us
and for all who work within this place
this day and every day,
forever and always.
Amen



Based on an ancient prayer by St Brigid
<http://commonprayer.net>

Made in the image of God

You are invited to look in the mirror and to make the sign of a cross on your forehead using the olive oil provided.

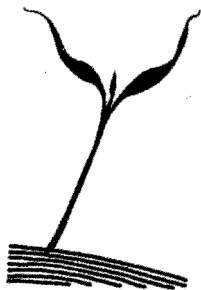
As you do so remember that you are a part of God's creation,
God is in you,
you are made in the image of God,
God's breath is in you.



Quiet is not inactive



What does it mean to you to be a 'still small voice' in the world? Add your words to the sheet.



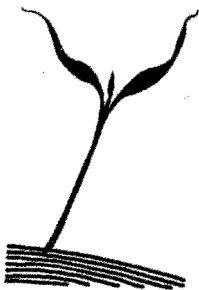
Blessed

From a meditation on the Beatitudes by Chris Goan

Blessed are those
whose hearts are open
But whose pockets are empty
Blessed are the small people
Blessed are they in their
Powerlessness
Blessed is
Their lack of influence
And blessed are those who have
No guile
No artistry
No significance
Blessed are those
who come with nothing
Because I would give them
Everything
I say it clearly
In common language -
Blessed are they
Because they shall
Own the earth
And through them
I am establishing
My Kingdom

Blessed are those whose spirit
Rises to meet mine
And who are never satisfied with
Easy compromise
Blessed are they who lay down their
rights
To look for *my* righteousness
Blessed are they who quest
Beyond dogma
Into me
Blessed are they as they escape
The confines of what is known
To search for more
Blessed are those who are vulnerable
And whose necks are stretched
To my sword
For it will fall kindly
And blessed
are those dirty streets
Where rests
My manna
Blessed are they
For there I am planting
My Kingdom

Who would you write a blessing for?
What would it say?



Beauty of the broken glass

A Jesuit Community Volunteer once said that living out his spirituality in the inner city meant that the challenge to find God in all things included the beauty of the broken glass.

If you mean to take that challenge seriously - to find beauty and God in what is broken - then take a bead from the ground and keep it somewhere to remind you of that challenge.



See www.jvcbritain.org for more information about the Jesuit Volunteer Community.

Still Small Voice Prayer Trail – www.movement.org.uk

Praying with our hands

“Prayer is not an activity of the mind, for God is not in the head. It is in activity of the whole person, and God is in the wholeness.”

- Ken Leech

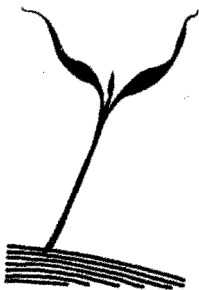
We can pray with our hands:

“It is very beautiful to hold a cross as we say our prayers. Sometimes just the holding can be a prayer. The feel of the cross speaks of God’s sacrifice and love; words become unnecessary. Likewise we can meditate on the creation by holding a stone, or a flower or a pine-cone.”

- Stephen Cottrell

What other objects can you find that can serve as a focus for prayer and meditation?

Be creative; go outside, take in the beauty of the environment, allow nature to guide you towards the focus of your contemplation.



Keep still, take your stand

Prayer can be a 'place of fear' where we feel vulnerable. Read the poem and then write or draw something about your own experience of prayer.

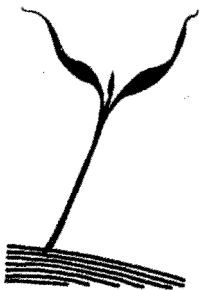
In the Open by Ruth Pitter

Move into the clear.
Keep still, take your stand
Out in the place of fear
On the bare sand;

Where you have never been,
Where the small heart is chilled;
Where a small thing is seen,
And can be killed.

Under the open day,
So weak and so appalled,
Look up and try to say,
Here I am, for you called.

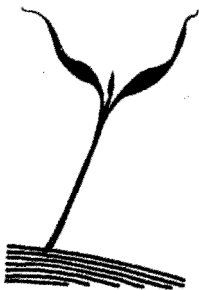
You must haunt the thin cover
By that awful place,
Till you can get it over
And look up into that face.



Prayer by pictures

Take a look at the pictures and choose one which says something to you about prayer.

Put it in your pocket or wallet, and when you get home put it somewhere you will see it each day – by a mirror, by a light-switch, next to your bed, in your diary – to remind you to seek God in prayer in the midst of ordinary life.



Springing up from the ground

“Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky.”

Psalm 85:11

Take a word of hope and encouragement from the ground and carry it with you.



A very simple prayer

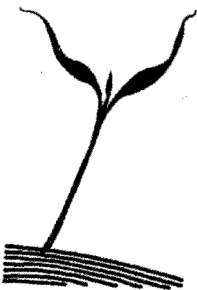
A Hasidic Tale retold by Anthony de Mello

Late one evening a poor farmer on his way back from the market found himself without his prayer book. The wheel of his cart had come off right in the middle of the woods and it distressed him that this day should pass without his having said his prayers.

So this is the prayer he made: 'I have done something very foolish, Lord. I came away from home this morning without my prayer book and my memory is such that I cannot recite a single prayer without it. So this is what I am going to do: I shall recite the alphabet five times very slowly and you, to whom all prayers are known, can put the letters together to form the prayers I can't remember.'

And the Lord said to his angels, 'Of all the prayers I have heard today, this one was undoubtedly the best because it came from a heart that was simple and sincere.'

Pray a very simple prayer either by following the poor farmer's example or by forming a single word from the alphabet letters.



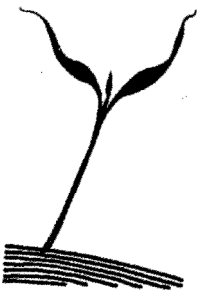
Anthony de Mello (1931 – 1987) was a Jesuit priest from India who wrote and spoke widely about spirituality.

Just Sitting

The practice of non-meditation

1. Sit for 20 minutes.
2. Don't get up.
3. Don't talk, write, get up or engage in any other external distractions.
4. Let your mind go wherever it wants.

There's no way to get this wrong. As long as you remain sitting, you're engaged in the practice.



Hundreds of ways

“Let the beauty we love be what we do. There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.”

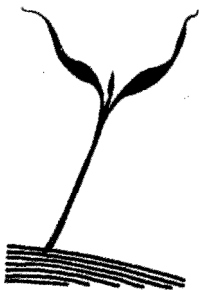
- Rumi

Where do you see, feel, experience beauty?

Where do you find sacred ground?

How could you celebrate what is sacred and beautiful through prayer and action?

There are a hundred grains of rice on the plate. Take one and think of one way in which you can ‘kneel and kiss the ground’ in everyday life.

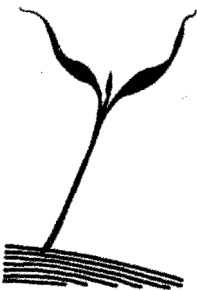


Washed away

Choose a stone and hold it tightly in your hand. Think about the stone and how it feels.

Reflect on one thing that distracts you from your relationship with God.

Imagine the stone is getting heavier and heavier, and after a few moments drop the stone into the water.



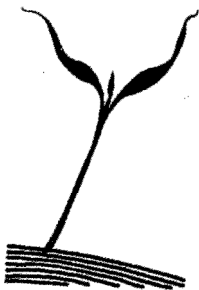
Praying for others

On the table are various newspapers from this week.

Start looking over the headlines and articles. When you find one that catches your attention take a highlighter and highlight that article.

Pray for that situation and for the people involved.

Is there any action you could take in response to the news story that you have chosen?



Friendship

Think of a friend. It could be an old friend or someone you have just met. It could be a relationship that is uplifting, affirming, loving, difficult or draining. It could be someone you see every day or someone far away.

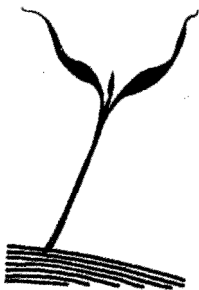
Choose three pieces of wool, and begin plaiting or knotting them together.

Pray for your friend

Pray for yourself

Pray for God's peace in your lives

Take your braid with you or attach it with the others.



A Table in the Wilderness

“Can God spread a table in the wilderness?”

- Psalm 78: 19

“There is a tradition in scripture of God providing manna, bread in the wilderness.”

God invites us to celebrate in the wilderness:

In the place that people are inclined to avoid.

In the place where life is risky.

In the place which can threaten to destroy life.

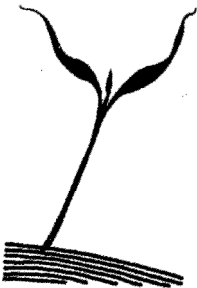
In the place which can be beautiful but remote, arid and leave one exposed, vulnerable.

In the place which can be vast, where one can get lost, and in which one may expect to be for a long time.

- Inderjit Bhogal

*Where is the wilderness for you today?
What might God’s table look like in
that wilderness? Who would be there?*

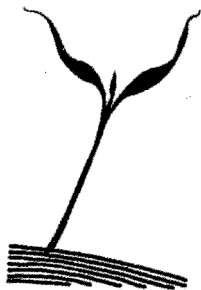
*Write or draw your thoughts in the
notebook and see what others have
written.*



Go bananas for justice!

Write a prayer for trade justice and for all people to be paid a living wage for the work they do on one of the (Fairtrade) bananas.

Find out if people are paid a living wage where you worship, study or work – if they're not, why not join a campaign, or start one?



For more information and ideas see www.church-poverty.org.uk/livingwage and www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/living-wage-campaign/

Jesus at Bethany

While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

(Mark 14:3)

Jesus would often find refuge at Bethany, staying at various people's houses. The same happened during the week leading up to his death.

It is important for us to find refuge in our lives, whether that is a place or in close friends and family. Take some time to think about these people and places and thank God that we are able to find refuge in them when things are hard. Pray also for people who are in need of rest, asking God how we can be a refuge to them.

