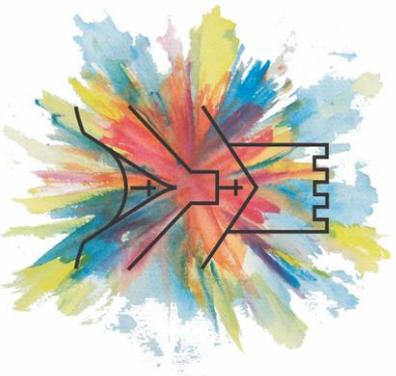


**Ideas of Prayer at Home
with Tonbridge Parish Church
as we are Church without Walls**



Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading)

Lectio Divina is an ancient method of meditating on Scripture. It was first introduced by St. Gregory of Nyssa (c 330– 395), and also encouraged by St. Benedict of Nursia (c 480-547), the founder of the Benedictine order. In Lectio Divina, the chosen passage is read prayerfully several times. This gives an opportunity to think deeply about it and respond thoughtfully. You may even find yourself imagining that you are part of the scene – it can give a new way of understanding familiar passages.

The 4 R's of Lectio Divina:

LECTIO (READ) Take your time to read the passage. Get a sense of what it is saying. Read the passage for a second time. Listen for any words or phrases that strike you, and listen with your heart.

MEDITATIO (REFLECT) Read the passage again, slowly. As you pause on the words or phrases that strike you, take time to consider what that word, phrase or passage means, particularly in your life.

ORATIO (RESPOND) Read the passage again, slowly. Consider now how God has spoken to you in this passage and respond back to him. If you are upset or angry, say so! It is OK to ask questions! You may want to consider how this passage is asking you to act differently.

CONTEMPLATIO (REMAIN) Now take some time simply to rest and remain in the presence of God. You may want to record some of your thoughts or prayers in a journal so you can come back to them later.

(Adapted from the Catholic Youth Prayer Book, St Mary's Press, Winton, 2006)

Some scripture passages to pray with:

Mt 9:9-13, Mt 11:25-30, Mk 4:35-41, Lk 8:4-8, Lk 15:1-7, Jn 15:1-11

Spring 2020

(Finger) Walking a Labyrinth

Walking a labyrinth is an ancient meditation practice drawn from Celtic Christianity. Often Labyrinths were marked out with stones or cut into the hillside. Sometimes you find labyrinth patterns on the floors of cathedrals – the labyrinth at Chartres being the most famous.

If mobility is difficult or you cannot get outside though (If you are self-isolating, for example!) then you can ‘take your finger for a walk’ round a labyrinth instead – tracing the lines slowly and meditatively into the centre and out again.

A Labyrinth is different from a maze. There is only one path. You cannot get lost.

As you travel inwards, think about your life journey up until this point. Think of all the highs and lows. All the turning points. All the times when you have noticed God at work. Notice how the path turns back on itself and you pass close by to events in the past. How have things in your life been connected?

Offer all of these to God.

When you get to the centre, rest a while in God’s presence. Just be still and attentive.

When you are ready, slowly trace your finger back out of the labyrinth. Imagine you are walking outwards, back into the world, knowing God’s presence with you. Listen to what new things God may be calling you too.



The Ignatian Examen

Over 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness through the Daily Examen. The Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us.

1. Become aware of God's presence. Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

2. Review the day with gratitude. Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.

3. Pay attention to your emotions. One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person

or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

5. Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Lord's Prayer.

(Adapted from <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/how-can-i-pray/>)

Praying for Others

Prayer can be practical too...

When we are isolated from others it can feel very lonely. And those we care about will be feeling lonely too. Don't forget to pray for them! You could:

Use photographs of friends and family to help you focus when you pray

Find some pebbles from the garden. Wash and dry them and write the names of people you want to pray for on them with a pencil, felt tip or a sharpie.

Make a prayer wall in your house where you can stick post-it notes with names or prayer requests. (Some more adventurous alternatives might be to make a prayer tree with a branch from the garden, or how about a 'prayer fridge' where you can stick the names on the front and pray for one or two each time you go to get anything out!

Finding a map of the world and praying for a different country each day.

Why not hold others in prayer by:

Picking up the phone – particularly if you know that they are also self-isolating or may be worried or lonely

Writing a letter to someone you haven't seen for a long time
Sending a quick text of reassurance – let someone know you're praying for them

Praying with others:

It may not be possible to meet in person, but you can pray with others by using the same words at (roughly) the same time.

Use our weekly prayer guide and share with others on the phone or by video call if possible.

Join with the Parish as we pray at 9am each day.

Pray the Lord's Prayer.

Remember – you are never alone – at any time there are people across the world joining their prayers with the saints and all the hosts of Heaven.

Julian of Norwich's Body Prayer

As we are encouraged to keep moving and ensure we have daily exercise despite being at home think about using your body in prayer. Julian of Norwich wrote, "The fruit and the purpose of prayer is to be *one* with God in all things."

Julian suffered immense pain and it was during her illness that she received visions. Whatever we are experiencing we can be open to the presence of God in a way which we can put aside the pressures on our minds and focus on prayer.

AWAIT (hands at waist, cupped up to receive): Await God's presence, not as you expect, hope, or imagine, but just as it is in this moment.

ALLOW (reach up, hands open): Allow a sense of God's presence (or not) to come and be what it is, without meeting your expectations.

ACCEPT (hands at heart, cupped towards body): Accept as a gift whatever comes or does not come. Accept that you are not in charge. Accept the infinity of God's presence, whether or not you are aware.

ATTEND (hands outstretched, ready to be responsive): In this stance of openness, attend to the action(s) that God invites you to take.

Get Creative!

We are made in the image of a creator God, so have a go at being prayerfully creative!

Try some mindful colouring. Try printing some adult colouring sheets with a Christian theme and focusing on the words or themes as you colour: <http://joditt.com/free-christian-coloring-pages-adults/>

Bake some bread. As you eat it you could read the story of the feeding of the 5000 (John 6:1-14) and pray for those around the world who don't know where their next meal is coming from.

Sing your favourite hymns or worship songs, YouTube has an extensive collection to listen too.

Have a go at writing a new hymn! (Pick a well-known tune and write some new words)

Write a psalm or a poem and share with others if you feel able

Make some origami birds or butterflies to remind you of the hope that comes with Jesus' resurrection

Paint or draw a rainbow to share God's hope and place it in your window.

Create a prayer corner in your home with items that help you to focus on prayer, a cross, stones, a bible, a candle.

Make a prayer Cairn from stones collected on a daily walk

Light a candle (or have a battery powered one) and know that God is with you, and that the Holy Spirit 'intercedes with sighs too deep for words'. (*Romans 8:26*)

Some links to resources you may find helpful

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

<http://www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/lords-prayer-actions>

<http://ministry-to-children.com/five-finger-prayer>

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples,

'I am with you always'.

Be with me today, as I offer myself to you.

Hear my prayers for others and for myself,

and keep me in your care.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,

Christ behind me, Christ before me,

Christ beside me, Christ to win me,

Christ to comfort and restore me.

Christ beneath me, Christ above me,

Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,

Christ in hearts of all that love me,

Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

from St Patrick's Breasplate