

Grace: I ask God to be able to feel sorrow with Christ in sorrow, to be anguished with his anguish, and to stay with him in the sufferings which he endures for me and for the world. I thank God for this great self-offering by which I have received eternal life (John 3:16, 15:13).

WEDNESDAY

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 I listen prayerfully to the fourth song of the servant of Yahweh as it echoes into the present.

Philippians 2:1-11 I consider the self-offering of Christ, who for our sakes “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant,” “who humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

THURSDAY and FRIDAY

Choose one of the gospels to trace the story of Jesus’ passion and death:

Matthew 26-27 A frenzied mob, a pressured politician, a strategic scapegoat, a thorn crown and a reed scepter greet the King of Kings. I can at least stand beside him in his suffering. I pray for grace to be willing to follow Christ, even in suffering, and to imitate him in his selfless and generous love.

Mark 14-15

Luke 22-23

John 18-19

You may wish to read through the entire narrative, as listed above, or take smaller sections, such as are listed below, and spend a prayer period considering each:

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Thurs: The Last Supper	26:20-30	14:12-31	22:1-38	13:1-38
The Agony in the Garden	26:30-46	14:32-52	22:39-53	18:1-12
Trial by Jewish leaders	26:46-75	14:53-72	22:54-71	18:13-27
Trial by Roman authorities	27:1-26	15:1-15	23:1-25	18:28-40
Friday: The Crucifixion	27:27-56	15:16-39	23:26-49	19:1-30
The Burial	27:57-66	15:40-47	23:50-56	19:31-42

SATURDAY and/or SUNDAY

Choose one of the gospels to trace the story of Jesus’ resurrection and appearances to his disciples:

Matthew 28 *Grace:* I ask God for the gift of being able to enter into the joy of the risen and victorious Christ.

Mark 16

Luke 24

John 20,21

(over)

Or choose from among the following resurrection stories:

John 20:11-18

With Mary Magdalen I hear my name and respond with joy

Luke 24:13-35

Jesus, my companion on my own journey to Emmaus, points out to me how he has been part of my history and prehistory. Consoled, I want to proclaim to all: "The Lord has been raised!"

John 20:19-23

The fear, guilt and confusion of the ten companions of Jesus in the room are familiar to me. I have felt them all. It is into such a place that he wants and needs to come. I welcome him and receive his gifts: peace, joy, mission, his abiding Spirit and a forgiving heart.

John 20:24-29

Tolerant of my dimness and unbelief as he was of Thomas, Jesus delights in consoling me with the gift of renewed faith. In his loving presence I utter, "My Lord and my God!"

John 21:1-17

A moment of joy – "It is the Lord!" A moment of companionship – "Come and eat this meal." A moment of intimacy – "Do you love me?" A moment of mission – "Feed my sheep."

Matthew 28:16-20

The men – those sinners he had invited to be his companions, along with me and others more sinful or more faithful than myself.
The mountain – that meeting place between God and his people. It could be a slum, a lab, a church, a clinic, an office, a parlor, a classroom.
The mission – go, baptize, teach...at every moment, in every circumstance of life.

The promise – with you always; sinful, unfaithful, limited; every joyful and painful moment.

Luke 24:44-53

I join the disciples in receiving his commission and his blessing.

Ignatian Meditation

Entering into the Story

1. Before the actual prayer time, select a short action passage from the scriptures, such as a gospel story.
2. Spend a few moments settling down at the beginning of the prayer time. Saying prayer such as the “Collect for Purity” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 355) may be helpful. Then ask God to touch you through the passage of scripture and give you the experience of grace that you need at this time.
3. Read the passage slowly and carefully several times, pausing between each reading for half a minute or so until the episode takes hold of you. Let the details of the story emerge. Let the questions and insights occur as you notice more with each reading.
4. Place the Bible aside. Now sink into the scene. Let it come to life with you as a participant. Don’t look at it as if it were a movie projected onto a screen; in your imagination take part in it. Notice the details; let yourself see, hear and smell the scene. Let yourself be one of the people caught up in the action, such as Peter, or Mary Magdalene, or the sick person Christ intends to heal, or one of the bystanders.
5. Let the drama slowly unfold. Let what happens, happen. Don’t control the story. Let yourself feel what happens. Do not moralize by trying to glean lessons from the story, or attempt to wring teachings or clever applications from it. Allow yourself to be affected by the words and actions of the story.
6. As your feelings are affected by the event, let yourself express these feelings to Christ. How does this touch your life? What do you feel moved to ask for or give thanks for? Or just stay with the impression the story has had on you, savoring it and soaking yourself in it in the presence of Christ in silent awareness, or with the gentle repetition of a single word or phrase that sums that impression up.
7. After your period of prayer comes to an end, review it for a few moments. What happened in your experience? What did you notice as specifically significant this time? Is there something which invites further prayer and attention later? Give thanks to God for being with you during the prayer.

Lectio Divina (Holy Reading)

Reading becomes Prayer

This form of prayer is ideal for those many passages of Scripture which are not narratives, such as the psalms, the epistles, and the teaching passages in the Gospel of John. It is a way of praying other spiritual writings as well. This is a very ancient practice in the Christian tradition.

Do not use passages which are unfamiliar or you will be tempted to read on hurriedly out of curiosity about where it leads and what more is coming. We have to change gear from our usual reading habits.

- A. Spend a few moments settling down and pray that your heart may be open and attentive to the gift God knows you need today.
- B. Begin reading at the place you selected, and read on very slowly indeed with an open mind. Don't study the text; just read it slowly. This is the "lectio," or reading.
- C. When a particular sentence or phrase or single word 'lights up' or 'rings a bell,' or seems striking or inviting, or in some way claims your attention, put the Bible down. Resist the temptation to go on. Here the reading stops and the meditation begins.
- D. Gently repeat this phrase or word again and again. Don't attempt to force any particular meanings from the words. This phase of meditation was compared by the monks of old to the way cows lie down and chew the cud. You know what the words mean, so just savor and relish them by gentle repetition. After some time you may find yourself shortening the sentence to just a few words or even just one. When you feel that you have really absorbed the words and are filled with a particular feeling or attitude or impression they have evoked, the time has come to lay aside the repetition or meditation phase.
- E. Now is the time for prayer. You may begin to express to God what impression the words have made on you. You may want to give thanks for the gift they signify, or question Christ or ask him for something arising from the feelings the words have evoked. Keep it simple, praying spontaneously. Or, you may want to stay in loving silence in the presence of God, filled with the grace or attitude that the meditation has instilled. When it gets hard to prolong this spontaneous prayer of expression or awareness because of distraction, bring the prayer gently to a close of thanksgiving, or if you have time and opportunity, take up the Bible again and begin further reading at the point you left off.