

IGNATIAN CONTEMPLATION: NEW LIFE

This will help the group to prepare for the contemplation and enter the context of Jesus' disciples who were experiencing grief over Jesus' death, and who were invited to experience peace upon seeing the resurrected Christ.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples, John 20:19-22

After Jesus' death, the disciples have locked themselves in a room for fear that their association with Jesus may also bring them death. Locked in with fear, they are probably convinced no one can get in to touch them; and yet Jesus surprises them and enters into their fear and their grief.

I invite you to find a comfortable position in your chair- with both feet on the ground and palms resting open on your lap- these two postures indicating a rootedness on the holy ground below us and receptivity to God's abundant gifts surrounding us. I invite you to take a couple of breathes, slowly, inhale, and exhale. With each exhale, allow your body to fall more deeply into your chair allowing any tension to be released with each breath. Keep breathing and recognize the rising and falling of your body. Notice God's very life present in the stillness of your body.

- I will read the Scripture once, and I invite you to simply listen and let the story speak to your heart.
- When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'
- *Pause 1 minute.*
- I will read the Scripture a second time. This time let the words sink into your heart. I will pause after reading the passage, and then invite you to share with the group a word or an image that stands out to you.
- *Read the passage. Pause 1 minute.*
- When you are ready, please say aloud the word or the image that remains with you.
- I will read the Scripture again, and then invite you to enter into the passage with all five of your senses. What do you see, feel, hear, taste, and touch as you are in the locked room with the disciples? Do not manipulate the movements of the scene, but rather be as present as possible to the setting and the people before you. Simply notice and receive all that comes to you as the scene unfolds.

- *Read the passage. Pause 3-4 minutes.*
- When you are ready, I invite you to share any images or movements that stand out to you in your prayer.
- This is the final time that I will read the Scripture. Continue to enter deeper into the scene, this time paying special attention to Jesus. What do you notice about him and how he feels towards you? What do you notice about your feelings towards him? Are there words or gestures exchanged?
- *Read the passage. Pause 3-4 minutes.*
- At this time, I invite you to share with the group what is unfolding in your prayer experience. Are you surprised, challenged, consoled? What is capturing your attention?
- For our final moment of reflection, I invite you to have a conversation with God, Jesus, or with any of the characters in the passage. This could be a time to express your desires, share how you are feeling, or simply listen to God or Jesus. After a couple of minutes, I will then invite you to offer your prayers to God.
- *Pause 2-3 minutes.*

Options:

1. Invite them to say a word or a phrase that they can offer to God as a prayer.
2. Invite them to speak directly to God in prayer out loud in the group.