

AT THE MEETING

OPENING PRAYER

We begin, as usual, with a short time of stillness, putting ourselves in the presence of God and asking for grace that everything that happens in our mind, heart and imagination may be directed purely to the praise and service of God. *Some communities use the CLC opening prayer, or some other formal prayer, to conclude this brief time of stillness. Others use a minute or two of suitable music.*

GRACE We ask the Holy Spirit to help and guide us as we look back on our personal faith histories.

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 1: 29-31 (Ask someone to read this aloud.)

SILENCE

Ten minutes silent prayer remembering my life and prayer since the last meeting. How have I found the prayer this last fortnight? What events in my life and prayer do I wish to share with my community?

SHARING AND LISTENING

- Remember that this is a listening, not a discussion, group.
- Include a second round if there is time.
- It's good to conclude this time of reflection with a short time of silence, praying for each other, and with a formal prayer, such as the *Glory Be* or the *Lord's Prayer*.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER, if wanted.

PRACTICALITIES: This is an opportunity for any reports, eg from members who have attended a CLC event, for questions, for discussion about any concerns, for news about any work or mission in which members might be involved, or for any business the group might need to sort out.

REVIEW OF THE MEETING

What was good for me in this meeting?
What was not so good? What would I have liked to be different?
What do I want to take away with me?

CLOSING PRAYER (Many communities use the CLC closing prayer.)



MEETING PLANS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES



**TOWARDS
MEETING FOURTEEN**

PERSONAL PRAYER BEFORE THE MEETING

A reminder of the suggested stages of prayer . . .

PREPARATORY PRAYER Begin in the usual way.

ASKING FOR WHAT I WANT I ask the Holy Spirit to help and guide me as I look back on my own personal faith history.

MATERIAL FOR PRAYER

The important prayer this fortnight is about your personal faith history which may take a number of prayer times. The article tells you how to do it and the passages cited give a scriptural background.

* Deuteronomy 1: 29-31 * Psalm 139: 13-16 * Jeremiah 31: 3

TALKING WITH THE LORD

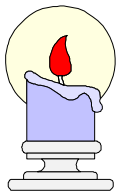
Ensure that, at the end of your prayer, you spend some time talking directly with the Lord. You may like to end the prayer with a *Glory Be*.

REVIEW OF PRAYER

Afterwards look back over your prayer and make notes.

MY PERSONAL FAITH HISTORY

Do you remember the dream the man had in **'FOOTPRINTS'**? How he looked back and saw two sets of footprints in the sands of his life, but in the most troublesome times only one? The dream taught that the Lord walks with us throughout our journey but in times of suffering and trial, carries us. We hope this prayer exercise will help you to look back over the footprints of your own life.



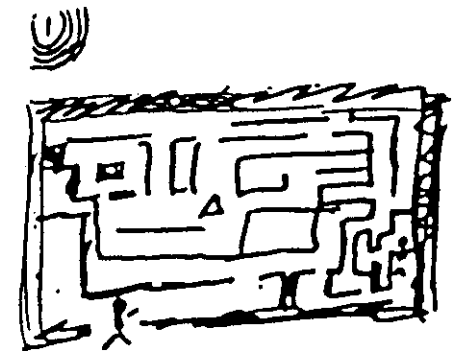
Begin your prayer, as usual, by acknowledging God's presence.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help and guide you as you look back over your life. Ask, perhaps: 'Lord, give me a deeper appreciation of your presence in my life, working for me.'

With the help of your imagination, ask the Lord to come with you down memory lane. With God recall and even re-live past events of your life, people, places, etc. Just let one memory touch off another.

Begin to focus on some of the **peak experiences of your life**, whether these are moments of prayer, love, celebration, sadness, times of success or failure, changed relationships with relatives or friends, study, sport, music, and so on. There are times when God's presence or seeming absence is usually noticed. Among the single events you may investigate as significant are those of call, temptation, sin, virtue, desolation or consolation. Take time with God reflecting on these times, asking to see how God was present with you.

Take a large piece of paper and divide it into four or five sections; more if you prefer. Let each section represent a period of your life with God. The beginning of each period will correspond to the beginning of a change in that relationship; either a weakening or a strengthening, perhaps initiated by something which caused you to see God differently or to react to God in a different way. New stages in your life or new relationships may mark such changes, for example joining CLC or other groups.



When you have decided on the key sections of your life try to decide on a **word**, or a **sentence**, or, better still, a **symbol**, or **simple sketch**, which expresses for you this important period in your life. It may highlight what you



now see God to have been doing for you at that time, such as bringing you to accept yourself more.

It then helps to use felt pens or magazine cut-outs to depict your four or five words or your symbol or sketch on your piece of paper. Ability to draw is not important. When you have done this, your piece of paper will contain a summary of how you see the way your relationship with God has developed.

The sketches on this paper, much reduced in size, come from someone else's life plan, when he did this exercise. Yours will probably look very different. As you see how God has led you, how your relationship with God has developed, can you see the sort of path that you have been led along?

There is no need to rush this exercise; you might like to spread it over the whole time between the meetings, asking to see how the Holy Spirit was at work in you, with you, and for you.

End each period of prayer giving thanks to the Father for leading you, to the Son for being with you on your journey, and to the Holy Spirit for working on you.

Tony Horan sj

For the first full calendar year we are happy to send you our national newsletter, *FOCUS*, free of charge. If you would like to go on receiving *FOCUS*, you need to join one of the categories of CLC membership (See the leaflet in this pack), if you have not already done so. This does not commit you to CLC, merely to continuing your journey with us. You may wish to discuss this at the practicalities section of your next meeting.