

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 to be able to open up our hearts to the persons of the Trinity.

SCRIPTURE: 1 John 4: 7-19 (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

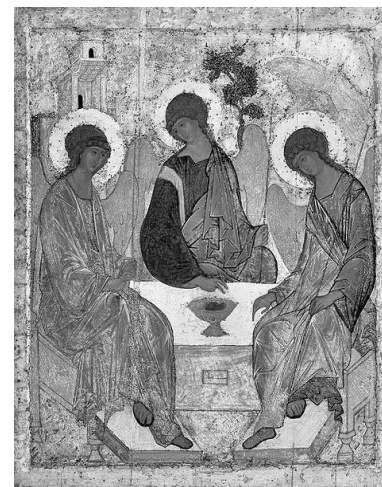
What was good for me in this meeting?
What was not so good? What would I have liked to be different?
What do I want to take away with me?

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



MEETING PLANS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

TALKING TO THE PERSONS OF THE TRINITY



**TOWARDS
MEETING NINE**

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 to be able to open up my heart to God

MATERIAL FOR PRAYER Read and pray with each of the articles below. If your heart is raised to God, let it; return to articles or pray the scripture when you need to.

* 1 John 4: 7-19

* John 15: 9-15

* Hosea 2: 14-22

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 some notes.

TALKING WITH GOD

God is so close, so natural, but we don't see him because we think *he should be more distant...*

Now, even if we know this in our heads we don't always feel comfortable with this God-who-is-close, and we often try to use many ways of talking about God which can hold him at a distance: for example, we call him *King* or *Judge* or *Redeemer* etc... Now all of these can be very useful in understanding the fullness of God, but our basic relationship with God should be expressed in the language of friendship (as in John 15: 15) or in the more passionate language of the prophet Hosea, **LOVE**.

So, how should all this affect my prayer? Profoundly. Growing in prayer consists in my building a relationship with God. No longer should we always try to keep our prayer so precise and on its best behaviour as if the Bishop was coming to tea but our prayer should be as disorganized, unpredictable, and laid-back as any friendship.

A golden rule in prayer is: "If it works in friendship, it normally works in prayer". For example, a friendship needs time to develop: as I need to spend time with a friend, otherwise I can easily lose touch. So it is with my prayer. I can't just let my friendship with God sort-itself-out while I get on with other things, I need to spend time with God. '*Wasting time with God*' is a good definition of prayer. As I may 'waste time' with a friend, do nothing in particular - just talking about life, friends family etc ...sometimes being serious and concentrated, sometimes just idling the time away, saying nothing-much about nothing-in-particular. Often the test of a developing friendship is when we can be quiet and not even feel that we *have* to make any conversation, but can occasionally just sit there...

If we learn to pray in this way, our prayer will deepen, becoming more honest, natural and good-humoured.

{Taken from an article by Dermot Preston sj in *JESUITS AND FRIENDS*, Easter 1994, no 27. }

PRAYING FOR THE GRACE

Jesus first met Andrew with the words 'What do you want?' and to Bartimaeus his opening words were 'What do you want me to do for you?'

Ignatius wants us to start all our prayers by imagining Jesus saying these words to us. How would you respond today, if Jesus stood in front of you, looked at you with love and said gently, 'What do you want me to do for **you**?' It is the stuff of fairy tales when three wishes are granted to the favoured one. Well, we are the favoured ones and no way could Jesus fail to grant our genuine desire. Of course this is no time for something superficial or transitory to come to our lips. This is the time for us to get in touch with our deepest desires, which is not always too easy. What **do** I really want from life?

Ignatius encourages us to get in touch with these deepest desires because he believes that they all relate to our relationship with God. "Thou hast created us for thyself and our heart cannot be quieted till it find repose in thee" (St Augustine's Confessions Bk 1, ch 1). Our deepest desires are all part of that search for our ultimate satisfaction, which is entering into the relationship of love which exists between the persons of the Trinity. The grace we ask for in these days is 'to be able to open our hearts to God.' We pray for this because if we can always say to God, freely and trustingly, whatever is in our hearts, whether it be anger or gratitude then

we are well on the way to being a true friend of God, an intimate.

Putting our deepest desires to God is the core of our prayer. This is surely what Jesus means when he says 'Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For whoever asks always receives;' (Luke 11: 9). That which is deep within us, he wants ardently to give us because those wishes are part of our coming closer together. The only obstacles to God fulfilling those desires are within us. The biggest obstacle is our not knowing our desire and need. Once we realise our need and desire, then expressing it is a movement towards God - already a movement of love.

If this expression of our desire is the core of prayer, the part that matters most, then everything else in our prayer is a means to express this from our hearts. We use means only in as much as they help us. Whatever we don't need, we don't use. Sometimes we only have time just to pray the grace and that's fine; we have our prayer priorities right. Another time we may find ourselves able to stay with praying the grace through quite a long period of prayer; good, again our priorities are right. As we stay with the grace, we get more in touch with it and with our desires, our desires for God.

Tony Horan sj

*This leaflet has been called **TALKING TO THE PERSONS OF THE TRINITY** because it is to **persons** that we talk and with whom we form a friendship. We are children of the Father, invited to call him the affectionate Abba; Jesus, our brother, calls us his friends; the Holy Spirit, within us, enables us to be Christians and to form a relationship with the Father and the Son.*