**IMAGINATIVE PRAYER:**

**ABBA MOSES AND THE GOOD SAMARITAN**

**A SUGGESTED 30-MIN PRAYER GUIDE FOR RACIAL JUSTICE**

Below you will find centring prayer, story and a spiritual scripture-reading exercise. Use what you want at your own pace or follow the suggested timings. You may need a pen, notebook or paper, and Bible.

**CENTRING PRAYER [3 MIN]**

Get into a comfortable posture and pray:

*‘As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still, slow my breathing, and centre myself in the abiding presence of Christ’*

Bring your attention to your breath. Treat each breath in as an arrival. Breathe in God’s presence. As you breath out, imagine letting go of future worries and responsibilities to God. Become present.

Spend 2 minutes in silence. Breathe deeply.

**STORY // ABBA MOSES [5 MIN]**

*We were unable to secure a licensed image, please search online for “St Moses the Ethiopian of Secret” to see artwork of him.*

St Moses the Ethiopian of Secret began his journey as a hardened criminal, who was transformed when he sought refuge with a group of hermits in Petra while on the run after a raid. So deeply moved by the hermit’s life of devotion, Abba Moses gave up his former villainous life and joined the monastery. Moses’ renouncement of violence was put to the test when he was attacked by four robbers. He overpowered them and tied them up, but resolved to forgive and free the men, affirming the transformation from violent temperament to new-found piety.

“Abba Moses spent many years in solitary prayer trying to emulate the life of Christ and recognising that without the Holy Spirit’s help he could not be transformed.” (Calvert Prentis)

Abba Moses shows us that transformation is not easy: but true **repentance** is a work that requires a transformation from deep within and will flow out of us into our actions towards others.

**IGNATIAN IMAGINATIVE PRAYER [22 min]**

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, developed the idea of Imaginative Prayer in his Spiritual Exercises. Through imagination, daydreams and meditation, Ignatian Spirituality encourages those who practise it to “enter into the vision of God” – to see things from God’s perspective and take on God’s qualities of love, compassion and understanding. To read scripture through Imaginative Prayer is to place ourselves fully within a story from the Gospels; to become an onlooker-participant and give full rein to our imaginations.

Some people find imaginative prayer difficult. If this is you, be generous with yourself, pray as you’re able, and try not to force it.

**STEP ONE – SETTLE [2 MINS]**

Take a moment to find a comfortable position. Bring your attention back to your breath. Treat each moment as an arrival. Breathe in God’s presence. As you breath out, imagine letting go of future worries and responsibilities.

**STEP TWO – SCRIPTURE [5 MINS]**

When you are ready, read the Bible passage below either out loud or quietly to yourself. Read it over two or three times, until you feel familiar with the story.

**The Parable of the Good Samaritan:**

**25**On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

**26**“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

**27**He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’”

**28**“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

**29**But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”

**30**In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. **31**A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. **32**So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33**But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. **34**He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35**The next day he took out two denariiand gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

**36**“Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

**37**The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” - Luke 10:25-37 [NRSV]

**STEP THREE – SET THE SCENE [5 MINS]**

After you have read the passage a few times, close your eyes and begin to build the scene in your mind. Visualize it as if you were making a movie, painting a picture, or writing a novel – whatever is helpful for you! Pay attention to the details: what can you see, hear, taste, smell or feel?

Now place yourself within the scene. There may be a character that you feel that you relate to, or that provokes a response in you – perhaps you are the Samaritan, the lawyer, the man who was robbed, or perhaps even Jesus telling the story. Perhaps you are just placed in the story as an onlooker. The choice is yours! Whatever your role, spend a few moments settling into this role noticing and taking in your surroundings.

**STEP FOUR – STORY [5 MINS]**

When you are ready, begin to play out the scene. Don’t worry about getting all the details right. Lose yourself in the story. If imagination is difficult for you, you could also draw the scene or link it to a memory you already have and play that out in your head instead.

TIP: If you are worried that your imagination might be going “too far,” then ask God for some discernment about how you’re praying. Where did your imagination lead you: closer to God or further away? Did it bring you consolation or desolation?

**STEP FIVE - COLLOQUY [5 MINS]**

*‘’The colloquy is made, properly speaking, as one friend speaks to another, or as a servant to his master…” [54] Igantius, Spiritual Exercises*

If you are able, physically move into a different location. Wherever you end up, have a conversation with Jesus about what you encountered, as is talking to a friend. Talk about what you noticed, how you felt, your reactions and reflections, or any new understandings. You might consider journaling this conversation. Take however long you need for this stage.

**CLOSING BLESSING:**

God of transformation,

You call us out of darkness into your marvellous light to be like Christ and to share in your heavenly kingdom. Forgive us when we turn away from you towards our own desires.

By the power of your Holy Spirit, turn us:

From the limitation of our own experiences towards your eternal mercy.

*Forgive and restore us.*

From our egos and selfish inclinations towards your justice and righteousness.

*Forgive and restore us.*

From our own sense of entitlement towards stepping aside for others.

*Forgive and restore us.*

From our selfishness to love those most like us, towards everyone your love fully embraces.

*Forgive and restore us.*

From our propensity towards the violence and separation of hate towards your reconciling peace.

*Forgive and restore us.*

*Create in us a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us. Restore us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*