

GOSPEL CONTEMPLATION

Jesus went to a lonely place by Himself to pray.

- ✓ *Occasionally, we have to be alone with ourselves in solitude, in prayer and in reflection to recover ourselves and keep united with God.*
- ✓ *Even Jesus felt the need to be left alone with God his Father to spend time in prayer with Him.*

Introduction.

- Quite down. Breathing and relation exercises will help.
- Singing hymns and / or bhajans
- Opening prayer

Reading the texts below:

Mt 13:53-58

Mt 14: 1 – 23

Jn 6: 14 – 17

Background Notes on the Emotional Mood of Jesus” at that moment.

- a) Jesus had a hectic round of apostolic ministry. Glance over chapters 11, 12 and 13 of Matthew. *Jesus is tired.*
- b) On top of it, he has been rejected by his own town people at Nazareth (Mt 13:53 – 58). *Jesus is hurt and disappointed.*
- c) He has been informed of the death of his cousin, John the Baptist (Mt 14: 1 – 13). *Jesus is sad and heart-broken*
- d) It was too much for him to bear. What will Jesus do? He did the most sensible thing: He withdrew for a while from the crowds to be alone. (Mt 14:13). “He left the place in a boat and went to a lonely place by himself

Further Happenings

- People wouldn’t leave him alone. They stuck to his back! (Mt 14: 13 – 14) It’s not easy to tear oneself from the crowd, from the people!
- For the sake of the poor and the sick, he gave in for a little while his desire to be alone. . (Mt 14: 14 – 21) He preached to them and satisfied their needs
- Soon afterwards the people wanted to force him to do something he did not like; (Jn 6: 14 – 15) They wanted him to be their “king”, to play a role
- That was too much for Jesus. He put his foot down and took control of the situation
(Mt. 14:22). First, he forced his disciples to get into the boat and sent them away (Mt 14: 22-23) Next, he dismissed the crowds as well.

Jesus’ Next Moves

(Mt 14: 23). He went up a hill all by himself. He remained alone there till late evening.

(Jn 6: 17) When night came, Jesus Jess was still there alone.
 9Mt 14: 23) All the while Jesus was praying

Active Contemplation

- Imagine that you are one of the disciples...
- Make yourself present to all the events found in the Gospel texts
- See what's happening...
- Listen to all that is spoken...
- Talk with the crowds... with the disciples... with Jesus...
- What's Jesus doing?
- How is he feeling?
- What lessons Jesus teaches you from these events of his life?
- When you are sad, disappointed, tired, hurting and heart-broken what do you do?
- Have you ever, in those sad moments, retired to a lonely place to pray?
- What effects had that prayer in your life?
- How can you imitate Jesus in future?
- For a while, write down any insights and feelings you experienced during this contemplation.

Optional Suggestion:

If you conduct this exercise for a group you may invite the participants to a sharing of reflections and feelings.

- Everybody will be invited to share his feelings and insights with the group members.
- Encourage them to pray for one another. You may follow this method.
 - ✓ The one on the right and on the left side of any participant will pray aloud and spontaneously for him, then the next and next.
 - ✓ Finally, anyone in the group wishing to pray for one in particular, may do so.

