

Guided Meditation: The Apostolate of Prayer

Excerpt

Christians, whatever place they occupy in the Church, are basically human, with problems as well as potential, but it is more than a human response that God asks of us, in the sense that we can never respond to the needs of others entirely in our own resources. It is through the indwelling of Christ in our hearts, the contemplative path to action, that our human response is made in co-operation with God [Godself]. We cannot *do* Christianity, we can *be* Christians, and it is from our individual relationships with God that our doing should arise. It is the enabling power of the Holy Spirit which draws from our human raw material the apostolic response.

p55f, *Encountering the Depths*

-oOo-

Meditation

Take up a posture that is comfortable and close your eyes.

Now become aware of your breathing. Become aware of the air as it enters and leaves your nostrils . . . Not as it enters your lungs, just as it passes through your nostrils . . .

Do not control your breathing. Do not try to deepen it or change its rhythm. Simply observe your breathing, in and out, in and out . . .

I'm going to read the passage slowly [once/twice].

Don't prejudge the passage and what you think you will find in it. The text is a gift to be received. Ask the Spirit to speak through the passage.

Let a word or short phrase wink at you.

Stay with the word, repeat it to yourself, relish it, let it sink in to your heart.

[read passage once, or twice with short intervening pause]

Continue to chew over the word or phrase that the Spirit has revealed to you . . .

What is it saying to you? It doesn't matter if it is out of the passage's context. Why has it snagged your attention now? . . .

Now address your ponderings to God.

You might have questions you want to ask. You might want to challenge God.

Or you might want to thank God, or to say sorry, or to say yes.

Offer to God whatever is in your heart . . .

Allow God to respond . . .

Now simply rest in God's presence, filled with God's grace . . .
If you become distracted, return to your breathing or to the word.
Stay in loving silence before God . . .

Now return gradually to an awareness of your breathing and your posture . . .
When you are ready, open your eyes.

-oOo-

Notes

This is one of a series of meditations responding to *Encountering the Depths* by Mother Mary Clare SLG, one of the books which the Slow Book Group at Exeter Cathedral has been reading. The book is divided into five chapters, for reflection over the five months May, June, July, September and October 2023, with a final session in November considering the whole book. The title of Chapter 4 is "The Apostolate of Prayer".

The style of the meditation is based on the ancient monastic practice of *Lectio Divina*. It is a different approach to the [Shared Lectio Divina](#) that I hold weekly on Zoom, albeit also for use in groups.

Clare Bryden
28 September 2023