

.Four

Confused by intimacy :: trust as darkness falls

Awaken me to your presence
Alert me to your love,
Affirm me in your peace.

Open to me your way
Reveal to me your joy,
Enfold me in your warmth.

For my heart is ready,
Holy One, my heart is ready.

...

As I enter into prayer today, I am settled and still, ready and waiting.
I attend to my breathing and speak to God:
Holy (in-breath) One (out-breath), Holy ... One Holy ...One ...
I gently surrender any distracting thoughts. ... silence.

.....

From Psalm 107

When they are diminished and brought low
through oppression, trouble, and sorrow,
⁴⁰ he pours contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes;
⁴¹ but he raises up the needy out of distress, and makes their families like flocks.
⁴² The upright see it and are glad; and all wickedness stops its mouth.
⁴³ Let those who are wise give heed to these things,
and consider the steadfast love of the LORD.

a personal issue:

how do I respond to invitations to intimacy?

With fear ? fear of losing control; .. of being hurt; .. of looking foolish; fear of
being exposed and vulnerable ...

when darkness falls, figuratively, in my life,
what happens to my inner self?

Lord, you invite us to join your journey with ours. Help me to make
sense of my life through yours. Let this image become a step towards
our mutual fulfilment in love. Lord Jesus, show me the way. AMEN

... the sacred gaze

Gaze at the image. Let go of other images in and around you.

Invite God alongside to join your gazing.

Whenever your attention strays, quietly return to the image.

Notice the colours, lines, forms and possible texture. Where is the movement, the stillness? the opposites, the contrasts?

Continue to gaze.

Notice the details – what is the artist conveying?
Any surprises?

Allow your eyes to rove over the entire image – each corner, each side. Let go of some parts and let your gaze rest on another.

Let God nudge you.

as darkness falls : John 13.1-17



Stay with what most 'affects' you or invites you. Let it deeply enter your awareness.

Let what draws you most in the image be 'laid bare' for God to enter.

Let your 'real self' make conversation with the 'real God'.

Take your time.

When you are ready, gently withdraw from the image...

Take a breath – and relax.

A prayer for all good gifts

Jesus, giver of all good gifts
On this barefoot journey
I stand in constant need of foot-washing
Carrying your promise in my heart
Pilgrim that I am, I plead for help along the way:

For the gift of vision
that I may see with heaven's eyes
So that people will be safe in my presence
Give me your *vision*.

For the gift of conviction
That I become the song of the gospel
Your Word made flesh in me.
Give me your *conviction*.

For the gift of poverty
That I may be at home with emptiness,
A willing space for God.
Give me your *poverty*.

For the gift of stability
That I may be able to stay with the gospel
In times of discouragement.
Give me your *stability*.

For the gift of hope
That I may stand on tiptoe with the whole world
Waiting for rebirth, growth, completion.
Give me your *hope*.

For the gift of reverence
That I may hold sacred the gift of each person.
Ever proclaiming the value of all creation.
Give me your *reverence*.

Finally I pray for the grace
To recognize each gift as it is given,
Receive it as a gift and acknowledge it
as mine to give away.
Give me your own *self-giving*.

Reflection

Where – perhaps – in this image has God visited me? How has the image helped me to hold before God some aspect of the self that is me? What has begun to be known? What has become visible? What do I need to revisit?

What is stirring in me as I pray? Am I consoled, troubled, left cold?

I imagine Jesus himself kneeling or sitting at my side, and share my feelings with him.

Response

You may wish to respond with simple art materials spontaneously – using colour, line, form, texture, light and shadow...



Make your own rough sketch of the image.

Write in your journal.

What happened a few weeks later?

Acts 3.1-16 & Acts 4 .1-13 show us Peter transformed. His intimate encounters with Jesus – as darkness falls, as morning dawns - call forth honesty and courage.

...

Rest

Sit quietly with God, at rest in the presence of the One who loves you. Let the image and its message move from your head to your heart to dwell there in peace-full silence.

May the gentleness and strength of the Holy One

The delight and vulnerability of thy Way of Christ

And the graceful mystery of the life-giving Spirit

Be with you now and always.

AMEN