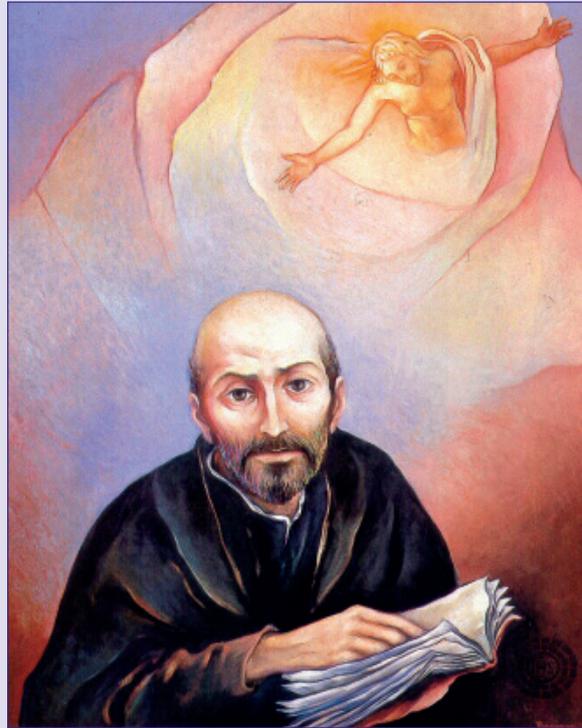


STEPPING STONES

AN IGNATIAN PATTERN OF PRAYER

- ◆ Preparation – decide where and for how long you will pray. Read the passage (where relevant) and then, when you're ready, go to the place of prayer.
- ◆ God is looking at you with love – before taking up your prayer posture, pause, remembering that God is already there, is delighted that you have come and is looking at you with love. Stay for a minute noticing how God is looking at you.
- ◆ Become still – take up the prayer position of your choice and become still, noticing how you breathe in and how you breathe out. Don't try to change it, just notice it. If you start to think of other things, don't worry – simply come back to noticing your breathing again: each breath filling you with God's life and love.
- ◆ Offering – make a very slow sign of the Cross and offer this time of prayer to God. God is the one in charge of your prayer; God is the one who leads. Ask God to guide your prayer that this time of prayer may be to the service and praise of God.
- ◆ The Grace – God wants to give us everything that is good. We can tell God that we want this too. As we start to pray, we can imagine God asking us, 'What is it that you want? What would you like me to do for you?' And we can tell God what is in our hearts.
- ◆ Prayer – now start the prayer you have chosen – maybe imagining being in a Gospel story or trying one of the other ways of praying.
- ◆ Speak – with, and listen to God, as one friend would speak with and listen to another: heart to heart.
- ◆ Finish – bring your prayer together, and in the light of what has happened, make a simple prayer from your heart to God, speaking in your own words. Say an 'Our Father' or 'Glory be'.
- ◆ Make a slow sign of the Cross – leave the place where you have been praying, thanking God for the time He has been with you.



Looking Forward

It is a good idea to have a little break before writing a few notes about what happened in the prayer. You might keep a journal. What did I ask God to do for me in this prayer? What seemed to take me towards God? Was there anything that was difficult? Is there anything that it might be good to look at again?