

Mourning at Jesus' Tomb (John 19:38-42)

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Guidelines: Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts.

Ignatian Meditation Process: Ignatius chose this Gospel reading for Week 3 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then "Ask for the grace". Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what's going on. Don't analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a "colloquy" (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

Introduction: After Jesus died two Pharisees, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who had been secret followers of the Lord, took his body down from the cross. Grieving his death, they cared for him and gave him a proper burial. (Luke indicates there was also a group of women disciples attending to Jesus' body. Surely this included his dear mother Mary.) Seeing how their chief priests and leaders had brutally persecuted, abused, and crucified Jesus and how he'd responded with forgiveness, prayers, and love caused them to now become open and bold followers of Jesus as their Messiah and Lord. In doing so they gave up their privileged careers and status. Apparently Joseph also gave to Jesus his own garden tomb that he'd purchased for himself.

Ask For the Grace: Jesus, my Lord and Savior, I ask for the grace I desire: To sorrow with you, to be broken with you, to cry with you, and to suffer internally with you — doing this with gratitude for the great suffering you endured to obtain God's mercy for me.

Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: John 19 (MSG)

38 After all this, Joseph of Arimathea (he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, because he was intimidated by the Jews) petitioned Pilate to take the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission. So Joseph came and took the body.

39-42 Nicodemus, who had first come to Jesus at night, came now in broad daylight carrying a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. They took Jesus' body and, following the Jewish burial custom, wrapped it in linen with the spices. There was a garden near the place he was crucified, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been placed. So, because it was Sabbath preparation for the Jews and the tomb was convenient, they placed Jesus in it.

1st Reading: Visualize yourself in the Gospel story. Don't seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with or are you a bystander?

2nd Reading: Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?