

+ Desires of the Heart: Themes of Ignatian Spirituality +

ART & IMAGINATION

Praying with our senses

BACKGROUND

During St Ignatius' pilgrimage to the Holy Land he stopped in Manresa, Spain in 1522. There he spent ten months praying and working in a hospital. It was on the banks of the river Cardoner that Ignatius was overcome by one of the most powerful visions of his life. He had experienced the very presence of God and received a divine insight and understanding of supernatural mysteries that cannot be explained: He realised God's presence could be found in all things and wasn't confined just to buildings, rituals, or formulaic prayers.

During recovery from his injury at the Battle of Pamplona he daydreamed about being a valiant knight and also being a saint battling for Christ. This idea of imagination and finding God in all things, including our senses, is incorporated into the Spiritual Exercises.

- ❖ Use a gospel passage and place yourself in the scene. Hit play to see what happens. What is the environment like? How do your five senses respond? Do you observe or interact with others in the story?
- ❖ Look at some artwork. Is there a feature that strikes you? Does it evoke a certain emotion or thought? What does it reveal about God and your life?

RESOURCES

prayerwindows.com - A resource from Bob Gilroy, SJ on praying with art as well as creative prayer exercises using your imagination

onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Imagination/ -

Beautiful imaginative contemplations using gospel scenes

picturinggod.ignatianspirituality.com



Albrecht Dürer, The Flight into Egypt

*"...the eyes of his understanding began to be opened."
- St Ignatius, Autobiography*