

Call of the King – a prayerful meditation

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The call of the King is a meditation in *The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola* that has meant a lot to me personally. It focuses on the leadership of Jesus in the world, right now, today. Specifically, it focuses on Jesus' invitation to you and me to partner with Him in working toward the completion of the work He began on earth. On these two pages, allow me to walk you through the meditation process in general and the meditation of the Call.

Step One

We begin by placing ourselves in God's presence. One way to do this is to close our eyes, relax our bodies, and monitor our breathing. As we focus on our breathing, recall that breath points to God's presence within us.

The Book of Genesis says, "The Lord God...formed a man... he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live." Genesis 2:7 (TEV) Breathing also points to the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. Jesus said to his disciples, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." John 20:21-22

If God makes his presence felt (for example, if we feel deeper inner tranquility and peace) we do not move on. We simply remain in a posture of openness and silent communication with God as long as it lasts. Trying to make ourselves feel God's presence, however, is almost always wrong. Feeling God's presence is a gift. If God wishes to give it to us, He will. Our role is to keep our mind and heart open to God's will.

We conclude the first step with this prayer of presence:

*Father, you created me and put me on earth for a purpose.
Jesus, you died for me and called me to complete your work.
Holy Spirit, you help me carry out the work for which I was created and called.
In your presence and name—Father, Son, and Spirit—*

I begin my meditation. May all my thoughts and inspirations have their origin in you and be directed to your glory.

Step Two

This step involves setting the mood for meditation and asking for the grace we seek through it.

Jesus differs from other leaders in history. Other leaders can only fire our emotions and excite our imaginations. They cannot transfuse us with their own spirit. They cannot reach inside themselves and give us a portion of their own power and strength.

Jesus, on the other hand, can do this. He can put his spirit inside us. He can share his power with us. He can enter our minds and our hearts and help us do what we could never do alone. This brings us to the grace we ask for in our meditation.

Lord, enlighten my mind to see how you differ from other leaders and move my heart to

desire more and more to partner with you in carrying out the work you began on earth.

Step Three

This step involves the meditation proper. It has three parts.

One

We begin by recalling these words of Jesus: “If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget himself, carry the cross, and follow me.” Matthew 16:24

Next, we ask ourselves this question: “To what extent am I open to the challenge these words set before me?” After thinking about the challenge from every angle, we speak to Jesus about our feelings, and then conclude by listening in the depths of each of our hearts to however Jesus might wish to respond.

Two

This part touches on the motivation and inspiration we need to accept Jesus’ challenge. Paul writes to the Philippians: “You must shine among the people of your day like stars lighting up the sky.”

We set the mood for this part of our meditation by recalling the moving conversation in Alan Paton’s book *Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful* - “When I get up there, the great judge will say, ‘Where are your scars?’ And if I haven’t any, he will ask, ‘Were there no causes worthy of getting scars?’”

We take to heart that provocative question. After thinking about it for awhile, we speak to Jesus about our feelings. Again, we conclude by listening in the depths of our hearts to what Jesus may want to say to us.

Three

“Many of Jesus’s followers turned back and would not go with Him any more. So He asked the twelve disciples, ‘And you—would you also like to leave?’” John 6:66–67

In a way Jesus is singing today in the darkness of our world:

Is anyone out there?

Does anyone care?

Does anyone see what I see?

I end my meditation by speaking to Jesus about how I can become more involved with Him working for the completion of the work He began on earth.