

# “CHANGING MINDS....CHANGING HEARTS”

Easter to Pentecost, 2019

## *Participant's Guide*



Welcome to “*Changing Minds, Changing Hearts*”. Thank you very much for participating.

The creators of “*Changing Minds, Changing Hearts*” hope that you will find the program gives you a chance to think and pray about some aspects of your life both in general and as a follower of Jesus in particular. It may even find some application more widely in your local Church community.

It would be excellent if you were able to take part in all seven meetings but, if you can't, you'll be able to join the group whenever you are able.

Each week's gathering will last between 60 and 90 minutes and will follow the steps outlined below.

### **Structure of Gatherings**

1. Consciously **gathering as a group** and joining in an opening prayer.
2. **Thinking in silence** about some questions based on the kinds of lives most people live.
3. Approaching the theme of the questions from a “**faith angle**”. To do this we use the gospel extracts read at Mass on Sunday. This includes both reflective reading of the passage from Scripture and time for personal reflection. A section called “**Some Other Thoughts**” about the reading is also offered. When invited, you may share some thoughts with the group about what is in your heart and mind. This sharing is not compulsory. Neither you, nor anyone else, should feel any pressure to share their thoughts. It's very important to remember that if sharing of reflection takes place, it happens in an atmosphere of respectful listening. These gatherings are not settings for theological debate.
4. Having reflected in the light of faith we are then asked one or two questions about how our encounter with the Word of God might affect our **future lives**.
5. We conclude by joining in **prayer** together

## Praying with Scripture

Some of the group's time together each week will be spent prayerfully engaging with a passage from the gospels.

You may already have a way of doing that which works for you.

If not, you may like to try the following two ways. Don't try to use them both together.

The descriptions of both methods are adapted from "Methods of Praying with the Scriptures" by Felix Just SJ, are available at <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Prayer-Methods.htm>

The text of "Changing Minds, Changing Hearts" was prepared by Gerard Hore.

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Used in the preparation were Francis J. Moloney SDB, *The Gospel of John*, Volume 4 in "Sacra Pagina" series (D.J.Harrington sj, Ed), Collegeville USA, 1998; ICEL/United States Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Shorter Book of Blessings*, New York, 1990.

## Ignatian Method – developed by St Ignatius of Loyola in the sixteenth century

This method is especially appropriate for scenes from the Gospels, but also possible with other biblical narratives.

1. **Begin:** consider how God looks upon you and loves you; become aware of being in God's presence...
2. **Preparatory Prayer:** offer to God all your will and actions, especially in this time of prayer;  
ask God for a specific grace that you need and desire right now (peace, consolation, hope, etc.).
3. **Contemplate the Biblical Story** that you have selected:
  - **Read** the text slowly and carefully; recall what it is about; then let it come alive for you!
  - **Place yourself inside** the story, using your imagination; become one of the characters in the scene.
  - **Participate** in the dynamics of the scene, dialoguing & interacting with Jesus and other characters.
  - **Observe** what is going on around you in the scene: What do you see, hear, feel, smell, taste, touch?
  - **Dialogue** with the other characters: What do they say or ask you? What do you say or ask them in reply?
  - **Notice** what is going on *inside you* as you pray: joy, sorrow, peace, confusion, love, anger, etc.
  - If you get *distracted* or your mind wanders, gently *return to the biblical text* and re-enter the scene.
4. **Colloquy:** enter into a short personal conversation with Jesus (or God the Father, or the Holy Spirit); speak heart-to-heart, as if conversing with a close friend.
5. **Closing Prayer:** conclude by praying the Our Father, Hail Mary, or another familiar/favourite prayer; you might stand, kneel, bow, raise your hands, or adopt another posture to mark the end of your prayer.

Afterward, briefly **review** what you experienced during this time of prayer (maybe *journal* about what happened) and **look forward** to your next prayerful encounter with God (when? where? which biblical text will you use?).



<https://www.jesuit.ie/who-are-the-jesuits/inspirational-jesuits/saint-ignatius-loyola/>

## **Lectio Divina (Holy Reading) – a part of the Church’s life for about 1500 years.**

Usually in Lectio Divina, one takes only a small part of the reading and makes it the subject of the rest of the time of prayer. That section may be as small as one Biblical verse, one sentence, even a single phrase. Which small section do I choose? Whichever you like; whichever grabs your attention, maybe for reasons you couldn’t explain. Once you have made the choice, stick with it.

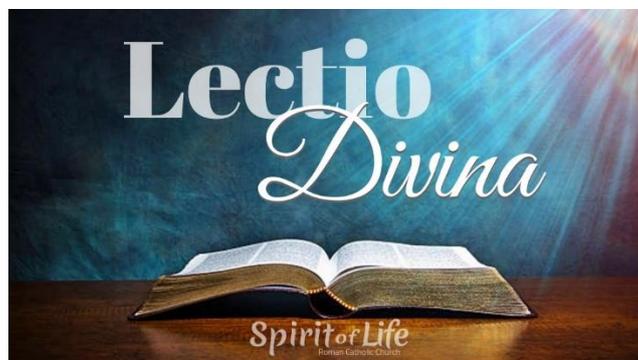
1. **Reading** (*lectio*) – hear or read the word of God. It should be read more slowly than normal.
  - What does the biblical text say?

Now, make your choice of a small part of the text to be the sustaining “spiritual cud” on which you chew in the rest of this Lectio.

Reread that section often, slowly, as you engage in the Lectio.

Don’t worry if you find you have been distracted. That’s perfectly normal. Return to the process by rereading your small piece of Scripture.

2. **Meditation** (*meditatio*) – reflecting on the meaning of the text that I have read
  - What is God saying to me through this text?
3. **Prayer** (*oratio*) – speaking with God in praise, thanksgiving, contrition, and petition
  - What do I say to God in response to this text?
4. **Contemplation** (*contemplatio*) – listening to God more quietly in the silence of our hearts
  - How does this text make me feel in my/our relationship with God?
5. **Action** (*actio*) – letting the encounter concretely affect our daily life and work in the world
  - How will I change what I do today in response to hearing this text?



<http://www.myspiritoflife.com/links/lectio-divina/>