

LETTING GO IN THE LOVING HEART OF JESUS

Guidelines for *LETTING GO IN THE LOVING HEART OF JESUS*

In Companionship Prayer™, once we begin to feel Jesus' loving presence it is important to pause, to stop, and to allow yourself to really notice how it feels to be with our prayer subject in this gentle, faith-filled way. Staying with how that feels in our body, we accept and let go into the overall experience of our prayer issue as we embrace it within the faith and love of Jesus.

In this part of the prayer we continue to be open to God's grace as we notice how it feels to be with our prayer subject within the gentle presence of our Lord, within the sacred heart of Jesus. We remain open to his love, knowing he continues to be personally with us and our prayer subject as we pray. Staying with how this feels in our body, we let go into how all that feels inside. There is no analysis here. The letting go is not letting go into critical thinking or meditations on meaning. Likewise, it is not letting go into emotional "what ifs" or emotional reactions.

We wait in faith, in God's presence. We wait without demands, without an agenda. We wait receptively, being open to the Holy Spirit, for some special movement, symbol or sense that somehow feels connected or related to our prayer subject; somehow connected to how we are all feeling inside. We wait to notice an image, or a word, or feeling, or memory that feels somehow different from our other thoughts and feelings. When it comes it may carry some personal meaning for us, or just as frequently there will be no clear meaning. The connection may not be obvious. It may not even make any sense. It just seems or feels connected. In any case, once we recognize the symbol, we do not try to define its relevance. In some cases we may not even recognize what it is. We do not try to define it or try to explore its meaning. We just know that it is our symbol, and we let our companion know that something has come.

In this prayer movement it is important to allow time for symbols and subjects to form; to allow time to notice; and in due course to allow time to nurture. So give yourself plenty of time for all this. Linger; do not rush. Give yourself the time to notice God quietly working within you. Be open to your prayer subject changing, or shifting to a new symbol or to new awareness.

Sometimes we wait and it feels like nothing is coming. We might become bored or impatient. Or we might feel we are wasting our companion's time. Or we might be embarrassed that nothing is happening. When any of this happens, it is important to let our companion know the situation. Just keep the eyes closed and tell your companion what is going on. If you feel some frustration or performance anxiety about it, let your companion know about that too. Then he or she can make suggestions or ask you questions that might facilitate your prayer experience. You might be asked to go back to the body feeling of your prayer subject. Or you might be asked to just notice the body feeling of nothing happening. Even within that, God can call us forward.

Be assured that this contemplative prayer is not a performance-based exercise. Success is not measured by what comes. There is no right or wrong experience. Our companion knows that.

Our companion has no expectations for us. It's a prayer of just being present and open within God's loving compassion and then seeing if anything comes. We are powerless to make anything happen. Our companion is also powerless to make anything happen. We can only place ourselves in an attitude of gentle faith in God's care, being honest within ourselves, and receptive to his word. That is the prayer. Beyond surrendering into that trust, we can do nothing.

Sometimes our prayer subject might feel particularly intense. This can be the case whether our prayer subject is positive or challenging. When it dominates our attention, it is important to give ourselves plenty of time to be with it as we wait for anything else to possibly come. It may take a while for it to subside enough for us to be able to begin to notice any new subtleties or symbols that might come forth. So, in Jesus' loving heart we wait with gentleness, faith and patience, knowing that Jesus is with us, holding us in his love.

If something does come, when we recognize that a symbol is present, we can let our companion know that something has come by just saying, "Okay." Or if we want to, we can briefly share something of our symbol, for example just a word or two that seems closest to what it is.