

Contemplating Together: A Guide

By Micah Singapore



Introduction

For many of us privileged to be working from home during this Circuit Breaker period, we may have lost a sense of time, rhythm and boundaries.

We thought it would be restful but we are only more restless.

We need to intentionally redeem our time. We need a chapel in time.

Some of us at Micah Singapore embarked on a journey together to recreate a rhythm to each day through a silent 'mid-day contemplation'.

We set aside 30 minutes each day to gather as a community on an online platform to be quiet, to reflect and meditate on the things of God, and to intently listen for His voice.

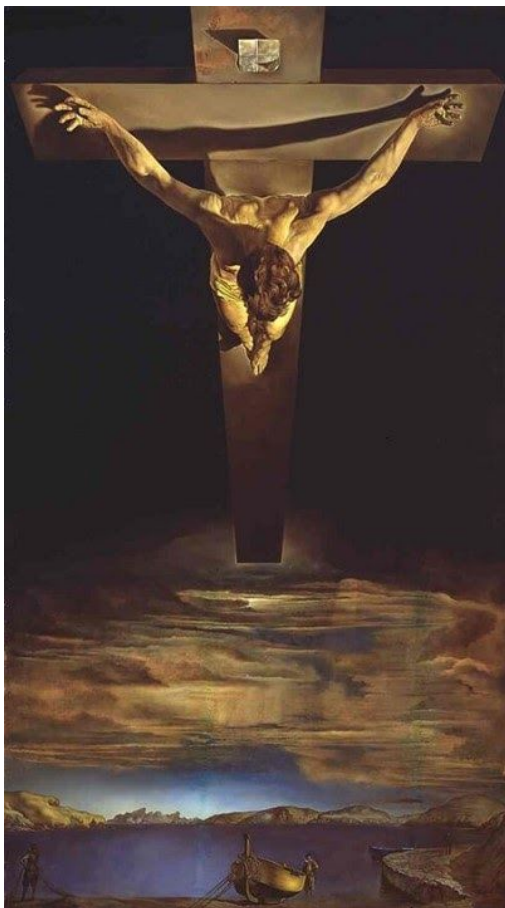
Many of us have been refreshed by this spiritual practice in community.

"Attending Contemplations during Holy Week while being quarantined in a hotel room, was encouraging for me, as we considered the suffering of Christ and its significance together with the wider Body of the Singapore church." - Joyce.

"I thought all [the other] prayers were 'better' than mine, meaning that I learned from reading your prayers." - Kiem.

We want to share this practice with others.

So, we've put together this guide for churches & small groups to do the same.



Painting: Christ of St John of the Cross by Salvador Dali

Listen to: Seven Magnificat Antiphons, Part 7 - O Immanuel by Arvo Part

Lyrics (translated from German):
O Immanuel, our King and Teacher,
Hope and Saviour of the peoples:
Come, hurry and help us,
You our Lord and our God.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyN3odie4Z0>

or

<https://open.spotify.com/track/7hF3AX5iXv6BkUWSA0YSLs?si=sARZ5uN1Q6e9hpsfubvOSw>

(links in chat)

Contemplating together virtually

When:

- Daily or certain days a week
- 1.30pm - 2pm (or at any other time feasible for your small group, e.g. 9.30pm - 10pm)

Who:

- Churches, parachurch ministries, small groups, families, colleagues, leadership circles
- Try to keep participation to a 'by-invite only' basis, open to personal contacts for security reasons and to foster the sense of community.
- [Suggestion: Try to keep it to less than 12 people if possible]

How:

- Decide a fixed period of time to attempt this practice (i.e. it can be daily or Monday-Friday for a full week, or once a week for four weeks, whichever suits your group best).
- Roster a meditation leader for each day for your group of participants.
- Participants will log-in to the video conference room at the set time.

- The meditation leader will offer participants a prompt to silently reflect on it. It can be in the form of a passage of scripture, a poem, song, piece of art, or a combination of the same (see examples/illustrations in annex).
- At the end of the 30 minutes, participants will leave a written prayer in the video conference room chat.
- Participants may stay to chat with one another or leave to return to their day after the 30 minutes.
- [Suggestion: Keep a record of the prayers that have been written/prayer, to chart your journey together and continue to reflect on them together/keep the conversation ongoing]

Examples / Illustrations

'Behold, the Lamb of God'

John 1:29-38

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." ³² And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'" ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

Isaiah 53:1-7

Who has believed what he has heard from us?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² For he grew up before him like a young plant,

and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,

and no beauty that we should desire him.

³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

and as one from whom men hide their faces

he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;

yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,

and with his wounds we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;

and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth;

like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,

so he opened not his mouth.



Francisco de Zurbarán's 'Agnus Dei'

Lamb of God

Your only Son no sin to hide
But You have sent Him from Your side
To walk upon this guilty sod
And to become the Lamb of God

Your gift of love they crucified
They laughed and scorned Him as he died
The humble King they named a fraud
And sacrificed the Lamb of God

Oh Lamb of God, Sweet lamb of God
I love the Holy Lamb of God
Oh wash me in His precious Blood
My Jesus Christ the Lamb of God

I was so lost I should have died
But You have brought me to Your side
To be led by Your staff and rod
And to be called a lamb of God

Suitable online Platforms

- [Zoom](#). Articles on conducting secure Zoom meetings: [Wired.com](#), [uMich.edu](#), [Zoom](#).
- [Google Hangouts/Meets](#)
- Cisco WebEx
- Skype

Get in touch

To find out more about how this may be done, or to learn from our experience, email thejusticedemand@gmail.com

*“How lovely is your dwelling place,
LORD Almighty!
My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh cry out
for the living God...*

*...Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere...”
(Psalm 84)*

Shalom,
Micah Singapore