

# The two sons sent to the vineyard

Andreï Mironov, 2012  
Oil on canvas, 70 x 100 cm  
Private collection (Wikimedia)



Matthew 21:28-32 | 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time (A)

The subject of our meditation is a painting by a self-taught Russian painter. The artist cleverly portrays a parable Jesus presents to the people, directed at the religious leaders who are questioning his authority.

A *Visio Divina* is an invitation to open ourselves to God, in stillness and silence, listening to the Gospel story and prayerfully observing an image, attentive to what God may want to reveal to us.

You will be guided through some questions during the meditation, and you are invited to jot down your thoughts as you go along.

We begin by entering into a movement of interior silence. I invite you to close your eyes and sit with your back straight, feet flat on the floor, hands placed gently in your lap, if you can. This is a posture of attentiveness, of waiting in expectation, of responding to God's invitation to intimacy.

I now invite you to take three deep breaths, to find the rhythm of your breathing.

As we begin, I invite you to focus on your inbreath and on your outbreath, becoming aware of your breathing in and breathing out. This is a practice that brings us into the present moment, where God dwells. We will take 60 seconds to practice becoming aware of our breathing.

Set a timer for 60 seconds.

As your awareness of your inbreath and outbreath begins to come into focus, we invite the Holy Spirit to be our guide:

*Holy Spirit, we invite you to be present to us, to open the eyes and ears of our heart, as we listen attentively to what the Lord wants to reveal to us during this time of prayer.*

On your inbreath say to yourself Holy and on your outbreath Spirit, we will do this for 60 seconds.

## VISIO

Observe a "reading" of the painting and scripture. Read each comment or question slowly, allowing at least 10-20 seconds between each one. Follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

I now invite you to open your eyes and gaze at the image before you. Let your eyes scan the whole image.

Notice the entire composition... The colors... The characters... What stands out for you? How do you feel looking at this image?

This is the time for a non-judgmental observation of the image and of yourself. Notice if there is a place in the image where your eye is invited to linger...

Let us now close our eyes to listen to the Gospel story as if hearing it for the first time.

Read the scripture passage, or ask one of the participants to proclaim the text very slowly (to promote internalization).

Now I invite you to open your eyes and look at the image again.

Allow a moment 60 seconds, of silence before continuing...

Notice the colors, the postures, the attitudes of the characters... Look for symbols... Notice how the artist has portrayed each of these characters... Notice the window in the top corner of the painting....

## MEDITATIO

Meditate, pondering its meaning. Read each comment or question slowly, allowing at least 10-20 seconds between each one. Follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Again, gently notice the feelings, thoughts, memories, reactions that are rising within you? What jumps out at you? What draws you in? What stirs within you? Is there a place in the image that your eye avoids looking? How might you describe this image? How might you describe how you feel looking at this image? What might you be wondering about as you gaze at this image? What might God be saying to you?

## ORATIO

Pray responding with commitment and fidelity. Read each comment or question slowly, allowing at least 10-20 seconds between each one. Follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

As you look at the image a final time, ask the Lord if there is anything you missed... Let your eyes gaze over the image and see if anything new stands out... Ask that the Lord speak clearly to you... What might God be trying to communicate to me today through this image? What dialogue is the Lord trying to establish with me? How might a part of my relationship with God be revealed to me through this time of prayer?

## CONTEMPLATIO

Contemplate: resting in God with confidence and faith. Let us respond in silence to the invitation of the Father who welcomes our prayer. I invite you in silence to stay with what you have received; we will rest in silence for 3 minutes.

Invite participants to share in small groups of not more than four people. Depending on the time allotted for sharing, instruct each participant to share the time equally.

Our relationship with God is nourished by moments when we take the time to savor God's life-giving presence without trying to fill the silence with words. Let us turn to God, and learn to see with God's eyes, and allow ourselves be transformed by His Word. Let us savor the calm of the moment and let us be lulled by God's unconditional Love.

## Final prayer

*There is often a gap, Lord, between my intentions and my behaviors. Even if the work of your vineyard is often demanding, teach me to respond to your call to contribute, together with others, to the coming of your Kingdom. Amen.*

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