

# Meditation for Closer

Can I invite you to take a moment, perhaps close your eyes.

Still your body.

Slow and steady your breathing. In... and out... in... and out...

Our days are full of so many things that can weigh heavy on our hearts and minds. Take a moment to tightly clench your fists with the worries of the day... and then, in your own time, release your grip as you allow the worry and strain to disperse for a moment.

Try that again.

Clench your fists with the worries of your day... and in your own time allow them to dissipate with the releasing of your grip.

And now, opening and relaxing your hands - whisper in your heart -

Come Holy Spirit.

Come Holy Spirit.

As your breath in... Come Holy Spirit.

You should have received a rose as you arrived, staying in the prayerful quiet, hold the rose in front of you.

Take a moment to look at it. To notice it.

Notice the depth of red colour.

In Isaiah God says, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Ask the Lord to search your heart... is there anything today, thought, word, deed, that you need to bring to him?

You may want to use the words of the psalmist "search me o God and know my heart... test me and know my thoughts..."

"search me o God and know my heart... test me and know my thoughts...";

"search me o God and know my heart... test me and know my thoughts...";

As you bring those things to the Lord, know that it is at the cross that He makes us white like snow.

Return your attention to the rose.



Take a moment to smell it, breathing in the sweet fragrance.

Psalm 119 says:

“How sweet are your words to my taste O God,  
sweeter than honey to my mouth!”

Consider the bitter sweetness of Jesus’ words on the cross - “It is finished” - the conquering of sin and death - it is finished. Spoken over our sin, over our guilt, over our shame, our brokenness - “it is finished”; the sweetest and most costly of words.

It is finished.

The well-known hymn puts it well - “When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within, upward I look and see him there, who made an end to all my sin”

It is finished.

Allow the sweetness of those three words to mingle with the fragrance of the rose and overwhelm any whisps of guilt or shame or condemnation you are carrying.

Return your attention to the rose.

Take a moment to feel the softness of the petals.

Consider the gentleness of God towards you.

The Bible says “while we were still sinners - Christ died for us” When we were undeserving, and disinterested, while we were still far away - he came towards us not in anger but in gentleness - like the father who runs to embrace the prodigal son - hold that image in your mind’s eye for a moment. Picture yourself as that son, as that daughter, the underserving and yet deeply grateful beneficiary of this Good Father’s embrace.

There is a beautiful line in Psalm 118, “your gentleness has made me great...” David writes this looking back on his life realizing that God was a patient and loving teacher even when he made heavy work of things....

“your gentleness has made me great...”

Ask the Lord to show you, moments in your own story where he has been gently at work in you.... allow those memories to bloom into whispered words of quiet gratitude.

For the final time, return your attention to the rose –

take a moment to consider it as gift – a symbol of love, it is, after all, often why roses are given...



Imagine the Father giving you this rose – a token of his love – what might he say?

Now imagine yourself giving him this rose– a token of your love – what might you say?

We thankyou Father, that as the scriptures say, “we love you because you first loved us”. Move us, by you Spirit this evening, to profound gratitude and deep love as we consider, on this Maundy Thursday, the costly love with which you have loved us. May this rose be to us, a picture of two loves; of your very great initiating love and ours - freely and gladly given in response.”

Amen

