



DIOCESE OF ABERDEEN & ORKNEY

FROM ASHES TO FIRE: A JOURNEY FROM LENT TO PENTECOST

Thursday 15th May 2025

Contemplative Act

On Thursdays during Lent to Pentecost the Ashes to Fire Course will offer a contemplative practice to try, experiment with or reflect on. This might be a way of prayer, a contemplative practice, a suggestion of places to pray, interactions with scripture or more.

Today's contemplative act is Silent Prayer. Earlier on this course, towards the beginning of Lent we explored silence. Today we explore silent prayer.

Psalm 62.1 says "For God alone my soul in silence waits." whilst Psalm 46.10 extols us to "Be still and know that I am God."



Christian author Eugene Peterson says of silence in prayer "Talk in prayer is essential but it is also partial. Silence is also essential."

One way of using silence in prayer is Centring Prayer, a simple (but not necessarily easy) practice. To begin with spend 5 minutes in this practice and work up to 20 minutes. To undertake centering prayer:

- Choose a sacred word (or phrase) that symbolizes your desire to spend this time of silence with God.
- Sit comfortably, with your eyes closed, and silently invite God to be with you during this time. Then begin to silently repeat your sacred word or phrase.
- When your thoughts begin to drift, gently return to our word or phrase.
- At the end of the prayer period, silently pray the Lord's Prayer.

The Jesus Prayer

This prayer, has its roots in the Orthodox monastic tradition dating back to the Desert Mothers and Fathers. It is based on the continual repetition of a simple formula. This can be just the name of Jesus, or a short prayer like “Jesus, Mercy” or the longer version “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” As the prayer is recited the encouragement is to imagine the mind settling in the heart, so the prayer replaces mind with heart and soul - the imagination of the heart settling into the heart.

Prayer in Silence

This is a way of being in the silence. Again, the suggestion is to begin with 5 minutes and work up to 20 minutes. To begin sit comfortably (but not so much that you might fall asleep), close your eyes and be aware of the natural rhythm of you're breathing. As you're spending time in silence you're encouraged to resist no thought but equally retain no thought, not reacting to thoughts and at the end return to the sacred word of God as you close, perhaps the Lord's Prayer or other scripture.

This connects to the Spiritual Practice of silence offered in the first week of Lent.

