



Visualisation Exercise

Introduction

The garden is a place where we encounter God – as the Garden Eden was a place for God and Adam and Eve. We all have a place in us which is only reserved for God

St Augustine “You were more inward to me than my most inward part,” or, as sometimes paraphrased, “you were closer to me than I am to myself.

Teresa of Avila “If I would have found out sooner what a great king dwells in my heart, I would not have left him there alone so often”

Imagine that your home had an inner, hidden courtyard in which you had a garden. No one knew about this secret garden. The home symbolizes your whole self. The inner and hidden garden symbolizes the inner and secret depths of your soul.

Wander through the garden of your heart and enjoy the sight and smell of the flowers and their many colors. Maybe there is a bench you can sit on or lean against a tree and look around. Give yourself permission to notice all the details and nuances. Notice the sounds and the colors.

- *What do you see? What feelings come up?*

The gardener is Jesus and He is the one who secretly enters, tilling, planting, weeding, growing and harvesting the many good fruits that come forth from your life. He desires to enter in secrecy, doing much labor in your life that no one knows about.

- *Do you allow Jesus to enter into the inner and secret garden of your own soul? Take some to respond to His invitation*

What else do you see in your garden? Do you see roots, weeds, rocks and thorns that are blocking your inner garden – these are things that have grown without your help that are taking away life. Some flowers may look good but are poisonous.

- *Do you need to get rid of hurt and grudges? Is there a need to forgive?*
- *Is there an invitation from God to redefine errors and failures? To receive His forgiveness and cleansing*

Do you see how this garden is to be **watered**? Have you watered your garden? Are parts of your garden dry and remind you more of a desert? Do you see any pond or stream, sprinklers? Has there been refreshing rain or draught lately? Do you see fertile ground?



- *Do you see seeds that have been planted but not watered.*
- *How does God invite you to water the garden*

Your garden has **fences**. Can you see them? They are important – no unauthorized person has access! Also, no wild animals should eat the plants.! God gave us those fences/boundaries. They are essential for a healthy garden.

- *Do you see any disturbance to the beauty of your garden?*
- *Are the “garden gates” to the world wide open?*
- *Are the fences strong and stable or are some damaged and need to be repaired?*

We must work hard to protect the garden of our heart

Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life

- *Are there things in your life you may need to limit / relationship you may need to set boundaries with.*

It was a place where you planted, tilled, labored, weeded and **harvested**.

The produce from your garden was maybe secretly distributed to many to nourish and delight them. A closed and abundantly watered garden brings good fruit.

- *Where do you see God’s labor in your garden? Where has your garden nourished others?*
- *What’s growing in your garden at the moment?*
- *Do you allow Him to labor within you, bringing forth an abundant harvest?*
- *What may be flourishing in 6 months time?*
- *Does anything need attention. Certain kinds of plants need support*

This work He desires to do in you is a work seen only by you. It’s a holy secret of grace working in your life. The Lord offers it out of His perfect love for you.

He wants to transform it into a garden bursting forth in abundance.

Prayer

Lord, I see this courtyard and I am aware of it being overgrown with weeds of all types. There is much work to do. But, this day, I say “Yes” to You. I accept the labor of perfect love that You offer me and I return to You my gratitude for the miraculous work You desire to do. Help me to adore You as you prepare the soil, plant Your virtues and bring forth a harvest. I thank You, my dear Lord. Jesus, I trust in You.