

# **Men's Ignatian Retreat**

## **Fall 2020**

### **Saint Ignatius High School**

### **Spirituality Program for Adults**

Five Thursdays, October 15 to November 12, 2020

7:00 – 8:30 PM

all offered online via Zoom



Every person making the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius embarks on a unique spiritual journey. The graces of the *Exercises* can be summarized in six short sentences:

We are loved.

We are gifted.

We are forgiven.

We are invited.

We are called.

We are sent.

– Excerpted from *Discovering Your Dream*  
by Gerald M. Fagin, S.J.

# Introduction

**God, help me to be open to You in this Retreat—  
and in my life.**

1. Hospitality, Welcome and Housekeeping Notes
  - a. Online The retreat will be offered via Zoom, including small group breakout sessions. You will have the best experience on a computer or tablet, but can still benefit using a smart phone or voice phone to connect.
  - b. Attendance and fidelity to prayer is vital to your own and the group's retreat experience. Please call your small group director or Colleen Wyszynski (216-961-2583) ahead of time, if you can't attend.
  - c. We don't charge any fee because making the Spiritual Exercises accessible is too important. We will, however, ask you to help with a donation near the end of the retreat.
2. *Meet The Guide* by Margaret Silf
3. *A Short Course on Prayer* by J.J. O'Leary, SJ
4. Some Notes on Prayer
5. Tips for Keeping a Prayer Notebook (Journal)
6. Faith Sharing Groups and Guidelines

## Meet the Guide, by Margaret Silf

In my day job, I am writing a programmer's guide on how to overcome the problems in computer data management when we enter the next millennium. How come, then, I am sitting here reflecting on the ways in which the insights of a man who lived 450 years ago in a remote Basque village in northern Spain affect the way in which we relate to God today, on the threshold of the 21st century? I sometimes think that my PC will give a little shudder of culture shock when I expect it to process my thoughts on the problems of two-digit notation and the search for my deepest desire at the same time.

This coming together of two worlds apparently so far removed from each other is perhaps in itself a pointer to some of the treasures that are ours today through the legacy of Ignatius Loyola and the Society of Jesus, which he founded. If we can imagine his browsing through this book, or sitting among us as we explore these questions together, he would quite likely be smiling to himself and muttering something about "finding God in all things." He would find it completely normal and healthy that we should be searching to deepen our relationship with God in the midst of life as we really live it – up to our ears in work or lack of it, mortgages, children, and mess. He would be delighted to find that most of us are lay people, as he was when he made his own journey of discovery. He would surely welcome the fact that we come from many different church traditions or even from none at all. And he would be more than tolerant of the checkered histories we may have behind us, remembering the excesses of his own misspent youth. Most of all, he would recognize the love of God that is burning inside each of us, that is always leading us onward, like a beacon, toward deepening our relationship with Him, because this would reflect the experience of Ignatius' own heart and the source of his prodigious energy.

So who was this man whose life and discoveries are still affecting our own journeys so fruitfully? Before we begin our journey proper, let's indulge for a few minutes in a time shift that takes us back to the age when Europe was in a similar kind of between-age turmoil to the one we are experiencing now. This new age isn't just causing havoc to our computer systems but also seems to include a heightened awareness in people everywhere (whether they call themselves religious or not) that there is more to life than the mere management of our days to achieve comfort and security in the shifting landscapes of our lives.

Inigo Lopez lived at the time when the world was coming painfully and violently out of the Middle

Agas. The mere facts of his life can be summed up in a few sentences; its content infinitely more far-reaching. He was born in 1491, the youngest of a family of 13, in Loyola, in the Basque region of northern Spain. When he was 14, he was sent away to train as a royal page to the king of Spain and was introduced to the ideals of chivalry and knightly service. As he grew older, he developed more than a passing interest in women, both those far away in his daydreams, and those who were temptingly accessible. The last thing on his mind during these years was his spiritual journey or the inner movements of his heart.

His life swerved around a big bend during his mid-twenties. The favor that his employer, Don Juan Velasquez, had enjoyed in the royal court came to an abrupt end at the death of the king. As a result, Inigo himself was unemployed, and chastened by his experience of how quickly and easily the power and riches and influence can disappear. With a parting gift of a few hundred crowns and two horses from the widow of his former employer, he had to set off into the unknown and start again.

The next phase of his life was in the household of the duke of Najera, who employed him as a gentleman-at-arms. Inigo learned to use weapons and helped to put down rebellions. His military training under the duke brought him, four years later, to a place called Pamplona, where he commanded a company defending the fortress there against a French invasion. The defense had become futile and defeat was a certainty, but Inigo was stubborn to the limits and absolutely refused to surrender. The price of his resistance came in the form of a cannonball which shattered his leg and broke his right knee. His days as a soldier ended on a stretcher; he was transported in agony and humiliation across the mountains to his family home in Loyola.

It must have seemed like the end of the line. Probably most of us can identify with that drained, empty feeling of being at the end of our dreams and our resources, or helpless in pain or immobility, either in body or in mind. We can imagine how it might have been for this young man, in the prime of his life, to lie a helpless invalid, wracked by pain, with nothing but his broken dreams for company. So daydreaming is just what he did.

Having asked in vain for some lively romantic novels to read, Inigo had to make do with what the castle could offer, which turned out to be a *Life of Christ* and a *Lives of the Saints*. This stricken and disgruntled patient spent his time between reading

and daydreaming of all that might have been, had his injury not robbed him, in a stroke, of both his future as a soldier and his attractiveness to women.

Daydreaming! Ironic that this man whose military skills and leadership potential were so remarkable should have come down to us, most powerfully, as a daydreamer. But Inigo's daydreams held a potent secret. They had, locked up inside them, the key to the gift of discernment. And how did Inigo discover for himself this key that was to open up a gold mine in his heart?

As the tedious, pain-ridden days passed, Inigo indulged in two kinds of daydreaming. On the one hand, he still dreamed of the battles he would command, the military glories he would achieve, the noble ladies he would woo and win. But they were the dreams of "what might have been," and though they raised his spirits for a while, he enjoyed the fantasy, they left him, in the longer term, feeling flat and disconsolate.

On the other hand, fired by the books he had been given, he started to dream of a King whose service was potentially even more desirable than that of the king of Spain; he began to wonder how this Christ King might be served; he began to dream of outsanting the saints in this great new quest that might be worth spending his life on. They were still daydreams, but he noticed an important difference in their aftereffects. These dreams left him feeling inspired, energized and eager. They were not about what might have been, but about something that still lay dormant in the depths of his own heart, like a seed that had been mysteriously germinated and was pushing its way to the surface of his life through all this heavy soil of pain and disappointment. These were dreams that didn't go away.

It was into this realization of the difference between daydreams and God-dreams (as we might call them) that the gift of discernment was given to Inigo. It was there that he discovered what we might call the "inner compass" of his heart, which was able to reveal to him which movements within him were capable of engaging his deepest, vital energy, and which were leading him only to fleeting satisfactions that left him unchanged and unfulfilled. As he lay there in his enforced stillness and solitude, he learned to notice his moods and feelings and reactions, and to measure them against this unseen compass. In his inner silence, he listened with fresh awareness to an invitation coming from deep inside himself to enlist in the adventure of the service of God.

As he ventured more and more deeply into the stories that were inspiring his new kind of daydreaming, he was also finding a new way of exercising his

imagination. He began to find himself, in imagination, present in the scenes, conversations and stories of the Gospels, and he began to participate in the plots of these stories. It was the start, for him, of an adventure into imaginative prayer that was to become a most powerful catalyst for the growth of his personal relationship with God, a method of prayer that is just as vividly available to us today.

On his sickbed, Inigo experienced deep conversion. Gradually, after many setbacks, he limped his way back to life, but it was never again to be the life he had known before; the cannonball had blown that life to pieces. Now Inigo was a pilgrim to God, to whom he was ready to offer all his ideals of knightly service, courage and persistence. The next step was to tell his family...as for so many who have walked this path in their own personal ways since then (including, surely, many of you who are reading this book today), this wasn't easy! Against a backdrop of pressure to use his skills and gifts to bring honor to the family name and help maintain the family property, Inigo made his excuses and left, with neither he nor his family knowing with any certainty where he was headed. Inigo -the nobleman, the soldier, the fearless defender of Pamplona - had become Inigo the pilgrim.

The first stage of his pilgrimage -that search for the "I know not what" that was urging him onwards -- took Inigo to the Abbey of Montserrat, high on a jagged mountain peak overlooking the plain of Manresa. Here he desired to make a full confession of his earlier life and begin again. His confession is said to have taken three days to make, and he received absolution from one of the monks there. He exchanged his nobleman's dress for the simple outfit of a poor pilgrim and made a night vigil of prayer. He gave his clothes to a beggar and his mule to the monks. He left his sword and dagger behind as an offering at the altar and as a sign that he had exchanged his life in the service of the world's values for one committed to the service of God.

As the new pilgrim made his way down the hill of Montserrat to the plain below, his mind must have been full of the experience of his conversation, his confession, his vigil, and the advice he had been given by the monks on the life of prayer. To all this new experience, he surely applied the ways of discernment that he had discovered in his dreams at Loyola. He felt the need to stay awhile, in quiet, to reflect on all that had passed and everything that God seemed to be showing him through it. He also made some notes on his reflections. And so it happened that, instead of going straight to Barcelona as he had intended, he settled in the nearby town of Manresa for

"a few days," which stretched into 11 months. In Manresa, the next stage of his life took shape. Determined to stay true to all he had promised God in Montserrat, the proud and self-willed Inigo now faced a life of begging for his daily food, while submitting to the relentless mockery of street urchins who were probably better dressed and cared for than he was. Living out the high dream of the mountain when he was down on the plain in the heat and dust of everyday reality proved to be, for him as for us, a constant struggle. He treated himself harshly, but he never forgot the agony of his own long sickness at Loyola, and he turned that memory into service by trying to help the sick in the hospitals of Manresa. He prayed until prayer became part of his every waking moment. At last he found a cave near the river where he made himself a desert home. That cave was to become a space where his love and understanding of God would deepen beyond anything he could have imagined, where he would receive insights that remain fresh and valid for us today, and where, very important for us, he was to capture the fruits of his conversion, his prayer and his reflections in written form. Perhaps inevitably, given what a good thing was gestating in his heart, Inigo also fell victim to the onslaught of negative movements, or "false spirits," as he would have called them. He suffered endless self-recrimination about his sins, real and imagined. He experienced dark depths of despair and came close to taking his own life. It was, perhaps, a black time, shot through with golden streaks of insight and passionate commitment to God, or it was a golden time of spiritual growth and maturing, shot through with the darkest shafts of doubt and despair. Either way of looking at it may find its parallels in our own experience - we have those times in our lives that are at once fraught with struggle and alight with the flame of our hearts' desires.

From Manresa came a man who had freely bound himself in joyful service to a king called Christ. He had been so opened to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that he was able to interpret his own experience in a way that has universal validity and significance.

The fruit of this experience and the wisdom that it engendered is recorded in an unassuming little book called the *Spiritual Exercises*. Inigo's notebook was

to become increasingly sensitive to God's action in our lives, how to discover and live true to the very deepest desires within us, how to make decisions that reflect God's indwelling presence in the innermost freedom of our hearts and how to join our lives consciously with the life of Jesus, God-made-man, through the living spirit of the Gospel.

It would be nice to record that Inigo went from strength to strength in his life of discipleship. Of course, it wasn't so. How could it be? We all know, too well, that things are never like that. Inigo's dream of serving God in the Holy Land was intractably vetoed by the authorities there. His travels were overtaken by ill health and near shipwreck. His attempts to help others by sharing his *Exercises* in spiritual conversations brought opposition from the Church, which eventually subjected him to the Inquisition, and the secular authorities, who among other things threatened him with a public birching. Injustice, humiliation and betrayal became his familiar companions, but they were carrying a hidden gift: through them he came to realize that his desire to be with Christ was stronger than his desire to avoid the indignities and disgraces that the world and the Church meted out to him.

Despite all this, the word companion became central to Inigo's life. In Manresa, Inigo had already begun to share his experiences with a few friends who showed interest in his *Exercises*. He used his own notes as a guide in helping them. This continues to be the way in which the *Exercises* are used: as a guide to a director, mentor or soul-friend in helping another person discover, through prayer and reflection, God's action in his or her life.

Inigo's ministry of companionship grew stronger when he became a student in Paris, belatedly trying to acquire the academic qualifications that would overcome the objections the Church raised against his speaking to others of spiritual matters without ecclesiastical authority. He was eventually ordained in 1536 at the age of 45 and adopted the name Ignatius. Before this; though, he and his friends in Paris, Francis Xavier and Peter Favre, were to deepen their friendship into a bond that forged them into the first Jesuits, as

### ***The Spiritual Exercises***

- Discovering who I really am
- Directing myself toward God
- Noticing God's action in my life
- Responding to the movements in my heart
- Discovering the nature of my deepest desire
- Seeking God's will
- Becoming free of all that distracts me from my deepest desire
- Making choices in line with my truest self
- Connecting my lived experience with the life, death and resurrection of Christ
- Responding to God's love for me
- Finding God in all things

together they formed the Society of Jesus. By 1534, this little group of companions had grown to seven, and on August 15 of that year, they bound themselves into an embryonic religious order. On that day they shared the Eucharist together, made their vows and then celebrated ... with a picnic!

Over 450 years separate us from that inconspicuous event on the outskirts of Paris. For the first seven Jesuits, there was surely no sense of disconnection between the deep seriousness of their commitment to God and to each other and the simple, exuberant joy of their celebratory picnic. Among the many riches that have come down to us from this small group of friends, we might focus on that coming together of all that makes us human: our searching and desiring, our failing and falling and fun loving, our shipwrecks and our picnics.

Just as my computer accepts all that comes, whether it be ancient spiritualities or problems of binary notation, so our journeys, surely, are about all of us, just as we are, with no arbitrary demarcations between work and prayer, both secular and spiritual, or between God and "real life." Ignatian spirituality is about finding God in our lived experience and allowing him to transform that experience, through His Spirit, for ourselves and for the whole human family.

The explorations in this book, like Ignatius' own, also began as a response to groups of friends who wanted to come together to share their search for God. Like his, they are carved out of personal experience – some of it joyful, some of it painful, all of it lived. They are offered in the spirit of Ignatius in the hope that they may provide a few landmarks in the mysterious and sometimes hazardous terrain of our hearts, as we make the journey toward the pearl of great price that lies both at our own deepest center and far beyond our wildest imaginings.

On a journey, we use landmarks to give us a point of recognition. We notice something we recognize - some feature of the landscape - and it locates our position: "Yes, I recognize that! So I must be somewhere around there." They give us confidence that we are not completely lost. They help us to find our bearings and discern the direction for the next stage of the journey. When we are in unfamiliar terrain (and life, for all of us, as we move into the future, is unfamiliar terrain), landmarks help us to locate ourselves and keep walking. Something outside ourselves - something that everyone can see and recognize (even though they may see it from a different perspective and give it a different name) relates to precisely where we are. It places us, as individuals, within the wider landscape.

Maps and guidebooks would do just as well, you might say. And when it comes to the spiritual journey of our hearts, there is no shortage of maps and guidebooks, ranging from the "Go this way, or else!" variety of creed and catechism, to the "50 ways to climb the ladder of perfection" sort. The thing they all have in common is that they can be read in an armchair. They can all teach how to swim without getting wet.

Landmarks won't let you do that. They are of no use at all unless you are all on the road! They are effective only in that they connect where you are, in your lived experience, to a point of recognition and orientation, to your own story and for the whole human story.

I remember once smiling over a particularly colorful description of a walk by the late A. Wainwright in one of his mountain walk guides, which included the bizarre instruction to "turn left at the third hawthorn tree." This unlikely piece of wisdom made a gentle mockery of all the intricately drawn maps in the book. The third hawthorn tree just had to be discovered. It was a clue on a treasure hunt, and it demanded not only that I do it now, before the number and arrangement of the hawthorn trees should change beyond recognition. It was information distilled from his own walking of the path, and gladly, exuberantly, shared with me, his reader and fellow walker. The excitement of his own discovery infected me with the desire to make my own. It felt both personal and universal, rich with the paradox of a season ticket valid only for the present moment.

Landmarks, like hawthorn trees, are also useful only when there is some light to see by. Even people who are on the way and committed to following the right path will encounter times of obscurity and darkness when the evidence is hidden or the signals are mixed. Inner Compass also explores ways of developing the skills and resources needed for those times when we walk by faith and not sight.

Perhaps the landmarks in this book share something of the quality of Wainwright's third hawthorn tree. You may recognize them, though you might not call them by the names I know them by. I hope they may help you find your own way to the greater treasure beyond the clues and encourage you to use your own inner compass with confidence and trust. But you won't find them until you take the risk of losing yourself, by setting out and by keeping going, in the timeless urgency of the present moment. This kind of journey is not for "pillars of the Church." It is for "people on the way."

## **A Short Course on Prayer**

By J.J. O'Leary, SJ

These pages are written for people who are very busy, but at the same time, desire to explore their own spirituality and enhance a dimension already present in their lives. What follows are a few practical words about prayer along with some questions to facilitate discussion about your life with God, your family, and your studies.

If you are still reading, then somehow God is truly alive in your life. Spiritual writers all agree that an infallible sign of God's presence is a desire for God. If you want to pray, you are already praying. The desire to pray is the evidence that God is already at work, at prayer, in you. The first graces we get are our desires and just to be reading this, shows desire in your life.

The prayer I would like to talk about is prayer of the heart, intimate prayer, praying from where we are. First of all, I believe most of us pray far more than we think we do. Anytime we reflect on our families, our children, our students, our job, something we are grateful for, that is beautiful prayer. Many of us think prayer is thinking about and talking to God out there. But prayer begins with reality. The first reality we have is ourselves and that's where prayer begins.

### **Touching Our Inner Core**

Karl A. Menninger, M.D., in an article on intimacy, talks about intimacy being a quality of a person not a relationship. He says "in so far as I can be close to myself, I can be close to others; in so far as I can be intimate to myself, I can be intimate with others." The deepest part of each one of us is within us, we are touching the God within.

God speaks to us in our deepest human experiences, feelings, desires, thoughts, or ideas. So to be aware of these experiences is to become aware of God's work in them and then to offer ourselves through them to God. We focus on our own experience to hear God's word in them and then are called to respond. What is God saying to us through this? We don't need to solve problems, worry, plan, or control. In other words, we recognize the God within and then listen reverently to the many ways God speaks to us through our thoughts, our feelings, our children, our students, our fellow workers.

Intimacy then is not primarily a sharing with another. Intimacy starts with being intimate with myself. Intimacy is knowing the core of things myself. Then what I do flows from where I've been. But intimacy begins with getting in contact with myself. I have to be in contact with myself before I can donate, give myself or share. It is important to get in touch with our deepest human experiences because that is where God is present to us. Where we are most present, God is most present.

For example, let's suppose the one I love the most has a dislocated shoulder. Where is that person most present? Of course, in his/her shoulder, where the injury is. The pain is intense. When I think of that person, what do I think of? I wonder, "How is the pain?" Wherever we are most present, God is most present. That is the importance of listening to where we are.



## **The Awareness of Self**

Prayer, then, is a way of lowering our mind and heart to God present within us. In prayer we discover what we already have. We now have everything but we don't know it and we don't experience it. All we need is to experience what we already possess. Rollo May says, "The more self-awareness one has, the more alive one is." This statement is similar to the one made in 200 A.D. by Irenaeus of Lyons: "The glory of God is the human person fully alive."

The more self-awareness we have, the more alive we become. Many of us don't live a life fully alive. I believe this approach to prayer helps us to live a fuller and deeper life. So often people say, "I become distracted whenever I try to pray." My response to this is to suggest that people make this very distraction the content of their prayer. Not, again, to solve the problem, to figure it out, to dissect, but to hear God's word in this person, situation, whatever it might be. It is usually the very subject situation, a person that I should be thinking reflecting, praying about in the presence of the Lord. So I think most of the distractions we get are really not distractions.

What counts is that we avoid running away from the center of our being. We start by becoming sensitive to what is happening within, being aware of our mood, our spirit because it is out of this spirit, this filter, that I will deal with others, that I will teach, and that I will receive all information.

## **How I Feel Right Now**

For example, how did I feel, (not think), the moment I woke up this morning? For most of us this spirit, this mood will perdure throughout the day. Now just to be aware of this is valuable because if, for example, I am not my good self, I will be more guarded in what I say and more likely to receive what others say in a jaundiced way.

Some people find it very helpful to begin their prayer by making, not a "traditional act of the presence of God," but an "act of the presence of self." □ How am I? Where is my spirit? What is my mood? What is going on? Possibly, just bringing that to God will be someone's prayer. Or by seeing if any special thought or concern surfaces. "God speaks to us most clearly through the events in our life," says Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. And that may be where I would like to pray.

In the play *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye prays about the love of his wife, the marriage of his daughters, his own poverty, the loss of his homeland—because these were where he was present at that time. For others, prayer might center on a friend who is in some serious conflict; or it might be a student we have recently counseled, a regret we are wrestling with, my boyfriend/girlfriend, grieving a loss, or something I'm especially grateful for. Those are the situations where God is present in my life today.

People often ask "Where is God in my life?" The best response I can give is to ask "Where are you? – that's where God is." In this way prayer can be something very practical and steeped in where we really live. In brief, we recognize the divine within ourselves, rather than trying to engage a God out there somewhere. Because just to be is a blessing, to live is holy. Our lives are holy just as they are. If there is one thing Jesus revealed, it is that he loves what he finds. He loves us just as we are. Nothing in our life is distasteful to God.

Prayer starts where we really are because God is in us as we are. God doesn't expect us to be any other than we are, except that there is a change that God is going to make in our lives. In a way we don't have to knock, we're in already. Prayer isn't come as you are; it's just be who you are.

### **A Readiness for the Lord**

We also get into direct contact with God by our relationship with people. It is in concrete situations, the events in our life that God speaks to us—in our families, in the classroom, a chance remark by a friend, thoughts and feelings—these are the way God speaks to us. So prayer for some can become what I like to call “a sensitization period,” to become sensitive to what God is saying to me through the many relationships, events, and feelings that make up my life.

In fact, one can read scripture the same way by just taking the readings of the day and then seeing how they relate to the day that lies ahead. Oftentimes they jar our psyche because that is not where we are. I think it is more helpful to start by getting in contact with where we are, with what's going on within and without, and then find a scripture passage that will fit with that. Prayer, then, can be a time of quiet reflection, deepening, enhancing of our mood, through the gentle presence of the Lord.

### **The Examen of Consciousness**

A wonderful way to close the day is to re-taste and re-feel it, by going over all the things in the day that made me laugh, cry, sad, angry, joyful in the presence of God. Our hearts are like putty—if you knead putty it stays soft; if you don't, it becomes hard and impossible to move. By quietly going over the events of a day, we keep our hearts soft, our minds aware, and our vision open to the presence of others—and of the Lord.

In summary, I'd suggest that the best thing we can do to nourish a prayer life is to regularly ask God to teach us how to pray. I don't believe there is any gift God wants to give us more than the gift of prayer. But, it seems, so few people ever ask for that. And then with the few minutes that we spend in prayer, whether it's five, ten, or sixty minutes a day, to ask the Lord to remember, to recognize where God is in the midst of our lives. This will provide a whole new tonality to our days and deepen in us the “20/20 vision” that helps us see life whole and in clear perspective.

### **Questions about Myself and God**

- What holds me back from becoming a more loving person?
- How is my spirit, my mood this past week?
- What makes me move away from my good self, my good spirit?
- Have anyone's words hit me more strongly than usual?
- What is one thing I really like about myself?
- On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how happy am I?
- Do I feel called to do or let go of anything in my life?
- When was I most aware of God, most alive?
- If I die today, what would people miss about me?
- What three words would I most like to have said about me if I died today?

- What discourages me, buoys me up, preoccupies me?
- Do I tend to be someone who frets and worries or am I able to let things go in trust?
- Do I have to control people and things?
- What keeps me from trusting?
- How do I handle worry?
- What situation would I most like to change in my life—but can't?

### **Questions about the Family**

- What do I regard as my family's greatest achievement?
- What are my strong points as a son, daughter, or spouse?
- What are my weak points as a family member?
- What most separates me from my family?
- Do I act or react with regard to my family?
- Am I able to listen to my family or do I have the need to dominate?
- Do I pray with my spouse, or boyfriend/girlfriend?
- Do we ever explore new ways of praying together?
- Do I pray for each member of my family daily?
- Do I accept family members as they are, or do I have such great expectations that it separates me from them?
- Do I affirm them?

[www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-what-how-why-of-prayer/a-short-course-on-prayer](http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-what-how-why-of-prayer/a-short-course-on-prayer)

## Some Notes on Prayer

- The "Art" of prayer is what you do.
  - Fidelity, time of day, posture, place, consistency, note taking, etc.
- The "Experience of prayer is what God gives you."
  - Sense of His presence, distracted, dryness, peace, restlessness, etc.
  - Try to accept whatever is given. The Giver knows what we need.
  - If you are frustrated remain faithful to the "Art" then accept what God gives you in prayer.
- Be aware that your prayer experience is affected when you are hungry, angry, lonely, tired, ill, or otherwise out-of-sorts.
- Suggestions on the "Art"
  - Find a place of reliable quiet and solitude
  - Settle in, relax, be attentive to your breathing, slow down; think of yourself as welcoming God into your space.
  - Consciously place yourself in the presence of the Lord. Be attentive to His Holy Spirit with you; He is there.
  - Pray for the grace specified; what you pray for is what you get.
  - Read and savor the scripture passage. Read aloud, repeat, read slowly, savor a phrase, etc. Immerse yourself in the words without analyzing; pay attention to your emotions as you read.
  - Let go of expectations; let what happens happen.
  - Don't fight distractions; passively let them pass by like clouds in the sky.
  - Fulfill your commitment; don't cut your prayer time short because, "it's not going well," accept the experience God gives you.
  - Don't be a slave to the format. If you sense God's presence stay in that place rather than move on to whatever the next "step" is.
  - Write down a few notes on your prayer experience.
  - Finish the way you started; think of yourself as saying a gracious, thankful farewell to God.

## Tips for Keeping a Prayer Notebook

### Prayer Review

For St. Ignatius Loyola keeping a record of one's spiritual journey was essential. He kept his own record of thoughts, experiences, and ideas. It was hardly for public consumption. Single words, streams of consciousness, and even drawings covered the pages. His notes existed for him; to give him a sense of his own journey. We encourage you to review and take note of what is occurring during your prayer.

Some options:

- Be open and honest. No one will ever see the contents of your notebook.
- Forget about rules of spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. These notes are for you so let your thoughts flow as freely as possible.
- Experiment with different methods
  - Jot down how you felt during prayer
  - Use your writing as a prayer - a letter to God
  - Express strong emotions on paper
  - Use the notebook to jot down all your "worldly" concerns before you pray so you can focus better.
  - Note how well your prayer time went and why.
  - Refer to the concerns, issues and events of your life so there is context when you review your notes later
  - Write your thoughts in stream of consciousness, letting flow to paper whatever comes to mind in any order
  - Set a time limit for yourself and write whatever comes to mind for that time. (e.g. I will write something, anything for the next five minutes.)
  - Note what stirrings you had since your last prayer time:
    - Did any part of your prayer come to mind later in the day?
    - Did someone else mention something that reminded you of your prayer time?
    - Do you recollect your prayer time as a time of peace, frustration, etc?
    - Did you do anything differently because of your prayer time?
- Review your past entries occasionally, maybe once per month. Look for changes in attitude, values, feelings, decisions, etc.

Writing these prayer notes, or, if you wish, keeping a prayer journal, is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The process of writing and reviewing forces us to be reflective. If you have committed to five minutes a day for jotting notes about your prayer life you will soon find yourself thinking about what you might write today. Those reflections keep you in tune with how the Spirit is moving in your life. You are asking yourself, "where was God in my life today?" The more you listen, the more you will hear.

## Faith Sharing Groups

In our small groups, we will be doing a form of faith sharing. This is basically a **sharing of your heart** (and not so much your head)—and your **experiences in prayer and in the Scriptures**. It is not so much about ideas but more about your feelings or emotional reactions within or after the prayer. We will be focusing on each person's personal experience of the scripture; *thus, there are no right or wrong contributions*.

In faith sharing groups, we recognize God's presence by listening to one another with **attention, reverence, and devotion**.

- We pay **attention** to the person speaking by really **listening** to what he or she is saying.
- We **revere** the person who is before us by **accepting** and cherishing his or her differences.
- When we do these two things, we discover **devotion**; that is, **recognizing** God's presence in the person before us.

To foster this awareness of God's presence in our faith sharing groups, we keep in mind the following:

- Think about what you are going to share by **reviewing your prayer** experience for the week **before** coming to the meeting. This will enable you to listen more attentively to the others in your group when they are sharing.
- **Do not cross-talk**. In other words, listen reverently to each person's reflection without making any comments or judgments.
- Pause for **several moments of silence** between each person's reflections to help remember the presence of God in your midst.
- Always remember that **strict confidentiality** must be maintained throughout the retreat.

### A few questions which might aid in your sharing:

1. In general, how was your prayer experience this past week? Was the prayer easy, difficult, or a combination of these?
2. How did you pray or what did you find helpful as you settled down to pray?
3. Specifically, what struck you in prayer this week especially regarding an of the scripture passages? Describe any positive or negative feelings you had.
4. Did the prayer leave you enlightened or challenged in any particular way?
5. Were there any events in your life this week that helped you grown in a heartfelt knowledge or experience of God?



### **Guidelines for Faith Sharing Groups**

1. Remember confidentiality.
2. Unconditional acceptance. Non-judgmental listening. Love one another.
3. Everyone is free to share from their prayer experience.
4. Share openly / listen reverently and prayerfully to each other.
5. Trust God's presence and the Spirit's guidance in the group. "Do not be afraid."
6. Leave problem-solving and teaching to God.
7. Expect differences. Your relationship with God is unique. There's no wrong way to pray.
8. Silence is a part of the sharing process, full of God's Self-Communication
9. Share the time so all may fully participate.
10. Practice loving one another as God loves.

## Daily Prayer and Reflection

Here is one format you might consider.  
Others will be explored during our Retreat.

### PRAYER

Father, you created me and put me on earth for a purpose.  
Jesus, you died for me  
And called me to complete your work.  
Holy Spirit, you help me carry out the work for which I was created and called.  
In your presence and name—  
Father, son, and Holy Spirit, I begin my meditation.  
May all my thoughts and inspirations  
Have their origin in you  
And be directed to your glory.

### REFLECTION

1. READ the reflection several times prayerfully.
2. THINK about what struck you most as you read it. Why this?
3. SPEAK to God about your thoughts.
4. LISTEN to God's response. Rest in God's presence with an open heart and mind.
5. JOURNAL your key thoughts and feelings.
6. END each reflection by slowly praying the Lord's Prayer.

Adapted from *Challenge, A Daily Meditation Program Based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, by Mark Link, S.J. pp 12-13.\* Each retreatant will receive a copy of this book at the end of the retreat.



*God's presence is not discerned at the time it is upon us,  
but afterwards when we look back.*

- John Henry Newman.

## **Men's Five Week Retreat: Week 1 Prayer Material**

**Prepare:** Choose Place, Posture, Prayer Time, Prayer Passage. Become mindful of the Presence of God.

**Grace Sought:** *Lord God, I want to be aware of your unconditional love for me – just as I am.*

### **Prayer for each Day:**

Follow the link or use your Bible for the Scripture readings. You will find the other readings in this handbook.

1. Read the Introduction materials. Prayerfully reflect and journal on two or three questions at the end of O'Leary's *Short Course on Prayer*.
2. Come as You Are – see the following pages for this prayer.  
Pope Francis says we are all “gifted, flawed and called.”
  - As I start this retreat and do an honest inventory of myself: what would I say about each of those categories? Is it easier to see my gifts, flaws or calling?
3. The Runaway – *Challenge*, Somebody's Son - see the following pages and The Prodigal Son – [Luke 15:11-32](#)
4. The Lost Sheep and Lost Coin – [Luke 15:1-10](#)
5. You are Treasured – see the following pages.
6. Compare and Despair – see the following pages.
7. The Calling: Matthew 9:9-13 – see the following pages for this reflection.

## COME AS YOU ARE

Come as you are  
that's how I want you.

Come as you are  
being quite at home.

Close to my heart  
loved and forgiven.

Come as you are  
why stand alone?

No need to fear  
love sets no limits.

No need to fear  
love never ends.

Don't run away  
shamed and disheartened.

Rest in my love  
trust me again.

I came to call sinners  
not just the virtuous.

I came to bring peace  
not to condemn.

Each time you fail  
to live by my promise.

Why do you think  
I'd love you the less?

Don't run away  
shamed or disheartened.

Come as you are  
why stand alone.

Come as you are  
that's how I love you.

Come as you are  
trust me again.

Nothing can change  
the love that I bear you.

All will be well  
Just come as you are.

by Paul Gurr, Carmelite



## Somebody's Son

### How conscious am I of God's forgiveness of me?

Richard Pindell wrote a short story called "Somebody's Son." It opens with a runaway boy writing a letter home to his mother. He expresses the hope that his old-fashioned father will forgive him and accept him again as his son. The boy writes:

"In a few days I'll be passing our property. If Dad will take me back, ask him to tie a white cloth on the apple tree in the field next to our house."

Days later the boy is seated on a train, rapidly approaching his house. Soon the tree will be visible around the next bend. But the boy can't bear to look at it. He's afraid the white cloth won't be there. Turning to the man next to him, he says nervously, "Mister, will you do me a favor? Around the bend on the right you will see a tree. See if there's a white cloth tied to it"

As the train rumbles past the tree, the boy stares straight ahead. Then in a quaking voice he asks, "Mister, is a white cloth tied to one of the branches of the tree?"

The man answers in a surprised voice, "Why, son, there's a white cloth tied to practically every branch!"

That story is a parable of God's great forgiveness of us. This week's meditations focus on forgiveness.

The grace you ask for is:

Lord, help me see  
that there is a wideness in your mercy  
like the wideness of the sea. Amen.

Reprinted from *Challenge, A Daily Meditation Program Based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, by Mark Link, S.J. pp.118-119. A copy of this book will be given to each participant at the end of the Retreat.

## I Treasure You

*Jesus said, "Even the hairs  
of your head have all been counted." LUKE 12:1*

They say the heads of blonds contain about 150,000 hairs; brunettes, about 125,000; and redheads about 100,000. It's hard to verify this count. But the big numbers help us appreciate the example Jesus used. One day, pointing to a flock of sparrows, he said to the people, "Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one sparrow is forgotten by God." No doubt Jesus ran his fingers through the hair of a little girl, smiled, and said, "Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth much more than many sparrows!" In other words, Jesus assures us that we are precious in God's sight. God treasures us beyond our wildest imagining. Thus, one answer to the question "Who am I?" is this: "I am someone treasured by God."

Why does God treasure me?

*Under all the false, overloaded,  
glittering masquerade,  
there is in every person a noble nature.*

B.AUERBACH

Reprinted from *Challenge, A Daily Meditation Program Based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, by Mark Link, S.J. p.32. A copy of this book will be given to each participant at the end of the Retreat.

## Compare and Despair

*Each one should judge his own conduct ...  
without having to compare it  
with what someone else has done.* GALATIANS 6:4

A woman was riding on a train. Suddenly, she caught sight of a white cottage on a hillside. Against the backdrop of dark green grass, the cottage sparkled in the sun and was a lovely sight. Months later the same woman was on the same train. Now it was winter, and snow covered the ground. The woman remembered the cottage and watched for it. This time she was shocked. Against the backdrop of the sparkling snow, the cottage looked dirty and drab. There's a lesson here. We tend to compare ourselves with those around us. The story of the cottage shows how misleading this can be. It all depends on who happens to be around us when we make our judgment.

What criterion should I use  
to judge how well I am doing?

*In the twilight of life,  
God will not judge us on our earthly  
possessions and human successes,  
but on how well we have loved.*

SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

Reprinted from *Challenge, A Daily Meditation Program Based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, by Mark Link, S.J. p.35. A copy of this book will be given to each participant at the end of the Retreat.

## The Calling - Mt 9: 9-13



As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples.

When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a

physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners." *New Revised Standard Version, copyright 1989. All rights reserved. USCCB approved.*

### The Calling

Chosen ... Jesus calls each and every one of us much like he did St. Matthew. Caravaggio's *The Calling of St. Matthew* illustrates how we are chosen. We are chosen in our own different ways, "as Apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers." (Ephesians 4:11) We are called. Jesus points to us and desires us to follow him. Our own hesitancy lies in our own insecurities, our own judgment, our own sinfulness, our own lack of trust in Jesus.

As St. Augustine says, "there is no saint without a past, no sinner without a future." Jesus desires each and every one of us, no matter our state in life. We are chosen. We are wanted. We are loved. We are called.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, I am grateful for your love and your mercy. I place all of me at your feet. "Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will." May I always hear your call for me. May I always be proud that I am chosen by you, like St. Matthew. May I have courage and full trust in your will for me. — *Joseph Hamaty is Executive Director of Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House in Lake Dallas, TX. <https://jesuitprayer.org/>, Feast of St. Matthew, Sep 21, 2017*

**God is calling me...**Am I listening? Do I have the courage to respond?

Matthew heard Jesus' call from his post. He immediately dropped everything and started following Jesus. I have tremendous appreciation for the courage that it took for Matthew to answer Jesus's call. It required that he be open to listening to Jesus's call, the humility to accept, and then be present with Jesus subject to ridicule/judgment from those who deemed him unworthy of the call.

There are times in our lives when we are overwhelmed and busy. When we do not take enough time to be with God in prayer and solitude to listen to the call. There are other times when we are afraid to accept God's calling. We are afraid of taking that risk or we have people who doubt us, and we doubt ourselves. And yet God keeps calling us. We pray for the openness, the humility, and the courage to answer the call of God in spite of these fears and doubts, to let God's glory work through us especially during these turbulent times of pandemic, racial strife, and an election season.

God is calling me...Am I listening? Do I have the courage to respond? — *Dr. Sajit U. Kabadi is the Assistant Principal for Mission, Ministry, and Diversity at Regis Jesuit High School in Denver, CO*

## Men's Five Week Retreat: Week 2 Prayer Material

**Prepare:** Choose Place, Posture, Prayer Time, Prayer Passage. Become mindful of the Presence of God.

**Grace Sought:** *Lord, help me grow in my heartfelt knowledge, love and imitation of You.*

*Lord, of these three things I pray:*

*To see thee more clearly,*

*Love thee more dearly,*

*Follow thee more nearly,*

*Day by day.*

– *Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius #104*

**Prayer for each Day:** Who is Jesus? And how is He calling me?

1. The Annunciation – see the following pages for this reflection.
2. Leave your Nets behind reflection – see the following pages.
3. Bartimaeus – [Mark 10:46-52](#) (What do you want?)
4. Gospel Contemplation: Read *On Gospel Contemplation* by J. Veltri, S.J. and try with the Calming of the Sea on the following pages.
5. Feeding of the Five Thousand – [Matthew 14:13-21](#) see the following pages.
6. The Call to Serve as Jesus did. (Prayer of Generosity). See the following pages

Optional Additional Reflections:

Comforting the Sorrowful

Serving with the Gifts You've Been Given

7. The Call of Jesus to You – see the following pages for this reflection.

**Saint Teresa of Avila**  
**You Are Christ's Hands**

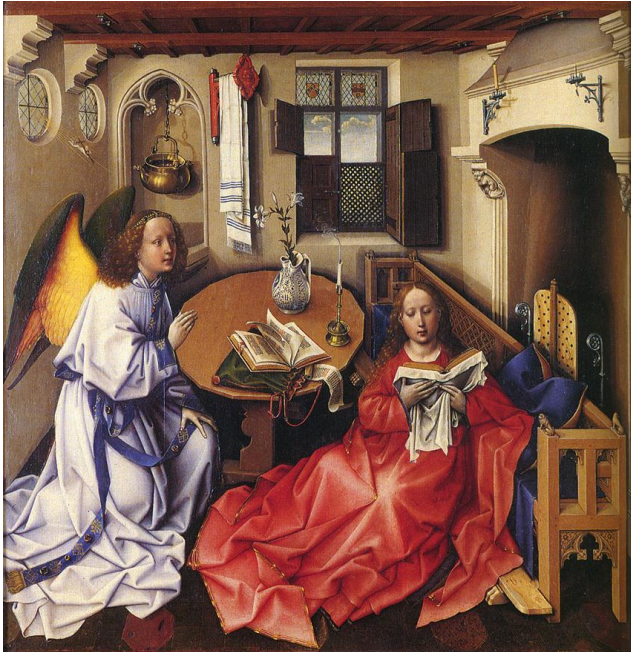
Christ has no body now, but yours.  
No hands, no feet on earth, but yours.  
Yours are the eyes through which  
Christ looks compassion into the world.  
Yours are the feet  
with which Christ walks to do good.  
Yours are the hands  
with which Christ blesses the world.



## The Annunciation

“The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.” *Luke 1: 26-28*

We have heard the story so many times over the years, it sometimes fails to astonish us. The



*Annunciation Triptych (Merode Altarpiece)*  
Workshop of Robert Campin, c. 1427–32

Annunciation. An angel appearing to Mary to ask if she will become the mother of the Christ.

For centuries, artists have pictured Mary at this moment in a variety of devout settings, surrounded by angels, covered in red velvet or standing amid tapestries and silver candles.

These paintings can have a lot of power, and we can study the symbolism and love the artist lavished on them for a long time, being drawn even deeper into the mystery. But sometimes we might feel that these beautiful paintings don't let Mary be real. We might imagine her as barefoot, cooking her own food and having a distinctive personality.

Although some of us may have once arrogantly dismissed her as “irrelevant” to our faith, we might find that we now rely on her for prayers and as a place to mull over the challenges of

family and marriage. Using our imaginations, we might meditate on her, picturing her as a young woman of deep faith, long steeped in the Jewish tradition waiting for the Messiah. She must have read the Isaiah passages many times and prayed over them as her heart filled with gratitude and great dreams.

“O Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter:  
we are all the work of your hands.” *Isaiah 64:7*

Her simple life probably included dreams of marriage, raising a family, teaching children the Jewish laws and traditions. But perhaps it was bigger than that. We might imagine that Mary's heart had grown in her humility and generosity to God. Now she would be asked for the ultimate sacrifice. It invites us to wonder what kind of woman Mary was.

We can envision her dark hair and eyes, her love of people. We can picture a charismatic figure, one who had, at any given moment, a kitchen filled with people, enjoying her well-known hospitality. Her stove was always going, good smells filling the air. With our imaginations, we might see Mary as an entertainer with a wonderful, billowing laugh centered in her joy of life. And a story-teller. Mary's tales were famous around town, and in later years, her son would make great use of the talent he learned from his mother.

One morning the young woman was alone in her kitchen at mid-morning. A pot of soup bubbled on the fire as she prayed over the ancient words of the scriptures. Then, as she so often did, she poured out her heart to God, asking to be of service, to be open to anything he might ask.

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.” *Isaiah 7:14*

She longed for the Messiah as all Jewish people did. It was deep in her tradition, in the prayers and scriptures. She prayed as she stirred her soup.

She wasn't frightened, but suddenly she was aware of a young man standing in her kitchen. She turned and looked toward him, never taking her hand off the spoon that stirred her soup. His presence was oddly comfortable until he dropped to one knee. “Hail, favored one. The Lord is with you.”

Favored one? She was unsure and a small fear crept into her heart. What was this?

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.” *Luke 1:30*

Her first reaction was unexpected. “Oh, please no,” she whispers. What *was* this invitation? She wanted only a simple life, to marry Joseph, go to the Temple each year, live in the town she knew so well. Fear clung to her and knotted her stomach. “I can't do this. I don't know how. I'm not worthy. I know I said I would do anything, but God must have me confused with someone else. Someone more worthy.”

She stood in shock while the young man waited for her answer. The empty kitchen was silent, except for the constant simmer of the soup. She closed her eyes. Fear. Wasn't that always what sent her to God? She breathed deeply and prayed. *Open my heart. Let me be your servant. Lead me where you desire. You will be with me.*

Then, she knew. She turned back to the young man and nodded. *I will do just as I have been asked*, she said.

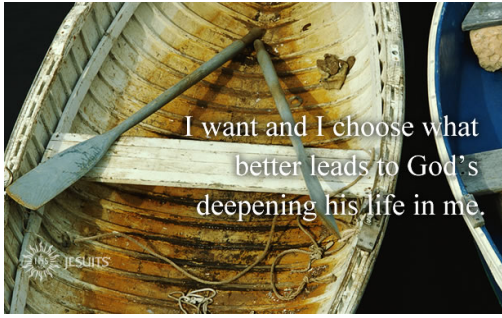
And deep in our own souls, we pray with the same heart, asking for the fears to be eased, asking to feel God walking with us in this daily path of life, not certain that we can handle everything that is coming.



*The Annunciation*, Henry Ossawa Tanner, 1898

*Mary, show us how. Teach us to trust in God as you have.  
Let us do what sometimes seems unthinkable in this world:  
to be humble and to accept without always understanding why or how.*

[Creighton University Online Ministries Home Page](#) | [Praying Advent Home Page](#)



## Leave your nets behind - Mt 4:18-22

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.”

Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

## Freedom to respond at once

I’m inspired by and also somewhat jealous of Peter, Andrew, James and John. I’m not jealous of their call to discipleship – I know that I (and you, too!) are called to discipleship. I’m jealous of their freedom.

My own response to God rarely, if ever, comes “at once” or “immediately.” Yet, upon Jesus’ invitation, they freely walk away from their former ways of defining themselves (their work and their paternal lineage) to reorient their lives around their relationship with God. I, on the other hand, tend to cling more tightly to my nets.

I’m currently making the Spiritual Exercises in their 19th Annotation form. In my prayer, “trust me” and “follow me” continue to surface. Day after day, I ask for the grace of freedom to respond like Peter, Andrew, James and John.

How is Jesus calling you today? What net(s) do you need to leave behind?

—*Lauren Hackman-Brooks is a Chaplain in University Ministry at [Loyola University Chicago](http://Loyola University Chicago).*

## Prayer

O Spirit of God, we ask you to help orient  
all our actions by your inspirations,  
carry them on by your gracious assistance,  
that every prayer and work of ours  
may always begin from you  
and through you be happily ended.

Amen.

—*A prayer for spiritual freedom published in [Hearts on Fire: Praying with Jesuits](http://Hearts on Fire: Praying with Jesuits)*

From: *On Gospel Contemplation* by J. Veltri, S.J.

This is how you can enter into the life of Jesus through prayer:

**Select a short concrete/action passage.**

First, from one of the Gospels, select an action passage, preferably fast moving and colorful in detail. When you first begin to use this method, do not attempt to pray a parable or a sermon.

**Relax and settle into God's presence.**

Ask for a particular grace you are seeking or the particular gift you need at this time - perhaps to know Jesus more intimately, or to become more compassionate, or to be healed in a particular area of your heart, etc.

**Read aloud the passage several times, pausing half a minute or so between each reading while the gospel episode takes hold of you.**

Slowly read the passage once - aloud, if circumstances allow. Then for 30 seconds or so look up from the page and let the scene sink into your imagination. Do a second oral reading, noticing the details you missed in the first reading. Again, look up from the page for 30 seconds, until these new details fit into the total scene in your imagination. In the third reading, you will see more details for the first time, also insights, questions and interpretations will begin to occur to you. Use a half-minute to let them settle into your memory. Then read a fourth or even a fifth time until almost all the distractions have disappeared, and the Gospel scene totally saturates your imagination.

**Now place the Bible aside and let the scene happen.**

Do nothing to promote it except to stay alert to its developments. As you let yourself sink into the scene, you will tend to lose the sense of yourself and to identify with the situation. Suppose, for example, that you have read about Jesus quieting the storm on the lake. You may imagine the wind howling, the boat pitching, the apostles struggling at the oars. If this identification deepens, you will find yourself in the boat, e.g., at the oars, or you may find yourself to be Peter or Philip. Sometimes you will discover yourself drifting in and out of the scene, in and out of various people of the scene.

**Allow yourself to take part in the scene, which is now present to you.**

Be as passive as possible while being as alert as possible. In fact, let everyone else control the event: Jesus, Peter, Mary, Martha and John. You merely interact with the persons, listen and reply to their words, take part in their activity - conversing with them, accompanying them, helping them in their occupations, in whatever ways you find yourself as part of the event that is present to you.

**Do not moralize or try to make applications.**

Don't moralize (for example, "I should be more spontaneous like Peter when I am with my friends...") or draw conclusions (for example, "Notice how the Pharisees are so much like the people I am working with...") By losing yourself in the persons, words and activity of the gospel event, your whole being is affected and influenced. You won't need applications because you will notice what happens to you either in the period of reflection after your prayer or, more subtly, in the effects in your life as almost by osmosis you begin to put on the mind and heart of Jesus's spirit.

**After your period of prayer comes to an end, make a review for a few minutes by reflecting upon what took place during the prayer.**

What happened in you during this prayer exercise? What did you notice as standing out even slightly? Is there something you should return to in a later period of prayer? Give thanks to the Lord for being with you during this time.

## Gospel Contemplation

### Calming of the Sea (Matthew 8:23-27)

**Put yourself in the scene.**

**Who or what are you?**

**What do you see, hear, smell, taste, feel?**

Then he got into the boat followed by his disciples. Without warning a storm broke over the lake, so violent that the waves were breaking right over the boat. But he was asleep. So they went to him and woke him saying, "Save us, Lord, we are going to drown!" And he said to them, "Why are you so frightened, you men of little faith?" And with that he stood up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and all was calm again. The men were astounded and said, "Whatever kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him."



*The Storm on the Sea of Galilee, Rembrandt,*

**The time after is for the Review of Prayer.** This is where discernment takes place. It is when one is 'reading the signs' that God brought up in the prayer time and trying to understand their deeper meaning. Take 5 minutes for the review.

## Feeding of the Five Thousand – Matthew 14: 13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”

Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” And he said, “Bring them here to me.” Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

### Start with What You Have

Jesus could have made a feast appear magically out of nowhere, but he didn't. He started with the food that was on hand: the loaves and fishes. From that he created a miraculous feast. And when the people had finished eating, there was much food left over.

St. Ignatius would tell us to begin where we are, with what we have. Whatever we possess comes to us through God's mercy and abundance. We express gratitude for those few loaves and fishes, and we share them through compassion to help others. The miracle happens within the mundane, which we energize with faith and generosity.

What do I have today that might be the beginning of a miracle?

### Prayer

Lord, show me the gifts I already have. Stimulate in me a sincere thankfulness for my life. Please use the energy of my God-given passions to extend love and grace to people I encounter.

- Vinita Wright, serves as Managing Editor, New Product Development at Loyola Press



## How ready am I to serve as Jesus served?

Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross was a former professor of psychiatry at the University of Chicago. She wrote a best-seller called *Death and Dying*. The book grew out of interviews with hundreds of people who had been declared clinically dead and then revived.

Repeatedly these people report that during their experience they underwent a kind of instant replay of their lives. It was like seeing a movie of everything they had ever done. How did the instant replay affect these people? Did it reveal anything significant?

Commenting on this, Dr. Kubler-Ross said:

“When you come to this point [the moment of leaving life], you see there are only two things that are relevant: the service you rendered to others and love. All those things we think are important, like fame, money, prestige, and power, are insignificant.”

This week’s meditations focus on loving service. The grace you ask for is summed up beautifully in this prayer attributed to Saint Ignatius of Loyola:

*Lord, teach me to be generous.  
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;  
to give and not to count the cost;  
to fight and not to heed the wounds;  
to toil and not to seek for rest;  
to labor and not to ask for reward,  
except to know that I am doing your will.*

Reprinted from *Challenge, A Daily Meditation Program Based on the Spiritual Exercises from St. Ignatius*, by Mark Link, S.J., p. 222-223. Copies of the book will be distributed to all participants at the end of the retreat.

## Comforting the Sorrowful

*[Jesus said,] “Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!”*

- Matthew 5:4

Tom Dooley was moved to work among Asia’s poor while he was in the Navy. One day his ship picked up a boatload of sick and wounded refugees drifting off the coast of Vietnam. Tom discovered that the simplest medical treatment brought smiles to their pain-filled faces. He also discovered that helping them made him happier than he’d ever been in his life. After his hitch in the Navy, Tom went back to Asia. One day he told a friend that his favorite Beatitude was “Happy are those who mourn.” He explained that the word mourn didn’t mean “to be unhappy.” It meant “to be more aware of sorrow than of pleasure.” He added that if you try to alleviate people’s sorrow, “you can’t help but be happy. That’s just the way it is.”

How sensitive am I to the sorrow in the lives of people around me?

When was the last time I tried to alleviate someone’s sorrow?

*Whoever lives for himself is apt to be corrupted by the company he keeps.*

- Author Unknown

Reprinted from *Challenge, A Daily Meditation Program Based on the Spiritual Exercises from St. Ignatius*, by Mark Link, S.J., p. 192. Copies of the book will be distributed to all participants at the end of the retreat.



## Serving with the Gifts You've Been Given

*[Jesus said,] "Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires;*

*God will satisfy them fully!"*

- Matthew 5:6

The great American concert violinist Fritz Kreisler said:

"I was born with music in my system. It was a gift from God.

I didn't acquire it. So I do not even deserve thanks for the music.

Music is too sacred to be sold,

and the outrageous prices charged by musical celebrities today

are truly a crime against society.

I never look upon the money I earn as my own. It is public money.

It is only a fund entrusted to me for proper disbursement.

My beloved wife feels exactly as I do...

In all these years of my so-called success in music,

we have not built a house for ourselves.

Between it and us stand all the homeless in the world."

How fully do I agree with Kreisler?

*Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.*

- 1 Peter 4:10

Reprinted from *Challenge, A Daily Meditation Program Based on the Spiritual Exercises from St. Ignatius*,  
Mark Link, S.J. p. 197. Copies of the book will be distributed to all participants at the end of the retreat.

## The Call of Jesus to You

I. Jesus' incredible gift to you: YOURSELF as you are.

A. WHO ARE YOU?

1. How would you describe yourself to another? What is your personality like? How likeable are you? Loveable?

> If you could use three words to describe yourself, what would they be? Why?

2. List your strengths, giftedness, and virtues—anything you like about yourself—your abilities, your skills, your dreams, and desires.

> Consider your gifts of nature: physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual.

3. Now list your weaknesses, your poverty, your enemies within—anything you wish were different about yourself. Anything that you keep hidden from others—your fears, your insecurities, your vulnerabilities, your secrets.

B. Now, put all of the above together. Do you see that this is the TOTAL you? That this is the YOU that Jesus knows, understands, and accepts – that this is the YOU that He loves with an everlasting love.

II. In the light of your retreat experience so far, and in light of the above – and in the light of that incredible love that Jesus has for you as you exist at this moment – the combination of saint and sinner, the conglomeration of virtues and vices, the paradox of beauty and the beast – that you, which He wouldn't change one bit – What do you hear Him saying about you? How is Jesus describing you? What does He think and feel about you? LISTEN!

A. How do you respond to what Jesus says and feels about you?

B. In the light of the above, what do you hear Jesus asking of you? LISTEN!

C. Finally, how do you respond to His love? To His request? To His call?

## Men's Five Week Retreat: Week 3 Prayer Material

**Prepare:** Choose Place, Posture, Prayer Time, Prayer Passage. Become mindful of the Presence of God. Begin each prayer time with *The Principle and Foundation*

**Grace Sought:** *Lord Jesus Christ, I want to be with you compassionately in your suffering.*

### Prayer for each Day:

1. *The Principle and Foundation* – see the following two pages for this day's reflection.
2. The Last Supper – [Luke 22:7-34](#)
3. Agony in the Garden Gospel Contemplation – [Luke 22:39-46](#), see the following pages for this reflection
4. Passion I – [Luke 22:47-71](#)
5. Passion II – [Luke 23:1-49](#)
6. Reread one of this weeks' readings. Reflect on that and on Holy Saturday with Mary and the Disciples – use your imagination to be with them and share in their feelings.
7. The Gift of the Cross – see the following reading.

## Soldier's Prayer

*What seems to be God's foolishness  
is wiser than human wisdom.*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:25

The following reflection was found in the pocket of a dead Confederate soldier:

"I asked for health  
that I might do greater things;  
I was given infirmity,  
that I might do better things...  
I asked for riches, that I might be happy;  
I was given poverty, that I might be wise...  
I asked for power,  
that I might have the praise of men; I was given weakness,  
that I might feel the need of God...  
I got nothing I asked for,  
but everything I hoped for. Almost despite myself,  
my unspoken prayers were answered.  
I am among all men most richly blessed."

*Troubles are often the means God uses to fashion people  
into something better than they are.*

ANONYMOUS

Reprinted from *Challenge, A Daily Meditation Program Based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, by Mark Link, S.J. p.85. A copy of this book will be given to each participant at the end of the Retreat.

## Principle and Foundation

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created. From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end, and ought to rid himself of them so far as they hinder him as to it. For this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things in all that is allowed to the choice of our free will and is not prohibited to it; so that, on our part, we want not health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, long rather than short life, and so in all the rest; desiring and choosing only what is most conducive for us to the end for which we are created.

*We reflect on God's love for us, how he is constantly creating and inspiring us, and his hope that we love each other and desire to be happy with him.*

Consider yourself and your spiritual journey.

1. Did you find the Principle and Foundation speaking to you? What is God saying to you?
2. Who is God for you? How do you feel about God?
3. How is your prayer becoming deeper? How is prayer becoming part of your life?
4. What has been your focus in prayer? Your concerns and intentions, understanding God, and your relationship with God?
5. Where are you, how are you growing? We can grow stronger when prayer is more difficult – or perhaps we have grown slack in our faith and commitments.
6. We all seek what's best for us in life – money or simplicity, popularity or privacy, pleasure or work, comfort or service. These can all be good in the right time and balance – or misused. God made us, loves us, and knows us. Consider the Soldier's Prayer on the previous page. Ask for his wisdom in deciding what is best for you.



Oldest icon of *Christ Pantocrator*  
Saint Catherine's Monastery,  
Mount Sinai



Helix Nebula  
*The Eye of God*

## **Gospel Contemplation: Agony in the Garden**

1. *Whose presence?* I will be in the presence of God, Father and Son.
2. *What is my grace?* Lord Jesus Christ, I want to be with you in your suffering.
3. The greater intimacy of sharing these experiences with Christ requires us to pray and act with more care and attention; just as sitting with a close friend on her death-bed.
  - Note how His divinity hides itself
  - Christ is at his most human
4. Christ's passion and death was a result of his deep and abiding compassion. We seek to find the same compassion for others and our world.

### **Contemplating the Passage: Luke 22: 39-46**

Then going out he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place he said to them, "Pray that you may not undergo the test." After withdrawing about a stone's throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground. When he rose from prayer and returned to his disciples, he found them sleeping from grief. He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not undergo the test."

### **The 15 minutes after your contemplation for Review of Prayer:**

1. What are the signs God gave me during the prayer time?
  - What did I like? This is consolation.
  - What did I not like? This is desolation.
  - What new insights did I have about Jesus?
2. What do these sign mean?
  - What did I learn about the Father, the Son, or the Spirit?
  - What did I learn about myself?
  - What did I learn about our present relationship?
  - What is my next step for growing in this relationship?



## **Exaltation of the Cross** Jn 3: 13-17

No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

## **The gift of the cross**

Today’s feast invites us to pray anew over the gift that the dying and rising of Jesus is for each of us and for our families. That gift becomes more practical to us in times of illness, loss of work, family disagreement, or other struggles. Like Jesus, you and I lurch towards understanding that these personal and community experiences of dying and rising actually become our path towards wholeness and redemption.

Pope Francis speaks about in urging us to find that “narrow gate” which defines our personal share in the cross of Jesus. Today’s Gospel reminds us that “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...” What finer companion can I have in this journey of life than one who teaches me so personally how to meet life’s pain and sadness, as well as the hope and joy they also promise.

Imagine you are standing before Jesus on his cross today. Look intently into his eyes. Hand over to him your anxiety and pain. Find a place in your heart to let Jesus love you, strengthen you, and bring you hope.

—*The Jesuit Prayer team*

## **Prayer**

Jesus, love of my soul, center of my heart!  
 Why am I not more eager  
 to endure pains and tribulations for love of you,  
 when you, my God, have suffered so many for me?

Come, then, every sort of trial in the world,  
 for this is my delight, to suffer for Jesus.  
 This is my joy, to follow my Savior,  
 and to find my consolation  
 with my consoler on the cross.

This is my happiness, this my pleasure:  
 to live with Jesus, to walk with Jesus,  
 to converse with Jesus;  
 to suffer with and for him,  
 this is my treasure. —*St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, SJ, Jesuit Prayer App – September 9, 2019 – [www.jesuitprayer.org](http://www.jesuitprayer.org)*





## Men's Five Week Retreat: Week 4 Prayer Material

**Prepare:** Choose Place, Posture, Prayer Time, Prayer Passage. Become mindful of the Presence of God.

**Grace Sought:** *Lord Jesus Christ, I want to be with you in the joy of resurrection.*

### Prayer for each Day:

7. Pray *The Examen* – see the following page for this reflection.
8. Appearance to Mary Magdalene – [John 20:11-18](#)
9. On the Road to Emmaus with Two Disciples – [Luke 24:13-35](#)
10. Reread the previous passage. Using your imagination, put yourself in these two scenes:
  - (a) Imagine Jesus appearing to his own Mother, Mary, following his death and resurrection. What does that reunion look like? What are you hearing and seeing? How are they embracing? What are her feelings as she reunites with her very own son? (Paul writes that Jesus appeared to more than 500 people after his resurrection and Ignatius says that had to include Mary.)
  - (b) You are walking down a familiar street or trail today with a close friend talking about this retreat: what you've learned, what you know, what you still question. Suddenly, a stranger appears behind you, intrigued by your conversation. Although you don't realize it right away, that person is Jesus. What do you want to tell him or ask him; what does he say as he reveals himself to you; and how does that make you feel?
11. Gift of Nature – see the following pages for this reflection.
12. Gift of Memories and Others – see the following pages for this reflection.
13. Gift of This Retreat – see the following pages for this reflection.

## The Examen: an Ignatian Prayer Method

A great way to pray is to look for God's presence in your life. More than 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness by proposing what has been called the Daily Examen. The Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in Order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us. Try this version of St. Ignatius's prayer.

**1. Become aware of God's presence.** Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you – a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding to see your day through God's loving eyes.

**2. Review the day with gratitude.** Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things – the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details, in "the gaps" in "between" moments.

**3. Pay attention to your emotions.** One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out to her in some way.

**4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.** Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling – positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart – whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

**5. Look toward tomorrow.** Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. **Listen to God respond in your life.** Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Our Father.

## The Gift of Nature

**Focus:** How God reveals and speaks to me in my natural surroundings.

### Ways of disposing for this grace:

- A. Take a nature walk
- B. Just sense and enjoy:
  - 1. See the squirrels, chipmunks, the silhouette of the sunset, the colors of the leaves and flowers.
  - 2. Smell the breeze, the hay, the flowers.
  - 3. Taste the grass, the water, a dandelion.
  - 4. Hear the wind, the water, the chipmunks.
  - 5. Feel the dirt, the grass, a rock, a tree.
- C. Take in the whole scene and enjoy - if any feelings or movements emerge, let them surface.
- D. When the experiences of the senses or feelings fade, reflect upon any of the following:
  - 1. God made all this for you.
  - 2. God is working in nature and through nature for you.
  - 3. God is revealing God's very self through nature.
  - 4. This is God 's gifting to you.
  - 5. In all this, God is loving you.
- E. Feel free to respond to any of the reflections above - in your own words.

- *Jim Lewis, S.J. (2007)*

## The Gift of Memories and Others

**Focus:** How God has been working in my life, in my memories

### Ways of disposing for this grace:

#### A. Individual Memories

1. Take a trip down memory lane.
  - Ask the Holy Spirit to let significant or heartfelt memories bubble up into my consciousness – whether they be positive or negative.
2. Enjoy or experience these memories; live in them.
  - Feel free to talk to Jesus about these memories.
  - Ask His help with difficult memories.

#### B. Individuals:

1. Recall and enjoy the presence of those special and important people in my life – friends, loved ones, family, teachers, associates, etc.
2. Recall how He has gifted me through these others, their presence, care, love, wisdom
3. Recall people I meet in public, on buses, trains, etc.
4. Let any response flow which naturally surfaces.

#### C. Groups

1. Recall how I have been gifted through various groups or communities – family, co-workers, groups of friends, community, co-prayers, team members, etc.
2. Recall how I have been gifted and nourished by group experiences, activities, events
  - picnics, retreats, parties, baseball games, pizza and beer, liturgies, prayer groups, bull sessions, etc.

#### D. Your Salvation History

1. View your life as a whole, as your STORY. Through these memories, do you notice:
  - How you have grown and developed as a person.
  - How you have been protected or cared for.
  - Your call from God.
  - How you have responded and how your relationship with Him has grown.
2. When these memories have faded, you might reflect:
  - How this is your salvation history; your personal revelation by the Spirit.
  - How God is working in your life and in your memories.
  - That these memories are His gift
  - That in these. He is loving you.
3. Feel free to respond - in your own words.

## The Gift of This Retreat

**Focus:** How God has been working in my life through this retreat.

**Ways of disposing for this grace:**

- A. Prayerfully review your retreat journal and notice:
  - 1. The moments you felt you grew in heartfelt knowledge of Jesus
  - 2. The times you felt the presence of God
  - 3. When God answered your prayers
  - 4. The times you struggled
  - 5. Scripture passages that touched you
- B. Prayerfully recall the people in your faith sharing group and notice:
  - 1. Their individual beauty and gifts
  - 2. How they helped you during this retreat
  - 3. What you learned about God from them
  - 4. How you may have gifted them with your words and presence
- C. Prayerfully acknowledge what you learned:
  - 1. A new way to pray
  - 2. How to share spiritual conversation with others
  - 3. How to find God in Scripture and in the events of your life
- D. As you have grown in your awareness and appreciation of God's goodness, in what practical ways will you-
  - 1. Stay grounded in the awareness of who you are in relation to God?
  - 2. Stay open to God's continuing faithful love for you?
  - 3. Stay focused on serving God and God's people?

E. Journal your reflections.

F. Close by praying: *Take Lord and Receive*

Take Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding,  
and my entire will, all that I have and possess.

Thou hast given all to me. To Thee, O Lord, I return it.

All is Thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy will.

Give me Thy love and thy grace, for this is sufficient for me.

- Ignatius Loyola



## Men's Five Week Retreat: Week 5 Prayer Material

**Prepare:** Moving ahead in Daily Life

**Grace Sought:** *Lord Jesus Christ, I want to be so grateful for gifts given me that I will respond in service, and love as you love.*

### Prayer for each Day:

- Continue your *Daily Examen* and *The Principle and Foundation*. Use your notebook to note feelings, insights, experiences of prayer.
- Magis – always seek more, open to growth, ... Our parishes and the Jesuit Retreat House offer prayer and retreat opportunities
- Find God in all things – even in difficulty and suffering
- Be Contemplatives in Action, Men for others. “*What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?*” (AMDG)
- Consider meeting with a spiritual director, perhaps for the complete *Spiritual Exercises*. Rich and Bob can recommend directors based on your individual preferences.
- Continue with spiritual reading, prayer materials on the web, or the Challenge book.
- Be open to a 19th Annotation Retreat - The complete *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius in daily life for 32 weeks.

## **Patient Trust**

Prayer of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.  
We are quite naturally impatient in everything  
to reach the end without delay.  
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.  
We are impatient of being on the way  
to something unknown, something new.  
And yet it is the law of all progress  
that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—  
and that it may take a very long time.  
And so I think it is with you;  
your ideas mature gradually – let them grow,  
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.  
Don't try to force them on,  
as though you could be today what time  
(that is to say, grace and circumstances  
acting on your own good will)  
will make of you tomorrow.  
Only God could say what this new spirit  
gradually forming within you will be.  
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing  
that his hand is leading you,  
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself  
in suspense and incomplete.



## God's Grandeur

by Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent World  
broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.



*Bright Wings* by Mary Southard CSJ  
A painting at the Jesuit Retreat House

## **Some Definite Service**

by John Henry Cardinal Newman

God has created me to do Him some definite service;  
He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.

I have my mission –  
I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain,  
a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for nothing.

I shall do good.

I shall do His work.

I shall be an angel of peace,  
a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it,  
if I do but keep His Commandments.

Therefore, I will trust him.

Whatever, wherever I am,

I can never be thrown away.

If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him;  
in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him;  
if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.

He does nothing in vain.

He knows what he is about.

He may take away my friends.

He may throw me among strangers.

He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink,  
hide my future from me - still He knows what he is about.

## **The Thomas Merton Prayer**

My Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself,

and the fact that I think that I am following your will

does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road,

though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore, I will trust you always though

I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me,

and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

- Thomas Merton

**Spirituality Program for Adults Reading List** to help you continue your spiritual journey!

1. Any of the numerous books by Father Henri Nouwen, especially *The Return of the Prodigal Son*
2. Anything by Anthony de Mello, S.J. or Thomas H. Green, S.J.
3. *Armchair Mystic* by Mark Thibodeaux, S.J.
4. *Close to the Heart* by Margaret Silf
5. *Contemplatives in Action* by William Barry, S.J. & R. Doherty, S.J.
6. *Crossways* by our own James Hogan
7. *Discipleship and Its Foundations: A Jesuit Retreat* by David L. Fleming, S.J.
8. *Eternal Seasons: A Liturgical Journey with Henri J.M. Nouwen* edited by Michael Ford
9. *Extraordinary Lives* by Friedl & Reynolds
10. *Francis: The Journey and the Dream* by Murray Bodo, O.F.M.
11. *Going on Retreat* by Margaret Silf
12. *Guidelines for Mystical Prayer* by Ruth Burrows
13. *He Touched Me* by John Powell, S.J. (Also any of his other books)
14. *Hinds Feet on High Places* by Hannah Hurnard (Also any of her other books)
15. *How Big Is Your God?* By Paul Coutinho, S.J.
16. *Inner Compass* by Margaret Silf
17. *Inviting God In: Scriptural Reflections and Prayers Throughout the Year* by Joyce Rupp
18. *Let Nothing Disturb You: A Journey to the Center of the Soul With Theresa of Avila* by John Kirvan
19. *Life After Life* by Dr. Raymond A. Moody, Jr., M.D.
20. *Love Without Measure: The Spirituality of Service of Mother Teresa* by John Kirvan
21. *Made for Happiness: Discovering the Meaning of Life with Aristotle* by Jean Vanier
22. *Make Straight the Crooked Ways: Daily Reflections for Advent* by Edward Hays
23. *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl
24. *Miryam of Nazareth: Woman of Strength & Wisdom* by Ann Johnson
25. *Praying Our Experience* by Joseph Schmidt
26. *Riding the Dragon: 10 Lessons for Inner Strength in Challenging Times* by Robert J. Wicks
27. *Simply Surrender: Based on the Little Way of Therese of Lisieux* by John Kirvan
28. *Slow Down: Five-Minute Meditations to De-Stress Your Days* by Joseph M. Champlin
29. *Spiritual Consolation: An Ignatian Guide for the Greater Discernment of Spirits* by T. M. Gallagher
30. *Summoned at Every Age: Finding God in Our Later Years* by Peter Van Breemen, SJ.
31. *The Art of Discernment: Making Good Choices in Your World of Choices* by Stefan Kiechle, S.J.
32. *The Circle of Life: The Heart's Journey Through the Seasons* by Joyce Rupp & Macrina Wiederkehr
33. *The Discernment of Spirits: An Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living* by Timothy M. Gallagher, OMV
34. *The Examen Prayer: Ignatian Wisdom for Our Lives Today* by Timothy M. Gallagher, OMV
35. *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Smalley
36. *The Gift of Peace* by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin
37. *The Holy Longing* by Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I.
38. *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A. Kempis; A Spiritual Commentary and Reader's Guide by Dennis Billy, C.Ss.R., including a contemporary translation by William C. Creasy;
39. *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis (No relation to Father Jim)
40. *The Sevenfold Yes: Affirming the Goodness of Our Deepest Desires* by Willi Lambert, S.J.
41. *The Shack* by Wm. Paul Young
42. *This Blessed Mess* by Patricia A. Livingston
43. *Toward God* by Michael Casey
44. *What More Can I Do?: An Ignatian Retreat for People Somewhere on the Way* by T. M. Gallagher,
45. *Who Do You Say That I Am?* by William Barry, S.J

## Spirituality Program for Adults

### Websites and Apps on Ignatian Prayer and Spirituality

[www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie) A user-friendly guide to daily prayer Run by the Jesuits of Ireland with many helpful hints. Also download the *Sacred Space Daily Prayer App*.

[www.creighton.edu/ministry](http://www.creighton.edu/ministry) Great site, with daily reflections from individuals of different faiths and departments at Creighton. A 34-week online Ignatian retreat for everyday life with useful supplementary reading and daily reflections. Also has Stations of the Cross. Click on the link to Online Ministries.

[www.staygreat.com](http://www.staygreat.com) Daily prayer inspired by Mark Link, S.J., currently of Loyola University Chicago. "For seekers, drifters and believer." Great site with six different daily reflections according to following themes: Stay Great, Pause n' Meditate, Live the Word, Pray the Word, Hear the word, Make 'em Laugh.

[www.sjweb.info](http://www.sjweb.info) Descriptions, essays, interviews, and links to a myriad of on-line resources.

[www.nwjesuits.org](http://www.nwjesuits.org) User-friendly and complete site by the Jesuits of the Pacific Northwest. Click on "Spiritual Resources" for *Spiritual Exercises*, Daily Ways to Pray and *Spiritual Exercises* in Everyday Life (SEEL).

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/> Catholic translation of the Bible online.

[www.pray-as-you-go.org](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org) Jesuit media initiative in England offers daily prayers that you can listen to on your computer or download to your iPod or MP3 player. 10-minute sessions include music, scripture and reflective questions to become more aware of God's presence in your life.

[www.ignatianspirituality.com](http://www.ignatianspirituality.com) Website of Loyola Press featuring "Prayer, Spiritual Direction, Retreats and Good Decisions" with categories such as Ignatian Prayer, Ignatian Voices, Ignatian Community and Good Decisions. Includes DotMagis Blog.

[www.americamagazine.org](http://www.americamagazine.org) Weekly national Catholic magazine published by the Jesuits.

[www.ignatius.edu/](http://www.ignatius.edu/) Under the Faith heading, select the Jesuit Identity page. Click on the box to listen to the Daily Examen prayed daily by SIHS students, faculty and staff. Or download the *Pray.Ignatius App*.

[www.jesuitprayer.org](http://www.jesuitprayer.org) provides a daily scripture reading, reflection, and prayer – and a monthly Pray with the Pope video. Or download the *JesuitPrayer App*.



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## Prayer for Generosity

Lord, teach me to be generous.  
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;  
to give and not to count the cost,  
to fight and not to heed the wounds,  
to toil and not to seek for rest,  
to labor and not to ask for reward,  
save that of knowing that I do your will.



*St. Ignatius Loyola*

Peter Paul Rubens (c. 1620-22)