
MOMENTS

A RETREAT FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

A DIRECTED PRAYER EXPERIENCE FOCUSED UPON GROWING IN AWARENESS OF
ONE'S INTERIOR SPIRITUAL LIFE BASED UPON THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST.
IGNATIUS

STUDY MATERIALS

COLLECTED AND PRESENTED BY KAREN SHIELDS WRIGHT FOR RETREATS IN THE
EVERYDAY

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Be Still and Know that I am God Ps 46:10

A RETREAT FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

Develop an awareness of experiencing the unfolding of your imagination, thoughts, feelings, and desires directed towards the Spirit in prayer, who arouses in us and makes known the Divine presence within us and around us. For prayer is a conscious relationship and communication with God, who is active in our lives and the One we encounter in the everyday, offering us gifts and graces Moment by Moment.

OBJECTIVES

To develop an increased Spiritual Awareness.

Experience through the Process of Attention your Interior Movements and to differentiate the Spiritual from the Physical/Biological, Psychological, and Natural responses.

- A Disposition of Openness
- Turning towards God
- Listening to Our Longing for God
- Gathering the Graced Moments
- To Know is to Experience
- Self-Awareness and Imagination
- The Final Mystery is Oneself

EXPERIENTIAL

Over the 8 weeks, you will be introduced to and experience various prayer methods

- The Daily Examen Prayer
- Ignatian Meditation – Praying with Scriptures
- Ignatian Contemplation – Praying with Scriptures via Imagination
- The Colloquy
- Devotional Journaling
- Prayer of Quiet – Prayer of Silent Love

METHODOLOGY

Read, Reflect, Respond

- Reading of Scripture
- Reflect upon the Moments
- Respond to Our Experiences

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR/CHAPLAIN

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INTRODUCTION

Our lives are given to us moment by moment by our God who is the abundantly gracious giver of gifts, faithful, and energetically infinitely creative in interacting with us. We offer our response of gratitude to God moment by moment in the midst of the ordinary events of our lives.

GOD CALLS, WE RESPOND

This Retreat in Everyday is based upon the spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, who discovered the dynamics of the conversion experience in his own life and later in the experiences of his followers and those he offered pastoral care. He went on to write his observations and experiences in accompanying others in their spiritual journey in what we know today as *The Spiritual Exercises*.

What we will be learning and experiencing through different ways of praying, is the dynamics of our interior spiritual life; and by listening to God's language with the '*ear of the heart*'.

As we move through these weeks, you will be introduced to the various foundational elements, concepts, basic terms, definitions, and the aspects of the interior life such as the operations of the soul, and the experiences of consolation and desolation in the discernment process.

We will be using passages from the Hebrew and Christian scriptures for our in-chapel reflections. There will be additional readings offered for an at-home retreat to continue the experience. You will be introduced to 3 main prayer methods for the 'a way of proceeding' in the Ignatian tradition: the Examen a daily prayer of reflection, its Meditation and its Contemplation praying with scriptures; and also the Prayer of Quiet used universally in all faith traditions.

- You will look at ways to reflect and sift through your daily life experiences using the prayer of the **Examen** to discover the leading thread of God's presence and action in your life as it unfolds day by day.
- The Ignatian prayer methods of **Meditation** and **Contemplation** are ways to experience God speaking to us through Scripture, and placing us in touch with the living scriptures through our imagination.

- The Prayer of Quiet seeks the experience to “*be still and know that I am God*” rooted in the ancient traditions of all faith, today we call it by different names i.e. Meditation, spiritual mindfulness.

AN INVITATION

I invited you to dispose yourself to be open for all that the Holy Spirit has for you, and to let the unfolding unfold.

Each week we will look different themes - *Moments* that are the prelude orientations to *the Spiritual Exercise of St. Ignatius* through group Reading, personal Reflecting, and faith Sharing as time allows.

These spiritual exercises unfold through a dynamic process of praying and self-awareness to help us be more attentive to God’s activity in our life, and to be more responsive to what God is calling us to do.

We will be gathering in the graced filled moments through a contemplative experience using this universal ancient integrative spiritual practice of praying with scriptures.

In developing a spiritual awareness of our interior life, we come to a place of presence with awe and wonder in our inexpressible longing and heartfelt connections to the Divine call within the operations of our soul.

As we envision our life as a gift from a gracious God, who is Love loving, we come to experience the continuous in-breaking of the Divine’s life flooding throughout all our daily encounters.

Let the unfolding awareness of the Spirit in you come through this directed prayer experience of stillness, interior solitude, and silence.

THE MOMENTS

The *Moments of the Retreats in the Everyday* are based upon the Orientations or Preludes of St. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* (to the 19th Annotation or 30 Day Retreat). Here we will be using passages from the Hebrew and Christian for your reflections.

These spiritual exercises unfold through a dynamic process of praying and self-awareness to help us be more attentive to God's activity in our life and to be more responsive to what God is calling us to do. All of these tools and methods are geared toward nurturing the habits of spiritual discernment for those who desire to see God at work in Finding God through all things.

Numerous texts were used in providing background information and supportive material for this retreat in particular *Moment by Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life* by Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ and Eugene Merz, SJ; and *The Ignatian Adventure* a text by Kevin O'Brien, SJ. Also works on William Barry, SJ and James Martin, SJ. These are our guides for reflection and prayer as we make a daily, particular, life response to God's call and action in our lives. Several other sources may be verbally introduced and noted throughout the weeks.

1. Encountering God who is Love Loving : God's Unconditional Love for Me – Ignatian Contemplation / Grace of Gratitude
2. The Garden of God: God's Creation Created Through Love - Ignatian Contemplation / Interior Movements
3. The Making of Me - The Breath of God
4. Thirst Our Longing for God – Ignatian Meditation (Lectio Divina) / Natural Spiritual Experiences
5. Listening to God Who Speaks: Prayer of Quiet / Operations of the Soul, Spirituality of the Heart
6. God's Call to Me – Ignatian Contemplation / Vocational Spirituality / Discernment
7. Into the Silence - The Language of God & the Spirituality of Heart
8. Contemplation Entering the Mystical - Stillness, Solitude & Silence
9. An Invitation to Grace - Healing/God's Ongoing Creative Action in Me
10. God, the Giver of all Gifts - Jesus Christ, the Light of the World
11. Turning to God
12. Awareness of God's Presence
13. Invitation of Greater Freedom

AN INTRODUCTION TO IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

Finding God in All Things

Ignatian spirituality is spirituality for everyday life. It insists that God is present in our world and active in our lives. It is a pathway to deeper prayer, good decisions guided by keen discernment, and an active life of service to others moving with gratitude, passion and humility to be a contemplative in action.

Central to Ignatian Spirituality is the realization that God is actively at work, revealed through and encountered in the world in all of creation: people, events, nature. It is a realization that all we have and are is a gift, a gift from God.

Principle & Foundation

That "all of the things in this world are created because of God's love and they become a context of those gifts, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily" (taken from the Spiritual Exercises #23 literal translation David Fleming, SJ).

This is the realization of God's love for all, in all. It is a keen awareness and attentiveness that invites us to see beyond the immediate and to recognize the Divine; and once that Presence is recognized to be moved into action, service and love. For Ignatius, love always moves a person to service.

This spirituality grew out of unique and personal relationship that Ignatius of Loyola experienced with God.

IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY: FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS

Ignatian Spirituality is about "Finding God in all Things"

Central to Ignatian Spirituality is the realization that God is actively at work, revealed through and encountered in the world in all of creation: people, nature, and in our daily encounters.

Ignatian spirituality is a spirituality for everyone in the everyday. 'Finding God in all things' is at the core of Ignatian Spirituality and is rooted in our growing awareness that God can be found in every one, in every place, and in everything.

It insists that God is present in our world and active in our lives. It is a pathway to deeper prayer, good decisions guided by keen discernment, and to an active life of service for others moving with gratitude, passion, and humility to be a contemplative in action.*

IGNATIUS' VISION

GOD THE GIVER OF ENDLESS GIFTS

- God dreamt us into existence, and has a dream for us, has desires for us.
 - Gave gifts of talents for us to use, placed us in this moment of time for a specific mission.
- Our deepest desires implanted by God are God's desires.
- We are called to be co-laborers, co-creators
 - To love God, and to share all of God's gifts given to us, to help transform the world to love.

FOUNDATIONS OF IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

"The world is charged with the grandeur of God"¹

ENCOUNTERING GOD

God is present and ongoing, creatively active in the world and in our lives. God communicates indirectly to us through creation, Scriptures and our daily encounters. His presence can be felt by us through creation and heard through reading the Scriptures, and His action can be seen in our encounters throughout our day. Finding God in all things.

God is in the world but not the world, God is in us and not us. God is transcendent yet immanent. God the Holy Spirit resides in us, directing us, counseling us, keeping us alive physically through the operations of our soul.

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA'S SPIRITUALITY

God as Giver of endless gifts

In experiencing his mystical vision, St. Ignatius of Loyola saw God as a giver of gifts, who showers us endlessly with blessings and gifts, like the sun bathing the earth with its light and warmth. God who dwells in all things, who labors actively and creatively to renew all of creation, and; whose presence can be felt in our everyday experience, and action can be seen in our encounters through our day.

PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION

God as Love loving

... all of the things in this world are created because of God's love, and they become a context of those gifts, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily. St. Ignatius' Principle & Foundation*

This is the realization of God's love for all, in all. It is a keen awareness and attentiveness to this invitation to see beyond the immediate and to recognize the Divine in all; and to be moved by love into action and service. For Ignatius, love always moves a person to serve.

¹ Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ

Although not usually considered a prayer, this text is worthy of prayerful reflection; here is a paraphrased version by David Fleming, SJ:

The Goal of our life is to live with God forever. God, who loves us, gave us life. Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into us without limit. All the things in this world are gifts from God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God insofar as they help us to develop as loving persons. But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives, they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some obligation.

We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God.

Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want, and I choose what better leads to God's deepening his life in me.

(Spiritual Exercises #23)

GRATITUDE

Since everything is a gift from God, the primary virtue for St. Ignatius was gratefulness. Without it, we would fall into the sin of pride.

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Ignatius' spirituality grew out of the unique and personal relationship that he experienced with God. His conversion journey began while he was recovering from a severe injury, a battleground wound, and continued throughout his life. During his initial conversion experience, Ignatius began to keep notes on his feelings and those interior changes (he called movements) he was going through. These notes eventually were developed into a guide called *The Spiritual Exercises*.

As time passed, Ignatius guided others (long before he became a priest and founded the Society of Jesus) through this process of conversion for them to also have a personal experience of the fullness of God. They followed his guidance, yet they had their own unique and individual experience of finding God in all things.

The Spiritual Exercises involves daily reflection, and prayerful reading upon scripture passages in order to understand oneself and the life of Christ.

To come to know Him more deeply

To love Him more dearly

To follow Him more closely

IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY LOOKS TO ANSWER

Who am I

Whose am I

Who am I called to be

OUR RESPONSE

AWARENESS

All of Ignatius's prayer methods are about noticing God's presence, action, and gifts through our everyday encounters with others and creation, and; not just during formal prayer time, but at any time for we are called to be open and aware.

GRATITUDE

For St. Ignatius, gratitude was a natural and loving response to our awareness of all God's giftings. He viewed the lack of gratitude as the greatest of all sins, since it lead to pride in which one does not acknowledge the giver and whose they are.

CONTEMPLATIVE IN ACTION

In the response to being loved into existence, God calls us to grown in becoming a contemplative in action. Such is one aware of and reflects upon God's presence in all things, while being fully engaged in the affairs of the world, This is the Ignatian *way of proceeding*, a way of prayer in action, using our gifts and talents '*for the greater glory of God*' in serving others.

HOW GOD SPEAKS

God speaks to us, in scripture, and daily in prompting us up through our interior life and our exterior life's circumstances and relationships. God is there calling us to become aware of His presence and actions in our daily lives and to respond. We respond. It is a rhythm of a Call/Response.

NATURAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

GOD SPEAKS TO OUR MINDS AND HEARTS

How God speaks to us indirectly is through the natural elements of our interiority (thoughts, memories, feelings, emotions): offering us insights for knowledge, stirring up memories for reflection, stimulating us through our feelings to prick our conscious, offering us those physical feelings of peace and contentment; and through our daily encounters (James Martin, SJ. *The Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything*)).

GOD TOUCHING OUR SOUL

God also offers us multiple natural spiritual experiences to catch our awareness, calling us – i.e. gifting us with a physical sense of a *presence* yet we have a response sense of “*I know not what.*” As our awareness of our experiences grows we come to know more of Who is calling.

In developing awareness in our desire and longing for the divine, we are called to reflect upon our previous spiritual experiences which are a natural way of God implanting in us God's desire, thus drawing us in. These are a few examples of natural spiritual experiences one may have:

- An inexpressible longing
- A heartfelt connection
- Yearning for an understanding
- Being at the edge of something beyond us
- Awe and wonder
- Overwhelmed yet at peace experience
- A sense of being overtaken yet a fullness of trust followed by a fear.
- ‘Fear’ is a common natural reaction to the Divine *Mysterious Tremendum*
 - Such an experience fascinates us and leaves us trembling

We are called to savor these experiences to delight in God's gifts. In receiving these experiences, they echo within our soul moving our heart, we are called to respond.

AWARENESS IN OUR DESIRE AND LONGING FOR THE DIVINE

.....
*REMEMBER WHEN YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED BEING
AT THE EDGE OF SOMETHING WONDERFUL.*

WHAT WAS THE EXPERIENCE LIKE?

HOW DID YOU FEEL?

WHEN WAS THAT?

WHAT SPARKED SUCH AN EXPERIENCE?
.....

DEVELOPING OUR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

Spiritual awareness is an integral part of the human development of the whole person. We have a natural openness to a transcendent experience that we may need to reclaim.

A PLACE OF PRESENCE

Awareness is a special place of presence... for in awareness one is receiving the fullness of what is being presented to us and not trying to change it.

“God is more intimate to me, than I am to myself” St. Augustine

WE ARE CALLED TO AN AWARENESS

We are called to develop a self-awareness and give attentiveness, to notice the operations of our consciousness and our soul (our interiority*).

*Interiority – consists of our thoughts, images, ideas, dreams, desires, urges, and feelings.

WE ARE CALLED TO AN OPENNESS

Awareness begins with an openness – that is an intentional willingness to unfolding the operations of our soul to develop a self-reflective consciousness – to **wonder, inquire, reflect and evaluate, leading to a knowing and choosing.**

SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEART

The heart has its reasons of which the mind knows nothing

- Inner orientation
 - A totality of response – with our whole self - intellect, feelings, will = our heart [a term in scripture for the person] to God
- Listen to the language of the heart (all our affections)
 - In this language, God reveals his intentions and inspires a response
- All of creation is the flow of the gifts of God
 - Our loving response to these gifts is the spirituality of the heart
- It is how we are with God and God is with us – being in and with God
- God has dreams for us, so we can dream together, we co-create with Him

TERMS

- **'Affections'** - In the Ignatian tradition, the term Affections refer to those interior reactions such as feelings, spontaneous thoughts, desires, deep emotions, and any combination of these.
- **'Heart'** - it is where we experience our Affections that rise up from the soul; it contains our thoughts (intellect), feelings (emotions) and intentionality (our will).
- **Will** – It is through our will that we allow God to work in us
- **True Self** – is where our soul connects with the Holy Spirit that is God

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS IN IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

- The Principle and Foundation
- Finding God in All Things
- A lay spirituality
- A contemplative in action
 - We are called to co-labor with God
 - Magis –Becoming a person for others
 - A way of proceeding in the world
- Ignatian’s Vision
 - All is a gift
- God communicates to us indirectly through creation, our daily encounters, and through the living word of God.
- Interior freedom - to be free from inordinate desires and disordered attachments
- Prayer as conversation
- Ignatian Prayer
 - Praying with Scriptures
 - Ignatian meditation and contemplation
 - The Examen – a prayer of consciousness
- Discernment
 - Discovering the deepest desires of our hearts in which we find God’s will for us of His dreams and desires for us
 - Consolation and desolation
- The Operations of our Soul
 - Experience and reflection
 - Interior Movements
 - Affectivity

OUR INTERIOR LIFE

Within our interior life, we experience our feelings*, thoughts, desires, urges, imaginations by which God uses to speak to us multi-dimensionally for we as human persons have been created as an integrative whole consisting of a Body, Mind & Soul.

To become aware of the operations of our interior self (the interiority) – where our soul resides connected to God the Holy Spirit who leads us towards a *Spirituality of the Heart*. This process of awareness is called the operations or movements of ‘affectivity.’

OPERATIONS OF OUR CONSCIOUSNESS

Operations of our Consciousness – consists of all our senses, emotions, and acts of our will.

Act of Knowing involves Movements of our Operations of (EUJD)

1. Experiencing
2. Understanding – Inquiring, Insight, Reflection
3. Judging
4. Deciding

The Movements

- Experiencing (external/internal stimuli)
- We turn to Understand our Experiences
- We will then enter Judging (if it so) once we Understand
- Then move to Deciding after Judging (thus enters the realm of moral and ethics on what should be done – the Act of Doing)

Act of Introspection involves Movements of our Operations of (IIR)

1. Inquiry
2. Insight
3. Reflection

OPERATIONS OF OUR SOUL

The Soul is non-material, it is spiritual – given to us through the breath of God – *ruah*

Aquinas on the soul

- It operates on and in the body
- Transcends bodily functions and senses
- Gives us the ability to be self-aware
- The Holy Spirit of God residing in us, communicates up through our soul
- The 3 Faculties of the Soul
 1. Intellect
 2. Heart – our affections thoughts and feelings reveals to us our orientation to or from God
 3. Will

NOTICING

To notice our deepest interior reactions

- Non-material = thoughts, imaginations, memories, dreams, desires, feelings, moods, affections, intentions, will - they become *spiritual* when they are directed towards and prompted from God
- Material = our body – we feel our emotions physically

DISCERNMENT

INTERIOR MOVEMENTS

Interior movements are those thoughts and feelings flowing between our mind and heart. They are spontaneous reactions of thoughts, insights, feelings, moods, urges, impulses, desires, inclinations, and even resistances which are called 'the spirits' in Ignatian tradition (or today we call them Affections).

FEELINGS

Feeling is an essential part of consciousness. Feelings express an innate emotion. Feelings can emerge from biological, psychological, natural responses and spiritual causes. We are to become aware of where and how they originate.

SPIRITUAL FEELINGS

Spiritual Feelings – are all feeling through the lens or perspective of faith.

CONSOLATION & DESOLATION

Consolation – positive feelings - *they come to me* - feeling a sense of comfort, solace, relief, support, reassurance

Desolation –negative feelings – *they come over me*- feeling a sense of emptiness, sadness, despair, anguish

NATURAL CONSOLATION & DESOLATION

Natural Consolation & Desolation with cause

- External - we experience from a movie, nature
- Internal - from our personal insights

SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION & DESOLATION

SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION WITHOUT CAUSE

Consolation without Cause – a gift from God

- Sense a quieting not from any reason
- Genuine happiness, feels like a soft touch lightly and softly
- ‘a calling’ an experience of the presence of God that takes over the whole person, it is the unconditional love from God (as in a mystical prayer)

SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION WITH CAUSE

As we are moving towards God, we would experience consolation. We will feel peace, quieted, strength, gratitude, alive, connected, joyful. Inspirations

Coming from

- God the Holy Spirit
- ‘good’ spirits
 - The true self where God lives
 - angels

SPIRITUAL DESOLATION

As we are moving away from God, we would experience desolation. We will feel doubt, confusion, disturbance in our soul, anxiety, frustration, alienated, and loss of energy, courage and hope.

Coming from

- Our shadows
 - Disordered attachments
 - Inordinate desires
- The objective mystery of evil – when we are being tempted

FINDING GOD'S WILL

God continuous labors in our world

We are called to co-labor with our Creator

We are Jesus' eyes and hands extended

Discerning God's will

Is finding our deepest desires

Bringing God in our in decision making

What would You like us to do together?

FREEDOM

To Be Free to Respond to God's Call

God desires us to be free to respond to this gift of ongoing love of being the beloved:

- Indifference – is to be able to be comfortable in whatever circumstance we find ourselves in.
- To rid ourselves of inordinate desires and disordered attachments.

PRAYER AS CONVERSATION

Prayer is simply how we talk to, share with, be with, and in God.

*Prayer is not magical... it is a conversation with God... it is a conscious intentional relationship with God (*God and You by William Barry, SJ).*

True prayer is nothing but love – St. Augustine

PRAYER A CONSCIOUS RELATIONSHIP

Prayer is a conscious, intentional relationship with God (William Barry, SJ). Prayer is how we talk to, share with, be with and in God.

How one prays, reflects their understanding of God. Prayer can be an intimate experience of our relationship with God in raising our minds and the hearts to God; it is a conscious act that has implications in our life.

OUR DESIRE

Be open to receiving the expected and unexpected gifts of God.

- What do I want during this time of prayer?
- What do I desire?

For God is mystery. God is always and everywhere in conscious relationship with us and in creation. He desires for us to be awakened to the full reality of who we are, being rooted in him and wrapped in his divine love as his beloved children.

God continually tries to arouse us. Unawareness of God's presence may precipitate an anxiety, a sense of rootlessness....a questioning about the meaning of life, or a frantic search for answers to life's mystery, or rushing away from such pain in overwork or over-indulgences.

Knowing who we are – in our depths - is salutary and freeing, even if a bit daunting. God will not force himself upon us.... Yet he will try to arouse our interest in him.... Leaving us free to ignore or refuse to respond, even if we are aware of his presence.

What can we do to develop a closer relationship in turning towards God?

TIME

Spend some quality time with God, as one would with a friend

With God, it really doesn't matter what one does during such times as long as one desires to spend time with God, just like it doesn't matter when one has a good friend. You can go walking, have dinner, see a movie, it's just you're getting to know each other, and so to it is with God.

Do what you like. You can read the bible, go for a walk, listen to music, visit a museum, have a beer, as long as you are aware of wanting God to be present, you are in conscious relationship and therefore praying. Notice when you are taking time.

WHAT IS THAT SOMETHING YOU LIKE TO DO?

NOW GO OUT, AND DO IT GOD!

QUALITY

As with a friend, quality time is important, making a quick phone call in the middle of the day just to check in. Checking in with God is like in those moments when your mind and heart turn to God. It's not about how much time, it's about our response to want to be with Him. It about desire.

We are called to respond to this yearning spontaneously while in those deep moments of silence while walking on the beach or in the woods, or just sitting on a bench or even stopped at a light while driving. It's a feeling without explication. Yet at some point this desire - these feelings begin to take on words.

Suggestion

Do nothing and simply dispose yourself to God's grace and sometimes God will lead you to put those feelings into words ...that is the Colloquy prayer in action.

PRAYER AS DIALOGUE²

Colloquy is a dialogue during or after any of the prayer periods of your Spiritual Exercises or at any time in the moment. It is a conversation of sharing, petitioning, interceding, adoration or in thanksgiving God our creator.

REFLECTION

*WRITE DOWN TIMES WHEN YOU SENSED GOD TRIED
TO AROUSE IN YOU AN AWARENESS OF HIM.*

*HOW WAS THAT EXPERIENCE FOR YOU? WHAT
WORDS WOULD YOU WANT TO SAY TO GOD ABOUT
THAT EXPERIENCE?*

² Notes from God and You and Living in God

INTIMACY IN PRAYER

MAKE KNOWN (PHIL 4:6)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

AS IN FAITH (MATT 21:22)

And whatever you ask in prayer, with faith you will receive...

AID TO OUR WEAKNESS (ROM 8: 26-27)

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. ²⁷And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.

PROFIT & LOSS (LUKE 9: 24-25)

²⁴For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?

THE ONE WHO SEEKS (LUKE 11:9)

⁹“And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

DEPENDENCE ON GOD (LUKE 12:22-34)

²²He said to [his] disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life and what you will eat, or about your body and what you will wear. ²³For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Notice the ravens: they do not sow or reap; they have neither storehouse nor barn, yet God feeds them. How much more important are you than birds! ²⁵Can any of you by worrying add a moment to your life-span? ²⁶If even the smallest things are beyond your control, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. ²⁸If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the

oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? ²⁹ As for you, do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not worry anymore. ³⁰ All the nations of the world seek for these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ Instead, seek his kingdom, and these other things will be given you besides. ³² Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.”

THE SECRET (PHIL 4: 12-13)

¹²I know indeed how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. In every circumstance and in all things I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need. ¹³I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me.

IGNATIAN PRAYER METHODS

A way to know God more fully, to follow Him more closely

1. **The Examen** – Ignatius' Prayer of Awareness – encountering God in our everyday life
2. **Praying with Scriptures**
 - **Meditation** – God speak to us through His words in the context of our daily life
 - **Contemplation:** Imaginative prayer puts us in touch with the living experience of the Hebrew people and the person of Christ of the Gospels

THE EXAMEN

Finding God in All things

The Examen is a prayer of graced awareness, a spiritual exercise, in reflecting upon encountering God's presence and action in our everyday; It helps one to find God in all things to see the day as it was through the eyes of Christ; to discern the Holy Spirit's leading direction for us, and: to respond to the Father's loving invitation for renewal and rejoicing.

The Examen is a window of time where we reflect upon how we encountered others in God in the everyday. It is a simple daily prayer, with God, who offers us gifts of transforming grace. Also called the prayer of Consciousness or the prayer of Reflection we take a journey into the recent past, to savor the present, and to look with hope towards the future.

Examen comes from the Latin word that *means both an examination and an active weighing or judging something*. It's as old as Socrates instruction to "know thy self". It's a practice of regular self-scrutiny. Ignatius took this ancient tradition of prayer of reflection and made a way to experience God, as well as to assess our behavior.

The Examen is not a liturgical prayer, devotional prayer, intercession, or prayer with scripture. It's not contemplation or centering prayer which is emptying our mind of images, words, or ideas. The Examen is the kind of prayer that lives in our hearts to God who does not stand apart from our lives.

Each moment offers a window into where God has been in your day. The daily examination is rather a question of asking:

How was I drawn to God today - by a friend, an event, a book, the beauty of nature?

How did I respond to God's loving action in my life this day

God is always present with and in us, paying detailed attention to us, waiting for us. Yet we do not consciously sense or feel His presence all the time or often notice His actions in our lives. Our soul and body - we are physically and spiritually in touch with God, always. Yet we are distracted, and at times our hearts and will are not always directed towards what are the most loving action or thoughts. God is patiently waiting for our attention, there always, desiring to help.

IN PRAYING THE EXAMEN WE SEEK

- Grace – to see through God’s eyes
- Knowledge - to know what He wants for us
- Desire - to discover our deepest desires which God places in our hearts
- Freedom – to be freed from our inordinate and disordered attachments that pull us away from God

Ignatius loved desires. He has an optimistic view of our human personality. We are to continually pray for what we want for our deepest desires – ‘our greatest desires’ are for a loving union with God and others. This is the deepest truth about ourselves and the fundamental forces within us.

St. Ignatius thought that the Examen was a gift that came directly from God, and that God wanted it to be shared as widely as possible. Ignatius wanted to help people develop a reflective habit of mind that is constantly attuned to God’s presence and responsive to God’s leading. It became the foundation for receiving a **graced awareness**.

The Examen prayer treats every moment of every day as a blessed time when God can appear. It’s a way to find God in all things.

THE 5 KEY ELEMENTS

- Gratefulness
- Awareness
- Spiritual Mindfulness
- Transformative
- Hopefulness

5 POINT QUESTIONS

St. Ignatius outlined 5 point questions for the daily thanksgiving, grace and introspection.

1. What am I thankful for today? How have I been blessed?
2. As I review my day, when did I feel close to God? When did I feel more distant?
3. What have I learned about myself today? Am I pleased with this insight?
4. Who do I want to BE tomorrow? How can I BE that person?
5. What do I look forward to in my day tomorrow?

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Rev 3:20

Notes: Share with God what you are thankful for, review your feelings, ask God to help you to show you where He was in your day, where you found Him and missed His actions, ask Him what you did well and what you could of done better. Ask Him for help for tomorrow. Remembering He will guide you gently and lead you all along with way.

THE EXAMEN: GRACE AWARENESS

The Daily Examen is a prayerful experience of God. Experience alone does not teach us much, it is when we reflect on our experience that we really begin to learn. The Examen can help us see God's hand in our daily-lived experience. It's a simple prayer that has the capacity to transform our lives by helping us become more aware.

Step 1 Preparation

- Slow your mind and calm your body and gently relax into God's presence. Imagine God welcoming you.

Step 2 Review the Day with Gratitude

Ask God to help you be grateful and honest as you look back on your day, let yourself see your day as God sees it. ³ *Let the day wash over you*, savor what God shows you.

- Notice any joys and delights; and focus on the day's gifts. ... be specific.
- Look at the day, look at the work you did, look at the people you interacted with. What did you receive from them? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.
- What were the blessings today? _____

Step 3 Review the Day Again Notice Your Feelings

Prayer over the Significant Feelings that Surfaced as You Replay the Day:

God communicates not only through insights (such as in reading and praying the scriptures) but also through our 'interior movements' - feelings, emotions, desires, attractions, repulsions, and moods. Feelings are neither positive or negative; it is what you do with them that raises the moral questions. These 'movements' tell you about the direction your life is going.

³ An Ignatian Prayer Adventure: Week 2: Finding God in All <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-spiritual-exercises/an-ignatian-prayer-adventure/week-2>

- Notice moments when you were fully alive, times when you felt at peace, joyful, happy, comforted, whole, your best self, and moments when you feel close to God. Allow some of these moments to come to mind. These are times of consolation.
 - Pick a moment that you feel most grateful for and stay with it, savor it. Notice how God is drawing you to more of those experiences. Take some time to give thanks to God.
- Now remember anything that you are less grateful for. Experiences that caused you to feel drained of energy, frustrated, irritated, angry, sad, alone, isolated, unaccepted, fragmented...less than your best self.
 - Bring these memories before God; ask God to bring you the healing you need.

Step 4 Choose one feature of the day and pray from it

- Asked 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 moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may seem something that's rather insignificant. Look at it.
- Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart. Whether it be intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

Step 5 Look Forward to Tomorrow with Hope

- Look forward to tomorrow. Ask God to give you grace for tomorrow's challenges.
- Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what is coming up. Are you doubtful, cheerful, apprehensive, full of delightful or anticipation?
- What do you think you particularly need for tomorrow: strength, energy, patience, courage? Ask for that gift.

<http://www.jesuitinstitute.org.za/>

IGNATIAN PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURES

Ignatius taught 2 different ways of prayers with the scriptures using our mind and heart, memory and will. He considered all of our senses, a full integrative way of entering into the present.

Insights

God is a God of surprises, let God surprise you

MEDITATION

Is a Mental Prayer (Mind) Is a Mental Prayer in reading and re-reading a selection in which we seek to discover on each reading more of an understanding of what God has for us. Then reflecting upon what words, images, memories or ideas that were is brought to mind - *here we now listen to the heart using our intellect and memory.*

CONTEMPLATION

Is an Imaginative Prayer (Senses) where we use our imagination to bring to life the experiences of being there. We allow ourselves to be caught up as in a movie or a book. Quiet reflection, patient noticing – is how we sense God who is ever-present using *our imagination and interior senses*.

- Examples: Jesus used imagination in his teaching on how to live life – ex: the Parables. Here we are to make present for you a mystery of Jesus’ life in a way that is meaningful for you.

Contemplation for Christians is a way of knowing Jesus in the gospels, to desire to become more like Jesus’ disciples in following him, listening to him, seeking to understand, him, responding to his call.

- **Composition of Place** – In reading the scripture scene with action, we imagine the scene as a video and enter in, become a bystander or a participant – ex: Moses on Mount Sinai or The Nativity, or in one of the healings. *To grow more full in faith knowledge.*
- **The Prayer with the Interior Senses** – In reading the scripture scene we place ourselves right in there – we now add our senses to imagine - seeing, hearing smelling, touching, tasting as a bystander or a participant – ex: The Passover, The Last Supper. *To grow in a unique and personal relationship with Jesus in our felt knowledge.*

As you finish this time of prayer, take a moment to speak person-to-person with Christ, sharing what comes up from your heart – this is called *a Colloquy Prayer*. Write some notes in your journal.

Notes: You may return to a phrase, word, image, or those interior movements that were particularly strong may be what the Holy Spirit is nudging you to consider to remember or reflect upon as you go through your day or week.

IGNATIAN MEDITATION

Lectio Divina means holy reading. This is a method of prayer going back to the early monastic tradition. The monks gathered in chapel to hear a member of the community reading from the Scriptures. In this exercise they were taught and encouraged to listen, not just hear with their ears, but to **listen with their hearts**. From their hearts they could experience deeply, reflect and respond with an increased love for God. *Here we use our intellect and memory.*

This method of mental prayer is simple. **Read a passage 3 times**. After each time you read, ask a question, reflect and respond. You may read the scripture passage aloud to hear with your ears the words.

MEDITATION QUESTIONS

- Reading: What does the Text Say?
- Meditating: What is God Saying to Me Through the Text?
- Prayer: What do You Want to Say to God about the Text?
- Action: What Do You Want to Do Based on Your Prayer?

AWARENESS

Awareness: We are called to become aware of our thoughts, feelings, desires, longings, intuitions, attractions, resistances, or those unnamed senses have changed. In doing these spiritual exercises, our awareness increases, it moves **from the literal > to the affective > to the spiritual...from our head > to our heart > to our soul.**

Read/ Reflect/Respond

First Time Reading: *The Literal Level*. Read to understand.

- Question: Ask yourself what is happening in the passage? Who is there, what is being said, where it is etc.?
- Notice a word, phrase or image that has resonated within you.
- Take a moment to savor the insight or a new understanding of the passage.
- Note down those in few words or phrase or image what it was about.

Second Time Reading: *The Affective Level*. Reflect to find a personal connection.

- Questions: What does this passage say to me or connect with my current situation? What are my thoughts and feelings upon reading this a second time?
- Notice how the rereading has affected you.
- Take a moment to savor the insight, feeling, or a new understanding.
- Note down a few words to describe how it has affected your thoughts or feelings

Third Time Reading: *The Spiritual Level*. Respond to let the Holy Spirit guide you.

- Questions: What is the message for me? What is God trying to say to me?
- Reflective Listening: Sitting in silence, await the sense of the Holy Spirit; this allows your experience with a deeper awareness of God's taking the initiative to speak with us. Let the Holy Spirit in. An answer, a prompting: It comes up into you... as a new thought, feeling, an image, word or phrase from scripture or through a poem or song.
- Response: Share with God follow the prompting of your heart, it could be through words or just sitting with Him in gratitude and love.
- Write down a few words about the experience and describe how it has affected you.

End with a Closing Prayer – Our Father or a simple prayer of the heart's gratitude.

IGNATIAN CONTEMPLATION - IMAGINATIVE PRAYER

God speaks through our imaginations as well as through our understandings, memories, thoughts, intellect, desires, feelings, and emotions.

Jesus knew how important was one's imagination for he taught in parables – i.e., the prodigal son, the widow's mite, the rich young man, the good Samaritan, the one lost sheep. He asks us to be with the Gospel passage as if it is happening now for the word of God has life... words live eternally in our the past, present and the future... they will always be present, alive in the moment.

Ignatius proposes many scenes from the Gospels for imaginative contemplation—about 50 of them in all. Most of them are scenes of Jesus doing things, on the move, ministering, interacting with others. Ignatius doesn't want us to just think about Jesus but wants us to experience the Word made flesh. He wants Jesus to fill your senses. He wants you to meet him.

There are two types of Ignatian Contemplation:

- 1) Composition of Place
- 2) Prayer with the Interior Senses

In this prayer time, Holy Spirit will make present for you a mystery of Jesus' life in a way that is meaningful for you now when praying this way.

Note: Some people's imaginations are very active, so they construct a vivid movie-like scenario with a Gospel passage. Others will enter the scene, reflect on the scene and mull over the activity. Vividness is not a criterion for the effectiveness of this kind of prayer; engagement is.

CONTEMPLATION QUESTIONS

The Composition, by imaging the place as in a movie, we come to experience God in action.

- What is going on? Where am I in this scene, Where do I want to be?
- What do I see, hear, smell, feel, taste?
- What is God sharing with me?
- What is this experience like for me?
- What do I want to share with God?

IN CONTEMPLATION WE BEGIN TO ENTER THE MYSTICAL

In contemplation, we bring all our powers, our memory, our understanding, senses, perception, imagination, judgment, and decision-making faculties of the soul. Though the words of scripture are in the past to us; all is present to God.

For each of us can pray just as easily as we breathe; for it is God who is helping us to pray. Here we sit under the gaze of God, and we ask today what would we want what do we need what we desire.

WHAT DO YOU ASK OF GOD TODAY?

In contemplation, we use our memory, our imagination, and our free will. Here we call up images and feelings which we can approve or reject them.

Here we enter the event, as if we are there, hearing, seeing, and feeling. We allow ourselves to enter into the interior experience of the event of God and of real people.

- Examples: You can feel the stillness of the paralytic as Jesus reaches out to touch him. Feel the grief of Mary's heart when she leaves Jesus for the last time. You feel Jesus's joy in the little children who climb all over him.

Here we experience the dynamics of the event it is the **"inscape"** of thoughts and feelings. As we enter in we first become a spectator, then you imagine that you touch them and they touched you. This kind of prayer goes beyond comprehension. The prayer itself is an experience, very real and as memorable as any other event... it begins the mystical journey.

Here are you re-envision using the God-given powers in prayer. We focus our imagination for the sake of coming to know and to love.

We come into God's falling into his loving gaze. We offer ourselves entirely over to God.

COMPOSITION OF PLACE

In order to grow more fully in faith knowledge, Ignatius invited us to engage in this type of contemplative prayer. It is different from the other traditions that use the word Contemplation referring to the stage of prayer in which we are 'being with God in silence,' such as in the Prayer of Quiet or at the end of movements of Lectio Divina (Contemplatio).

HOW TO BEGIN

- Select a passage from one of the Gospels in which Jesus is interacting with others.
- Close your eyes and reconstruct the scene as in a movie using your imagination.
- Observe what is going on in the scene.

What does Jesus look like? How do the others react to him? What are the people saying to one another? What emotions fill their words? Is Jesus touching someone?*

As you visualize the scene, note your desire to be there.

At some point put yourself in the scene perhaps as an observer, or as one lining up for healing, or as one helping others to Jesus.

As you finish this time of prayer, take a moment to speak person-to-person with Christ, sharing what comes up from your heart – this is called a Colloquy Prayer. Write some notes in your journal.

PRAYER: THE COLLOQUY⁴

Colloquy is a dialogue during or after any of the prayer periods of your Spiritual Exercises or at any time in the moment. It is a conversation of sharing, petitioning, interceding, adoration or in thanksgiving God our creator.

REFLECTION

*WRITE DOWN TIMES YOU SENSED GOD TRIED TO
AROUSE IN YOU AN AWARENESS OF HIM.*

*HOW WAS THAT EXPERIENCE FOR YOU? WHAT WORDS
WOULD YOU WANT TO SAY TO GOD ABOUT THAT
EXPERIENCE?*

PRAYER OF THE INTERIOR SENSES

This is a prayer form in which one applies one's senses to the Composition of Place [seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling] in another imaginative way, thus making the scene become more real and alive.

Here we ask for the desire for Jesus to open our 5 senses: eyes, ears, touch, smell and taste. Here we became aware of the life of Christ, the mystery before you, and all that you sense of His creation.

HOW TO BEGIN

After reading the selected text slowly you enter the scene through your imagination. As above visualize it as in a movie. Place yourself in the event. There you became aware of all aspects of the scene by imagining and sensing it through your 5 senses. Then through inspiration become an active participant.

Examples:

⁴ Notes from God and You and Living in God

- I *see* the people, and what is going in the event in scripture verses
- I *hear* what the people are saying, volume and tone of their voices, the noise of the street etc.
- I *feel* the objects around me – the soil under my feet, the breeze, the clothes I am wearing, the sun on my face
- I *taste* the fish they are cooking at the sea of Galilee, I taste the wine at the wedding of Cana
- I *smell* the sea air, the spring flowers, the dead corpse of Lazarus

As you finish this time of prayer, take a moment to speak person-to-person with Christ, sharing what comes up from your heart - this is called a *Colloquy Prayer*.

Write some notes in your journal on what you sensed.

SCRIPTURE: A KISS OF ETERNITY

Scripture is where God is present who speaks to me

The ancients insisted especially upon the link between scripture and the beatific vision. Scripture opens up the gates of the heavenly kingdom; to understand it here below is already a kiss of eternity.

“When Scripture recounts eternal events as though they were happening in time it causes those who are accustomed to temporal thoughts, to pass imperceptibly to those of eternity.” St. Gregory

Reading is seen as an anticipated vision of divine glory

This is how the Lord leads the soul to intimacy – successive stages of intimacy corresponding to the 3 senses of Scripture: historical, moral, mystical.

QUOTES ON LECTIO DIVINA⁵

THE MAJESTY OF SCRIPTURE

For the majesty of Scriptures is paramount - the text breathed. Yet today due to our critical minds we tend to read the text as a history book.

THE TABLE OF GOD

For the sacred Scripture is the table of God where we are fed, where we understand what we, and what we must desire, and to Whom we must lift up our eyes ... There we drink from the fountain of divine knowledge.

This is not abstract knowledge we gain in Lectio Divina, it is saving knowledge. The experiences in the tradition confirms what St. Paul's words to Timothy. “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching for reproof for correction and for training in righteousness so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16 -17. The majesty of Scripture as compared to our human language pales before the transcendence of the words; scripture is a heavenly letter.

⁵ Praying the Bible: An Introduction to Lectio Divina by Mariano Magrassi, OSB

IMAGINATION

“Scripture is where God is present who speaks to me - I hear His words as if I could see His mouth speaking” H. de Lubac.

This understanding of the Bible as having a conversation with God comes with the flood of images to express the Bibles’ meaning for the spiritual life.

A LIVING BOOK

Since it is a living word Scripture implies the present of the life-giving Holy Spirit, and the Word of God expressed therein. (pg 28)

Entering the human heart, God’s divine touch sets its strings vibrating. (pg29)

AN INEXHAUSTIBLE MYSTERY

Growth in insights into the realities and words that are being passed on... This comes about through contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts.

IN SEARCH OF THE BELOVED

It is not so much a matter of reading a book as of seeking Someone. Exegesis is not technique; it is mysticism. [Exegesis is a critical explanation or interpretation of a text.]

DEVOTIONAL JOURNALING

Devotional Journaling, as a spiritual practice, is simply noting down your experiences and reflections from your daily life in and about God and you, which you share with God.

A place where you pour out your feelings and thoughts to God; it is a place where you can return to see how you have either grown or pull back from growing in love of God and others.

It can contain notes as simply as your experience of the bird's song one morning, to a complex systematic study and reflection project on a biblical passage. Its about you and God in relationship, through all your encounters with and through God with people, places, and all things.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT GOES INTO A SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

- Reflections about what you have sensed around you or observed during your everyday or places you have been (travels, retreats)
 - Your experiences, and insights you had along the way
- Reflections on what others have said or written that inspired you.
 - What was it about that moved you?
- Your experiences when meditating on your daily readings of biblical passages or other spiritual writings.
 - What happened, what insights you had, and your feelings – positive or negative?
- Prayers you've prayed
 - Formal (prayers by others)
 - Your personal prayers (requests, thanksgiving)
 - Your cries out to God
- Letter writing to; talking to and with; or just being with God.
 - What you have experienced when sharing with God {when writing, meditating, during one of your mental chats, or just being with God during the day}.
 - What insights did you come away with about you and God, what promptings did you sense were from God.
- Write about the ways you've surprised yourself, such as what you've discovered while looking back in your journal.
- Your or other's photos, drawings, doodles

GUIDELINES

- The most important thing is to be honest with yourself and God, by being open to the gentleness of the Holy Spirit who will guide and enlighten you towards the truth.
- Have a sturdy notebook, keep it handy, write in it at the same time each day, and when you have been prompted. Also note the date for each entry.
- Look to connect it with the liturgical year or seasons of the year or the spiritual program you are taking.

PRAYER OF QUIET (OR PRAYER OF THE HEART)

(PRAYER OF SILENT LOVE, A MYSTICAL PRAYER)

Prayer of Quiet, Prayer of the Heart, also called the Prayer of Silent Love, is a mystical prayer of Silence.

In the Christian traditions Meditation mostly often refers to thinking about sacred events or writings. While in the Eastern religions meditation is a thoughtless activity. Prayer of Quiet or also called Centering Prayer is a method of Silent Prayer using a focusing word. Christian Meditation, or Christian Contemplation are terms used interchangeable at different times in history depending upon the tradition for the same method – ultimately it is all done in Silence.

- This type of Contemplation is a prayer of our entire selves desiring to be in union with our Creator. Sitting in silence is just being with and loving God as we await the manifestation of God's presence.
 - It is what we do....to be
- Infused Contemplation in particular in the Carmelite Christian tradition, by using the term infused, is one in which we come to experience a gift from God of His grace in which we are lifted up into a state experiencing the mystical union.
 - It is what God does to us....
 - We may or may not be given the gift of infusement, yet sitting and awaiting in His presence is enough of a gift. This is a level of contemplation called the Mystical prayer.

HOW TO BEGIN:

Find time to be at peace in quiet for 20 minutes. Sitting comfortably, select a word or phrase or become aware of your breath, which you can use to bring any thoughts that drift off back into silence. Begin with an opening prayer. Sitting in silence, experience resting in the love of God being with you. Any thoughts that intrude, just let them drift away.

- Stillness – outer body – centering yourself
- Silence – interior mind – by attention towards the gaze of God
- Surrender – - take and received all of me - your body, mind, heart, and soul

CENTERING

In centering ourselves, we gather in those scattered thoughts, emotions, and feelings. Here we enter into the core of ourselves; in that area where we are not alone; where we sit in stillness and silence, bringing our attention towards the one Who is, the Holy Spirit who resides within us.

Centering it's not an end in itself, but it is the beginning wherein those moments we enter into a conscious internal encounter to dialogue with God our Creator, who is continuously creating us, moment by moment.

We begin by bringing our attention to each part of your body, sensing the tension in our face and neck, sensing the pressure of your clothes on your shoulder, feeling the position of your arms and hands, the weight of the chair and floor onto your back and feet, sensing all of your physical self.

Now slowly and gently move your attention to your breath, breathing in and breathing out, allowing the air to move freely.

Allow your thoughts and the sounds around you; to come and go without trying to figure them out, let them go on their own.

Now we begin our divine reading.

PRAYERS OF ST. IGNATIUS FOR THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

ANIMA CHRISTI

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds, shelter me.
From turning away, keep me.
From the evil one, protect me.
At the hour of my death, call me.
Into your presence lead me,
To praise you with all your saints,
Forever and ever. Amen.
(a favorite prayer of St. Ignatius)

SUSCIPE

Take, Lord, Receive"

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding, and my entire will
-- all that I have and call my own.
You have given it all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.
Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace.
That is enough for me.

THE 3 QUESTIONS

In the meditations on sin, Ignatius suggests that we place ourselves before the cross and consider three questions that echo throughout Spiritual Exercises

- What have I done for Christ?
- What am I doing for Christ?
- What ought I do for Christ?

Return to these questions throughout the retreat.

A PRAYER: BY TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

Patient Trust

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.

