

# A Year of Prayer

October 2005 - May 2006



## Guide Book

*Explanation:*

The culminating exercise of the Spiritual Exercises is entitled, “The Contemplation to Attain Love.” In it Saint Ignatius asks to us reflect on

“[H]ow God dwells in creatures... So He dwells in me and gives me being, life, sensation, intelligence. ...[C]onsider how God works and **labors** for me..., how he conducts himself as one who **labors**.”

Earlier in the same Contemplation, Ignatius observed that love is shown not so much in words, but in deeds, especially in mutual sharing. And it is in God’s **giving** in **laboring** that we are invited to understand and respond to God.

Drawing on the inspiration of the Spiritual Exercises, Decree 26 of General Congregation 34 builds on this insight and conviction, when it says:

The God of Ignatius is the God who is at work in all things: **laboring** for the salvation of all as in the Contemplation to Attain Love ...

For a Jesuit, therefore, not just any response to the needs of the men and women of today will do. The initiative must come from **the Lord laboring** in events and people here and now. God invites us to **join with him in his labors**, on his terms, and in his way. **To discover and join the Lord, laboring** to bring everything to its fullness, is central to the Jesuit way of proceeding. It is the Ignatian method of prayerful discernment, which can be described as “a constant interplay between experience, reflection, decision, and action, in line with the Jesuit ideal of being ‘contemplative in action’.” ... Such discernment reaches out, at the same time, to embrace the larger community of all those with whom we labor in mission. [Emphases added]

That is precisely the grace we seek in this Year of Prayer. We hope that through our praying, sharing, and discerning together, we might, by God’s grace, be more firmly bonded together as Lay and Jesuit Companions on mission with Jesus. And in the process our mission of serving the faith by promoting justice will be renewed in the many works of the Maryland Province.

That is the hope and prayer expressed in the title of this Guide Book.

## Table of Contents

Welcome — Fr. Tim Brown, S.J., Provincial .....	1
Suggestions for Using this Guide Book .....	3
Origin and Aim of the Spiritual Exercises .....	5
Ignatius’ Conversion Experience	
Summary View of the Spiritual Exercises	
Prayer Forms in the Spiritual Exercises	
The Use of Repetition .....	23
The Influence of Images on Prayer .....	25
Bartimaeus: a Role Model for Our Year of Prayer .....	29

### Seasons and Graces

#### *Gratitude*

Introduction to the Season of Gratitude .....	33
---	----

#### **The Creation Stories of Genesis 1 and 2**

The Glory of the Created Universe .....	39
The Glory of God the Creator	
As the Wise Initiator of Creation .....	43
As the Self-Giving Friend of us all .....	47
The Glory of Being Human	
As “breath of God’s breath and life of God’s life” .....	53
As “essentially social” family members .....	57
As “man and woman God created them” .....	63
As Stewards and Co-Creators with our Creator God .....	67

#### **The Creation Story of Jesus: the “Our Father”**

Ours is an “Abba” God .....	71
-----------------------------	----

We are “Kingdom People” .....	75
<b>The Creation Story of Ignatius</b>	
The Creating God of The First Principle and Foundation .....	79
The Laboring God of the Contemplation to Attain Love .....	83
Eucharist: The New Creation Story .....	87
Summary Reflection on the Grace of Gratitude	

## *Healing*

Introduction to the Season of Healing .....	97
<b>The lies imbedded in temptation and sin:</b>	
The lie about self-sufficiency .....	101
<i>What we learn about us, what we learn about God</i>	
The lie about God’s selfishness .....	105
<i>The truth that counters the lie</i>	
The lie about its benefits to us .....	107
<i>Be Ye Perfect</i>	
The lie about our prestige in the eyes of others .....	109
<i>Darkness and Light</i>	
The lie about our power over others .....	111
<i>Biblical Images of Sin</i>	
The lie about the advisability of secrecy .....	115
<i>Forgiveness</i>	
Discovering myself in discovering God .....	119

## *Call*

Introduction to the Season of Call	
The Trinity Asks, “What Shall We Do?” And Mary Responds! .....	123
<i>Contemplation of the Trinity</i> .....	125
<i>The Annunciation</i>	

The Unfolding Drama — the Infancy Narratives .....	129
<i>Ignatian Contemplation</i>	
The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand .....	131
<i>Jesus begins his public ministry</i>	
Peter .....	135
<i>The call to a sinful man</i>	
<i>The Rock</i>	
And the beat goes on... ..	137
<i>The call of the 12, 72, and others</i>	
The Call of the King .....	139
<i>The Call of the Temporal King</i>	
The Logic of Jesus .....	143
<i>To what and to whom are we called?</i>	
<i>Fall in Love</i>	
Under Whose Standard Will You Serve? .....	145
<i>The Two Standards</i>	
<i>A Scandalous Story</i>	
The Three Types of People .....	151
<i>A parable</i>	
<i>The jawbone, the wishbone, and the backbone</i>	
The People Who Were Deaf to the Call .....	155
<i>Jesus, the Innocent Victim</i>	
The Mission .....	159
<i>The Discernment to go to Jerusalem</i>	
<i>The Passion</i>	
<i>Christ’s Death Reveals Sin</i>	
<i>Resurrexit sicut dixit!</i> He has risen just as he said! .....	163
<i>Jesus Appears to His Mother</i>	
<i>The Scriptural Accounts of the Apparitions of the Risen Lord</i>	

## Co-Laboring

Introduction to the Season of Co-Laboring .....	171
The Original Sending Forth on Mission .....	173
The Original Community in Jerusalem .....	177
Reflections on:	
<i>Lumen Gentium</i>	
The Experience and Testimony of St. Paul	
The Mission of the Son and the Gift of the Spirit	
The Outward Movement of the Community from Jerusalem .....	185
Five Acts in the Drama	
The Deliberation of the First (Jesuit) Fathers .....	189
<i>The Original Jesuit "Identity and Mission Statement"</i>	
<i>Communal (Lay-Jesuit) Discernment</i>	
Faith and Justice .....	195
<i>General Congregation 32: "Faith Doing Justice"</i>	
<i>Sobering Statistics</i>	
Culture as the Doorway between Faith and a Just Society .....	203
Decree 26 of General Congregation 34, "Our Way of Proceeding" .....	209
<i>Fr. Pedro Arrupe's prayer</i>	
Gathering Our Gifts .....	213
<b>Appendix</b>	
Selection of Prayers .....	217
Bibliography .....	225

## A Word of Warm Welcome

I write to each of you — Jesuit and Lay Colleague alike — to welcome your participation in the Year of Prayer. At the heart of this Year is our desire to deepen the roots of our companionship and refresh the Ignatian vision that inspires every one of the works of the Maryland Province — our educational institutions, our parishes, and our social and spiritual ministries.

Our joining together in companionship is a matter of mind and heart. In joining minds people come to share some common convictions about who we are, how we grow as persons and how we help others to grow. In joining hearts we seek to deepen our shared commitments. Fired by similar desires and aspirations, purposes and ideals, we can forge effective action plans in our work that enable us to become companions on mission.

This is what motivated Ignatius of Loyola to draft his "Spiritual Exercises." Having experienced the joy, peace, and purposefulness of his own conversion from self-centered vanity to a life dedicated to helping others, he wanted to share his joy with others. He decided to formalize and make available to others the steps of his conversion process. These steps became an unfolding series of "exercises" to be done by people who desired to have — or deepen — a conversion of conviction, commitment, and loving service.

While still a layman Ignatius started guiding people through these exercises. Based on their shared experience of the exercises, some of these began to consider whether they could serve others better by banding together more permanently as companions on mission. After prolonged discernment for God's will for them, this community of friends decided to call themselves the Company of Jesus or, more popularly, "Jesuits."

Over the years there has been an emergence of gifted, well-educated, dedicated lay people who are devoted to the same kind of service that Ignatius envisioned from the start. The Jesuit General Congregation 34 in 1995 acknowledged this collaboration.

Partnership and cooperation with others in ministry is not a pragmatic strategy resulting from diminished manpower; it is an essential dimension of the contemporary Jesuit way of proceeding, rooted in the realization that to prepare our complex and divided world for the coming of the Kingdom requires a plurality of gifts, perspectives, and experiences, both international and multicultural. Jesuits, therefore, cooperate with lay women and men in the Church, with religious, priests, and bishops of the local church in which they serve, with members of other religions, and with all men and women of goodwill (GC 34, Decree 26, ## 551-552).

To deepen this kind of companionship among lay people and Jesuits who serve in the various works of the Maryland Province is precisely the aim of this Year of Prayer.

We will be doing what Ignatius and his first companions decided to do, and we will be doing it in a similar way. And, like all things Ignatian, the driving motivation will be in the service of our neighbor and for the greater glory of God (Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam: AMDG).

Decree 26 of General Congregation 34 lays out eight “characteristics” of the Ignatian way of living and working called, “Our Way of Proceeding.” It calls these characteristics “attitudes, values, and patterns of behavior ... that we need to draw upon today ... in the new situations and changing ministries in which we labor.”

These “attitudes, values, and patterns of behavior” are the graces or “gifts from God” that we will be praying for and disposing ourselves to receive from the Lord in the course of this Year together. They will come as we open ourselves ever more deeply for Gratitude, Healing, Call, and Co-Laboring — the unfolding graces that guide us through the Year.

In embarking on this Year I am convinced that we are responding to a clear call of God inviting us to deepen our union of minds and hearts for the sake of service. Through the Year let’s be mindful of one another, pray for each other, and offer one another whatever tangible help we can.

A closing expression of gratitude is in order. We not only walk in the footsteps of our predecessors, we stand on the shoulders of their achievements. Almost twenty years ago, then Provincial Father James A. Devereux, S.J., with the principal assistance of the late Father Clement Petrik, S.J., guided the Maryland Province of Jesuits through a very successful year-long experience of the Spiritual Exercises. The motivation then as now was renewal, personal and apostolic. The book they published, *Place Me with Your Son: The Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life*, though out of print, is still in use today.

I also want to thank Father James L. Connor, S.J., and his Mission and Renewal team. Father Connor has worked tirelessly on this entire booklet, and I am grateful to him for his dedication to this project. It is fitting that we remember during the Year of Prayer to pray gratefully for all those, both Jesuit and Lay, who have gone before us as well as for those who walk at our side sharing our Ignatian mission.

Yours in Christ,



Timothy B. Brown, S.J.  
Provincial, Maryland Province  
Society of Jesus

## Suggestions for Using This Guide Book

1. We have just heard Father Provincial Tim Brown invite us Lay and Jesuit Colleagues engaged in the works of the Maryland Province to join together in a Year of Prayer based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. The goal is to deepen the roots of our Jesuit-Lay Companionship and refresh the Ignatian vision that inspires our works. The theme of the Year is “Co-Laboring with the Living Lord.” It has four unfolding “Seasons,” each disposing us to grow in a particular grace from the Lord: Gratitude, Healing, Call and Co-Laboring.

2. The graces are the Lord’s to give, but throughout the Year, we will be disposing ourselves in various ways to receive them, not only as individuals, but as companions in particular ministries — educational, pastoral, spiritual, social — living together in a geographic region. Ideally, we will each engage in private prayer for about an hour a day; we will also spend 10 or 15 minutes daily doing the Ignatian Examen of Conscience; we will be members of small (8 to 10 people, a mix of lay and Jesuit) groups which meet every two or three weeks to share insights and inspirations from personal prayer; and, finally, with the assistance of a Regional Coordinating Committee, we will gather 3 or 4 times in the course of the Year with others in our Region who are making the Year of Prayer, in order to share our experience in a brief and well organized way. All of these exercises are in function of our major desire: to hear and to share with one another how the Lord seems to be leading us at this particular point in our history as Lay-Jesuit Companions on Mission.

3. This Guide Book, like the Spiritual Exercises themselves, aims simply to help us to be open and disposed, in mind and heart, to listen for and to respond generously to God who is living in us and our history, is laboring that our world become, ever more so, the Kingdom of God on earth, and is calling out to us to be faithful co-laborers with God and one another in this most demanding and rewarding of enterprises. It is the “pearl of great price” (Matthew 13:45-46).

4. After introductory material on St. Ignatius, the Spiritual Exercises, and ways of praying, this Book guides us through material on which to pray. The “Year of Prayer” runs for about eight months, i.e., from mid-October to early June. The Book presumes that retreatants have a Bible and a notebook for journaling.

The “Year” is divided, as we have said, into four “Seasons.” Each “Season” guides our desires for a particular grace. The first Season guides our desire for the grace of Gratitude; the second Season for Healing; the third Season for the grace of Call; and the fourth Season guides our desire for the grace of Co-Laboring. Reading the Introduction in this Guide Book to each of the four Seasons would give you an overview of the Year.

Each Season lasts for some weeks. Gratitude goes for 12 calendar weeks, Healing for 6 weeks, Call for 12, and Co-Laboring for 7. The length of the Seasons depends on the number of “sub-graces” identified for prayer under the major grace of the Season. In the Guide Book these “sub-graces” are called “Unfoldings of the Grace” (of, that is, Gratitude, Healing, Call, or Co-Laboring). Enough material is provided – we hope – under each of the “Unfoldings” for five or so meditations in the course of one week, though, of course, that will vary with the person praying. The Table of Contents is basically an outline of the Year.

These time-spans will not mesh exactly with the liturgical seasons, but they won't be in open conflict either. Gratitude will take us through Advent to our grateful expectation of Christ's birth at Christmas. Healing begins right after Christmas and will take us toward Lent. At that time we will start the Season of Call when we pray over Christ's birth, public ministry, and, in Holy Week, Christ's passion and death – calling others to discipleship all along the way. Then and finally, we enter the Season in which we pray to understand and embrace our call to Co-Laboring with the living Lord and with one another on mission as Ignatian Partners. On Pentecost we “burst out of the Upper Room” to proclaim with deepest gratitude and joy the Good News of Christ Risen and us with him.

5. Please feel free to use this Guide Book in the way which best suits you as an individual and/or as a group. Be realistic about your time constraints and be open to the Spirit as you feel led along this year-long path. Ignatius insists on such freedom in the Spiritual Exercises. The various institutional apostolates (higher education, parish, and so on) will also want to adapt use of the Guide Book to their own needs and desires.

6. Besides this Guide Book and the Resource Book of readings, feel free to use whatever additional materials assist you and/or your group. Given time constraints this Guide Book is quite modest and should be regarded simply as suggestive. In the expectation that it might be edited for use by Ignatian Partners of the “next generation,” suggestions for its improvement are most welcome! Throughout the course of the Year additional prayer material and up-dated information will be available on [www.mdsj.org/yop](http://www.mdsj.org/yop).

7. Finally, warm thanks are due to Diane Nicholson who not only edited this Guide Book, but contributed significantly to its content. Thanks, too, to Karaline Jackson for setting it up for and seeing it through publication.

With a pledge of prayer throughout the Year of Prayer, as well as a readiness to assist in any way, we are

The Province Mission and Renewal Team

Jim Connor, S.J.  
Kevin O'Brien  
H. Cornell Bradley, S.J.  
Agnes Muffoletto

## Origin, Aim and Process of the Spiritual Exercises

In an oft quoted speech to Jesuit Alumni of Europe in Valencia, Spain, on July 31, 1973, Father General Pedro Arrupe said that the goal of our educational process is to produce “Men for Others.” It has since become “Persons for Others.” He didn't mean people who occasionally or even often did charitable acts, but people whose life orientation was concern for others. They are persons for others. To help people become “persons for others” is as true of Jesuit parishes, retreat houses, social centers, and other works, as it is of Jesuit education.

To this end those who staff and run these Jesuit apostolates are, themselves, “persons for others” – and are continually deepening themselves in that orientation. To continue that deepening process is one of the principle goals of this Year of Prayer.

Service of others was the founding motivation and the primary characteristic of the Society of Jesus itself. In his book, *Ignatius the Mystic*, Harvey Egan, S.J., makes the point that Ignatian mysticism is one of service; it is not a “bridal” mysticism. That is, his spirituality isn't simply union with God or Jesus, but union-in-service – contemplative companions on mission together. It was a unique contribution to the Church's spirituality and self-understanding.

### Ignatius' Conversion Experience

This orientation originated in Ignatius' own conversion experience which we find described in his autobiography.

The opening sentences of the autobiography tell us that:

Up to his twenty-sixth year he was a man given over to the vanities of the world, and took a special delight in the exercise of arms, with a great and vain desire of winning glory.

In other words, up to his mid-twenties, Ignatius was driven by ambition and vanity. He was a show-off. Born in 1491, the youngest son of a Basque nobleman, serving first as a courtier and then a soldier, Ignatius was convinced that his life – if not the world – revolved around himself. Hardly, “a man for others!”

This life orientation and the self-image that went with it were crushed when both of his legs were shattered by a canon ball at a battle against French invaders at Pamplona. With legs so crippled Ignatius' chivalrous show-off days were over. To what should he turn now? This was the question he pondered as he lay recovering from several painful surgeries in the family castle at Loyola. His wondering was mostly by way of daydreams about “what ifs.”

There were basically two sets of daydreams, one originating in his recent past courtier experience about impressing a noble lady through gallant knightly behavior, the

other from stories he was reading about Jesus and some saints — quite uncharacteristically. They were the only books available to him at his brother’s castle at Loyola! The feelings he noticed himself experiencing in these daydreams and his subsequent reflection upon them were absolutely critical to his conversion — and indeed to the whole of his future life. Therefore, it’s well worth quoting the opening paragraphs of his autobiography (and even using them as a text for prayerful meditation).

“He had been much given to reading worldly books of fiction and knight errantry, and feeling well enough to read he asked for some of these books to help while away the time. In that house, however, they could find none of those he was accustomed to read, and so they gave him a Life of Christ and a book of the Lives of the Saints in Spanish.

By the frequent reading of these books he conceived some affection for what he found there narrated. Pausing in his reading, he gave himself up to thinking over what he had read. At other times he dwelt on the things of the world which formerly had occupied his thoughts. Of the many vain things that presented themselves to him, one took such possession of his heart that without realizing it he could spend two, three, or even four hours on end thinking of it, fancying what he would have to do in the service of a certain lady, of the means he would take to reach the country where she was living, of the verses, the promises he would make her, the deeds of gallantry he would do in her service. He was so enamored with all this that he did not see how impossible it would all be, because the lady was of no ordinary rank; neither countess, nor duchess, but of a nobility much higher than any of these.

Nevertheless, our Lord came to his assistance, for He saw to it that these thoughts were succeeded by others that sprang from the things he was reading. In reading the Life of our Lord and the Lives of the Saints, he paused to think and reason with himself. “Suppose that I should do what St. Francis did, what St. Dominic did?” He thus let his thoughts run over many things that seemed good to him, always putting before himself things that were difficult and important which seemed to him easy to accomplish when he proposed them. But all his thought was to tell himself, “St. Dominic did this; therefore, I must do it. St. Francis did this; therefore, I must do it.” These thoughts also lasted a good while. And then other things taking their place, the worldly thoughts above mentioned came upon him and remained a long time with him. This succession of diverse thoughts was of long duration, and they were either of worldly achievements which he desired to accomplish, or those of God which took hold of his imagination to such an extent that, worn out with the struggle, he turned them all aside and gave his attention to other things.

There was, however, this difference. When he was thinking of the things of the world he was filled with delight, but when afterwards he dismissed them from weariness, he was dry and dissatisfied. And when he thought of going barefoot to Jerusalem and of eating nothing but herbs and performing the other rigors he saw that the saints had performed, he was consoled, not only when he entertained these thoughts, but even after dismissing them he re-

mained cheerful and satisfied. But he paid no attention to this, nor did he stop to weigh the difference until one day his eyes were opened a little and he began to wonder at the difference and to reflect on it, learning from experience that one kind of thoughts left him sad and the other cheerful. Thus, step-by-step, he came to recognize the difference between the two spirits that moved him, the one being from the evil spirit, the other from God.

He acquired no little light from this reading and began to think more seriously of his past life and the great need he had of doing penance for it. It was during this reading that these desires of imitating the saints came to him, but with no further thought of circumstances than of promising to do with God’s grace what they had done. What he desired most of all to do, as soon as he was restored to health, was to go to Jerusalem, as above stated, undertaking all the disciplines and abstinences which a generous soul on fire with the love of God is wont to desire.

The thoughts of the past were soon forgotten in the presence of these holy desires, and they were confirmed by a spiritual experience, in this manner. One night while he was awake he saw clearly an image of Our Lady with the holy Child Jesus. From this sight he received for a considerable time very great consolation, and he was left with a loathing for his whole past life ... [I]t seemed to him that his spirit was rid of all the images that had been painted on it....For this reason it may be considered the work of God, though he did not dare to claim it or say more than to affirm the above.”

Luis Gonzalez de Camara, *St. Ignatius’ Own Story*, Chapter 1

There are several key things happening to Ignatius here which will make a lasting impression on him and which will shape his future life in service to others. To mention a few:

1. We see the personal conversion taking place before our eyes as he records this experience. His conversion will be from the “vanities of the world” and his “great and vain desire of winning glory” to concern for others in the example of Jesus, Dominic, and Francis. It was to become “A Man for Others,” as Father General Pedro Arrupe would put it some four hundred and fifty odd years later. For Ignatius it is a 180 degree re-orientation — even though, as he will shortly realize, it is still tinged with some vanity.

2. Notice how indispensably important his feelings are in enabling him to choose this change of life orientation. His initial excitement about doing great deeds for his noble lady eventually sours in his stomach. Vain-glory doesn’t sustain him. The peace, joy, and satisfaction at sacrificing for the good of others in the model of Jesus and the saints persist and continue to sustain him well after his reading about them.

3. On reflection he begins to discover the sources of these two different sets of feelings. The source of the feelings of peace and quiet joy at the prospect of service is the “good spirit,” while the source of his original delight at impressing the lady, which

eventually becomes emptiness and dissatisfaction, is the “evil spirit.” The spirits are of God and Satan. “[H]e came to recognize the difference between the two spirits that moved him, the one being from the evil spirit, the other from God,” we read in the autobiography.

4. Ignatius’ (not yet articulated) claim here is that in these “movements of spirit,” he can experience God and Satan working within him — or at least the effects of their activity.

5. Notice that when Ignatius takes the quiet time to heighten his awareness of his feelings he is able to name them and reflect on them in order to interpret or discern their meaning. He will gain, throughout his lifetime, ever greater facility in this process of heightening awareness of experience, reflecting on it, and interpreting its meaning — with a view to choosing to do what God is asking of him. This process of experience, reflection, decision, and action will become central to Ignatian spirituality.

6. Discerning the movements of God working within him will be a primary source of instruction, guidance, and direction for Ignatius in all his decisions throughout his lifetime. But there will be other sources of revelation and interpretation, all of which will work collaboratively with his interior experience of God to guide him. They are the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, the Christian community which lives, expresses, and interprets the life of the Risen Lord, the social, political, and cultural worlds in which Ignatius lived, and, finally, his own and others’ intelligent reasoning on the data of experience to understand it and to take the responsible actions indicated. These other sources of inspiration and guidance were already operative, however implicitly, in Ignatius’ original conversion experience. But the touchstone experience was and remained for Ignatius his own vivid awareness of God present and working within him. In the contemplation that closes the Spiritual Exercises, he says, “[God] dwells in me and gives me being, life, sensation, intelligence; and makes a temple of me, since I am created in the likeness and image of the Divine Majesty.” (n. 235)

7. We notice in his autobiographical account Ignatius’ lively imagination. He could spend two or three hours imagining how he is performing exploits of chivalry with his imagined noble lady looking on. He can imagine her reaction — and how he reacts to her. As he reads the Lives of the Saints, he can imagine himself doing heroic deeds in service to the Gospel, more heroically than Dominic or Francis. It is not surprising, then, that when he is composing the Spiritual Exercises he will ask retreatants to imagine the road that leads from Nazareth to Bethlehem and to hear and see what Mary and Joseph are saying and doing on the journey with their kinfolk. And at their arrival at Bethlehem, Ignatius advises the retreatant: “Imagine yourself as a young servant boy or girl beside Jesus’ manger in the stable. What do you see and hear?” And so it is with many of the meditations in the Exercises.

8. Ignatius was a man of “hands on,” “down-to-earth” practicality, not abstraction. That is why he counseled retreatants to use their senses: smell, touch, taste, hearing, and seeing. And he told them to combine imagination and sensation. Ignatius wanted to have and wanted others to have “real” knowledge, not “notional” knowledge — a distinction that Cardinal Newman popularized. “Notional” knowledge is theoretical;

“real” knowledge is empirical. It introduces us into a relationship with someone or something, engaging our affections and commitment. Ignatius didn’t want retreatants simply to think about God and others, in a notional way, as a spectator might. He wants them to be personally and actively engaged with God and others, interacting in an ever-deepening relationship.

9. Notice how Ignatius, through reflection on his own interior experience and activities, became familiar with the basic operations of our human consciousness: sensing, reflecting, struggling to understand, feeling, desiring, imagining, and being drawn toward desiring, loving, choosing and, finally, doing. We see that pattern presumed in the various graces he asks the retreatant to pray for. Look, for instance, at the opening grace of the Second Week of the Exercises: (1) to know Christ Jesus more intimately; (2) to love him more deeply, and (3) to follow him more closely. Whether he could describe and analyze this pattern theoretically or not, he was master of it in actual practice!

10. In Ignatius’ original conversion experience we notice his derring-do, his readiness to be generous, and all the best aspects of his spontaneous ambition. For instance, of his daydreaming about imitating Jesus and the saints he says that he was “putting before himself things that were difficult and important which seemed to him easy to accomplish when he proposed them.” This readiness, in a form purified of egoism, will remain central for him. He wanted always to do the “more.” In Latin it is the *magis*. And one of the mottos of his Religious Order would be “Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam” (AMDG), “For the Greater Glory of God,” rendered by the fuller service of our neighbor.

11. Finally, by reason of his vision of Mary and Jesus, Ignatius was convinced that God had confirmed the authenticity of his conversion and call. As a result, in the Exercises he will insist that we should seek confirmation of decisions we have reached in the process of discernment — not necessarily by visions, but by consultation with others and/or use of the various practices of reflection he recommends. Central here is his conviction that God is present and active in us and in human history. French Jesuit Maurice Giuliani, a revered authority of Ignatian spirituality, traces discernment through three stages: (a) feeling interiorly the movement of the Spirit, (b) evaluating whether this movement is genuinely of God, and (c) seeking confirmation. He implies that it is the third stage that is most often overlooked. (“Movements of the Spirit,” *Christus*, No. 4, October 1954, and English translation in *Finding God in All Things*, ed. William Young, S.J., Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1958.)

The point of this long eleven-point litany is simply to exemplify how thoroughly Ignatian spirituality is rooted in the experience of Ignatius himself, particularly his conversion experience. One of his close Jesuit friends and colleagues, Jerome Nadal, said, “The form of the Society of Jesus is in the life of Ignatius...God set him up as a living example of our way of proceeding.” And obviously the form of the Spiritual Exercises is in the life of Ignatius — beginning with his conversion experience from self-promotion to service, out of love of Jesus.



In the Resource Book for this Year of Prayer, there is a short history of Ignatius' life and the way his conversion experience played out in his gathering of companions, their deliberations leading to the founding of the Society of Jesus with the approval of the Pope, the progressive discernments and decisions to undertake particular ministries of service to others, the extraordinary growth of the Society, the spirituality and spirit that guided these activities ("Our Way of Proceeding"), and, finally, Ignatius' death and the passing of the baton to the next generation and beyond.

## Summary View of the Spiritual Exercises

1. The classic description or goal-statement is this: "Spiritual Exercises ... have as their purpose the conquest of self and the regulation of one's life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of any inordinate attachment." (SpEx 21).

The Exercises aim, in other words, to dispose the retreatant to receive the gift of self-forgetful freedom in order to hear accurately, respond faithfully, and continually follow Jesus, the Lord and Leader on whom Ignatius' eyes are resolutely set.

2. The Exercises, for the most part, are a series of meditations on select Scripture passages that the retreatant reads, ponders, and prays over in order to be informed and affected by them. The aim is to come:

- a. To understand and appreciate Christ and his mission: what it is for and what it fights against ("to know him more clearly"),
- b. To admire him ("to love him more dearly"), and
- c. To feel drawn to join with him in his struggle and to follow him on his mission ("to follow him more nearly").

These scriptural meditations move from Christ's birth and childhood, through his public ministry, to his passion, death, and resurrection. This is not just a chronology; there is, we discover, an unfolding personal and spiritual "logic."

3. The centrality of Jesus: Jesus is the love of Ignatius' life, as well as the pivotal figure in human history. In his person, ministry and death, Jesus embodied, revealed, and established the Kingdom, which God intends the human family to be and to live out. This People of God lives Jesus' life and lives out his Spirit, which sustains and guides them. For Ignatius, therefore, Jesus is the empowering source and the perfect model of the free person making life decisions well.

So retreatants of the Exercises spend many hours over many days contemplating Jesus. They ponder his mind and heart, his relationship with others, the way he thinks and acts and talks, what angers him, what makes him joyful, how he makes decisions, and the fidelity with which he fulfills them. They pray for a deeper attraction to Jesus and his way of life, and to be given his spirit, the Holy Spirit, in order to achieve it. Their prayer is that of St. Paul: "I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

4. Key "diagnostic" exercises: Interspersed throughout this series of scriptural meditations are special exercises which Ignatius developed in order to clarify the struggle between the contending forces of good and evil, God and Satan, Jesus and the "world" (in St. John's sense). We come to experience that this struggle is going on both "out there" in the world and "in here" in our own hearts and minds. Some of

these special exercises are:

- a. Viewing our world through the eyes of the Trinity;
- b. Considering Christ's call to us as that of a warrior seeking companionship in battle (remember that the young Ignatius was a soldier!);
- c. Understanding the forces of good and evil as two sets of "campaign strategies" and the "Standards" as banners under which soldiers march;
- d. Discovering, experiencing, and appreciating Christ as a "laborer" working here and now in history to overcome fear and self-preoccupation and to release our freedom for loving community with others.

5. Freedom building exercises: Also interspersed throughout the scriptural meditations are special exercises for testing, refining, and building up our freedom to choose the good and God's will for us. For instance, putting ourselves on our deathbed and looking back on the options we "faced;" giving advice to our best friend; or grading ourselves on the level or degree of our honesty and generosity. There is instruction about and exercises for getting in touch with our feelings—which both energize us and reveal our motivations to us as either worthy or unworthy, freeing or binding us, benefiting us and others or harming us.

6. Discerning and deciding: There is instruction and guidance in discernment of "spirits" (i.e., the sources of feelings that are trying to motivate us to action) and decision making (i.e., in choosing the good to which God calls us). This process includes:

- a. Getting the relevant data,
- b. Understanding and affirming it accurately,
- c. Weighing or discerning the relative merits of the various possible courses of action,
- d. Making the decision which "seems best in the Lord," and carrying it into action,

There are instructions about "Making an Election or a Choice of a State of Life," "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits," and doing the "Examen of Consciousness."

7. Ideal Outcomes:

- a. Personal renewal. If well made, the retreat will have a profound personal effect on the exercitant. For instance, the person will come to:
  - (1) Deeper self-knowledge;
  - (2) An experience of being loved unconditionally, even and especially in one's weakness and sinfulness;
  - (3) An awakening of generosity and compassion for the service of others and the world at large;

- (4) A perspective on the world which shares in God's own view as revealed in the "mind and heart of Christ;" and

- (5) An unleashing of freedom from the cramping preoccupations of self-regard, timidity, human respect, ambition, complacency, jealousy, prejudice, and egoism.

- b. Decisions. In the course of the retreat, the exercitant may also come to a decision about his or her vocation in life (e.g., marriage or celibacy); choice of career or type of employment (e.g., law, medicine, or education); life-style (e.g., voluntary poverty or simplicity, location of residence); or forms of voluntary service of the poor, either direct or in a research center on systemic causes of poverty).

- c. Habitual facility. Besides the fundamental gifts and achievements mentioned above, a person ideally emerges from the Exercises experienced in and perhaps already deeply committed to the habitual use of various exercises in order:

- (1) To gain and deepen self-knowledge;

- (2) To evaluate specific social situations;

- (3) To discern and decide concrete actions; and

- (4) To interpret and deal constructively with one's feelings like depression and discouragement or euphoria and enthusiasm.

---

## Prayer Forms in the Spiritual Exercises

In the first of his “Introductory Observations” to the Spiritual Exercises Ignatius mentions several forms of prayer that a retreatant may use in the course of her or his retreat.

[B]y this name of Spiritual Exercises is meant every way of examining one’s conscience, of meditating, of contemplating, of praying vocally and mentally, and of performing other spiritual actions, as will be said later. For as strolling, walking and running are bodily exercises, so every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all its disordered tendencies, and, then, to seek and find the Divine Will as to the ordering of one’s life ...are Spiritual Exercises.

(#1)

Below we describe these prayer forms:

1. Oral prayer
2. “The second method of prayer”
3. *Lectio divina* or Reading of Sacred Texts.
4. Meditation
5. Contemplation, and
6. The Examen of Consciousness
7. *Collatio*: A Method of Group Prayer

Before looking at each of them, it is good to recall the basic format Ignatius recommends for our prayer — whichever specific form we are using at the time.

- Become ***aware of our presence with God***. This can be done verbally, as in, “Lord, I know I am in your presence,” or non-verbally by just lifting our awareness to the realization of God’s presence, or also by gesture: feeling our pulse beat or heart beat or breathing and acknowledging that God is present within us as the ultimate source of our vitality and life. Stay in reverent awareness of our presence with God for a moment or two.
- ***Ask for the grace*** that we want at this time. The grace will vary according to what we are going to pray about, or what felt-needs or desires we have right now, or what God seems to be calling or moving us toward at this juncture.
- ***Recall what you are going to pray about*** right now and what form of prayer you are using — or at least the form you’ve chosen to start out with. Ignatius uses the language of “composing yourself” with the subject matter or the scene or the text for prayer. It’s like the way we “imagine ourselves” into a frame of mind for a serious conversation or interview or

class presentation or homily.

- **Proceed praying** with the form you've chosen. We will have more to say about each of them right below here. You may be praying for 15 minutes, or 30 minutes, or an hour or more.
- Close your prayer with what Ignatius calls "**a colloquy**," which is a conversation with God, and/or with Jesus, and/or Mary or one of the saints, and/or even with your own private "patron saints and role models," some living and some dead. This "direct discourse," person to person, face to face, is the high point of prayer. In such a conversation we are consciously engaged as a partner in a living relationship with God and others. In the process we and our relationship are becoming "real" and deeper. Who we are in this relationship depends on the kind of relationship we have at the moment. To God we might now be relating as a child of our "Abba," or as steward delegated by God with responsibility to do God's work in the world. To Jesus we may be relating shoulder to shoulder as a fellow worker, or face to face as a disciple in need of instruction or even forgiveness. And so with our saints and role models.
- End the prayer period with an Our Father. Take a 3 to 5 minute "breather" or break, and then pull out your diary or journal book. **Reflect back over the prayer period** and ask, "How did it go? What went on? How did I feel? What ideas came to me? Was I being called to do something? — or avoid something? Have I learned anything useful for future prayer periods? — how to pray better?" Record the high points for future reference.

This basic format (right above) will take different shapes depending on the prayer format and the time frame of your prayer right now. If you are simply saying the Our Father and the Apostles Creed, and it is taking about three minutes to do so, you might use only the first suggested step: become aware of God's presence. If you are meditating on a scripture text for a full hour, you will probably walk through the steps of the full process.

A second pre-note: you'll find that the prayer forms that follow have a way of leading into one another. For instance, saying the Our Father as a vocal or oral prayer readily becomes an exercise of "the second method of prayer." And "meditation" might subtly draw you into the prayer form called "contemplation" during an hour long prayer period. A good rule of thumb is, "Don't fight it;" allow yourself to be drawn by the Spirit. In your reflection and journaling after meditation, you will probably notice if slipping into an alternate prayer form has been an escapist evasion or a graced experience. As you can see, the final reflection is a mini-exercise of Ignatian discernment.

### **1. Oral prayer**

Oral or vocal prayer means saying prayers that have been previously composed and recorded. There are many such wonderful prayers. The first and finest, of course, was

composed by Jesus himself: the Lord's Prayer. To Mary we pray the "Hail Mary" and the "Hail, Holy Queen." Another is the beautiful prayer of Francis Assisi, which begins, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace." "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful" is another. There are many inspiring and consoling psalms such as Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Some prayers are to be found in an Appendix to this Guide Book.

Praying prayers like this is a way of entering into God's presence and relating to God very personally and intimately. The fact that the prayer has already been composed by others enables us to pray readily, to relate easily to God, and also to relate to the prayer composers and to others who make up "the communion of saints." Saying them frequently makes the sentiments and desires of these prayers "our own." Learning them and saying them by heart forms our own heart and shapes our mind when we are not even advertent to it. Doing oral prayer can be especially helpful when we are tired or distracted.

### **2. "The second method of prayer"**

It's called the "second method," because it is the prayer form that Ignatius mentions second in a prayer-list in the Exercises. (#250-257) It uses oral or vocal prayers, but takes us beyond simply saying them. It asks us to pause for a while over each word or phrase or sentence in order to mull its meaning and feel its attraction more profoundly. Some people take twenty minutes or more saying an Our Father this way. In fact, Ignatius uses the Our Father in his explanation of this method in the Exercises:

Keeping eyes closed or fixed on one place, say "FATHER," and continue meditating on this word as long as meanings, comparisons, relish and consolation are found in the considerations pertaining to this word. Do the same on each word of the OUR FATHER, or of any other prayer that one wishes to use for this method (#252)... If in one or two words there is abundant matter for thought and much relish and consolation, do not be anxious to go on, even though the whole hour be taken up with what has been found. When the hour is finished, say the rest of the Our Father in the usual manner. (#254) Then, turn and in few words address the person to whom the prayer was directed, asking for the virtues or graces that you need most. (#257)

### **3. Lectio divina or reading of sacred texts.**

Read a Scripture passage through thoughtfully to see what it says. Read it through a second time (or even a third time) and see what strikes you. You might be drawn by a phrase or sentence or thought to take a journey along a path of reflection. Let yourself think about it. What is it saying to you? What feelings are you experiencing? What is the message for you? What is God possibly saying here? Listen to God and let yourself go where God is leading.

Then set this experience back into the full context of the scriptural passage by re-reading the passage all the way through again. Does the full text complement, refine, or modify what you had been praying and feeling earlier? Be especially aware of your feelings.

Conclude with the kind of colloquy we described above. Say an Our Father. And, after a pause, do your reflection and journaling.

#### **4. Meditation**

Just as saying Oral Prayers can lead us into “the second method of prayer,” so too “lectio divina” on a passage of scripture or other inspired writing can sometimes lead us quite naturally into meditation, and, in turn, meditation may lead us on to contemplation.

The usual distinction between meditation and contemplation is that in meditation we use our minds more, while in contemplation it is our hearts that predominate. Or, to say the same thing another way, in meditation we are principally concerned to understand, while in contemplation we are principally concerned to feel. Or, again, when we “think” it tends usually to be about “something” — even when it is something about a person; whereas in contemplation we are affectionately engaging in a personal relationship — often wordlessly and non-conceptually.

In point of fact we are engaged in both understanding and in affectionately relating in both these forms of prayer, i.e., meditation and contemplation. It is a question simply of which predominates. We humans are always and invariably “feeling-thinkers” and “thinking-feelers.” It has been recently re-discovered as “emotional intelligence.” (See the book by that name authored by Daniel Goleman, Bantam Books, NY, 1995.) Moreover, Ignatius insists that those walking the path of his spirituality are “contemplatives even [and especially] in action.” His spirituality, as we have seen, is motivated by the need for and expresses itself in active service of others in company with Jesus. And he means that activity to be a contemplative experience. Ignatius finds God present and working in people in soup kitchens and at summit meetings of world leaders, at birthday parties and prison executions, on Beltways and dirt roads. To be true to his spirituality — his specific call from God — Ignatius even resisted mystical visions at some points in his life, seeing them as at least distractions, and possibly temptations.

The way meditation differs from contemplation is exemplified in Ignatius’ treatment of basically the same subject matter — God’s creating — in two different exercises: “The “First Principle and Foundation” which opens the Spiritual Exercises and “The Contemplation to Attain Love” which closes the Exercises. We will speak of the “Contemplation” below under contemplative prayer. Here we simply observe that “The First Principle and Foundation” reads like an organizational mission statement that sets out goals, lays out means, gives examples, and instructs us regarding the conditions required for utilizing these means effectively. “We humans are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and thereby be saved. All else is given us as means to achieve this end. In our use of them, we are to ... Therefore, in your decisions always bear in mind the end for which you are created.” It is essential, Ignatius feels, that we understand this real-worldview, and act on it. But experience with this meditation — this thinking it through and personally appropriating its implications for us — shows how it arouses us to enormous gratitude, affection, loyalty, and commitment to walk steadfastly on the pattern God offers us in his continual creative activity.

In doing the Spiritual Exercises we meditate on Scripture passages much as we do on “The First Principle and Foundation.” After the opening steps of the Ignatian format (described above), we come to the heart of the prayer exercise by reading the text under consideration in order to *understand* what it is saying to us. We also read it or even re-read it to hear with our heart what it is evoking in us — as we do in the second method of prayer.

To become more deeply engaged with a text, Ignatius invites us to use our memories, imaginations, senses of hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, even tasting (as at the Eucharist at the Last Supper, for instance) and opening ourselves to empathy — all of which help us to get into the scene. When the Scripture text is a story, we can let ourselves to be drawn right into the story line as we read it, the way we are sometimes drawn out of ourselves and into a good movie or play or novel. We may assume a role in the drama — perhaps as a Pharisee, and try to think that way, and say something to Jesus or others in the dialogue of this drama. You’re “there,” watching, hearing, reacting, feeling. Relax and give free rein to those feelings and associations. In this way we are open to be more deeply formed into “the mind and heart of Jesus.”

End with your colloquy or colloquies — depending on how many persons you want to talk with. Speak to them out of your heart — out of the feelings you have experienced and are experiencing. Conclude with the Our Father. And go on, after a break, to your reflection, discerning “How it has gone with you.” What is the Lord saying to you? How are you being called? How have you responded how are you responding? Thank God.

#### **5. Contemplation**

By contrast to “The First Principle and Foundation,” the last exercise of the Spiritual Exercises, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” describes God as the continually giving Lover who is laboring incessantly in us and all reality, wooing us, calling us to reciprocate that love, and to do so not only by words but especially in deed — as God gives his love in deed. Thereby, we join God in his labor out of a profound — even mystical — union of love.

The “First Principle” primarily leads us to say, “If this is what life’s all about, I’d be stupid not to collaborate with God and his creative plan for us.” It is a movement of mind. The Contemplation primarily leads us to say, “For a God who has given everything of himself for love of me I will do anything.” It is a movement of heart.

Contemplation, according to Father Walter Burghardt, is “a long, loving look at the real.” Dom Bede Griffiths describes it as “Awakening to the presence of God in the human heart and in the universe which is around us... knowledge by love.”

The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality puts it this way on page 214: “Contemplation has to do with awareness of the presence of God apprehended not by thought but by love.... It is...a way of making oneself aware of the presence of God who is always there. ... It brings us [God and us] together. It unites. In contemplation my subjectivity becomes one with the subjectivity of God, and I as a separate entity seem to

disappear... While that true self is distinct from God, in the sense that I am not God, it is inseparable from God: it cannot be apart from God.

“What is true of the self is true of all reality. The contemplative sees everything in unity and therefore rejects any dualism that would separate God from creation. It is this experience of nondualism which ... resolves the problem so often cited in books on contemplation, namely, the apparent conflict between contemplation and action....”

We may start a prayer of contemplation with a text but the aim is to disengage from the message of the text and become personally united with God for however long a period that God gives the grace and inspiration for sustaining this relationship. A “mantra” — a name of God used repetitiously — might be helpful in sustaining the relationship, but it is not delivering a “message,” either to God or us. The experience is non-conceptual.

In contemplation, we should conclude, as usual, with a colloquy, and do our reflection after saying the Our Father and taking a break.

## 6. *The Examen of Consciousness*

a. Ignatius’ Presuppositions in proposing the Examen:

1) God’s creating is a continual sharing of Trinitarian life with all creation so that God’s Kingdom may come on earth as in heaven, i.e., “that all may be one, as Thou, Father in me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in us.” (John 17:21)

2) Personally present and working in creation and within human history, God is actively guiding us in our work for the full attainment of this “Kingdom-life” with God and one another in unity and peace, justice and love in quite concrete ways.

3) We humans can, with God’s grace, discern God’s active guidance to this end in our own daily history, and we can collaborate with God to promote the Kingdom’s realization in society.

4) The sign that it is God’s guidance is that it produces unity and peace among people and instills feelings of peace, love, and integrity in us. By contrast, what produces dissension and hostility in society, and selfishness and revenge in us, is a sign of the destructive activity of evil. (See Galatians 5:13-26)

b. Steps in Making the Ignatian Examen

1) We begin by being quiet interiorly. We ask to become aware of the many gifts of life and love that God has given us in his goodness and love for us. We respond with gratitude.

2) We pray for the grace we want in this Examen: to see clearly, to understand accurately, and to respond generously to the specific guidance God has been giving us in the course of this day’s unfolding history.

3) Review in memory the history of the day (or week or month or year) in order to identify the concrete instances of God’s presence and guidance and, perhaps also the activity and influence of evil. (The difference can be detected by paying attention

to strong feelings we experienced either at the time or now as we review these incidents or encounters. (See Presupposition #4 immediately above.)

4) Evaluate how we behaved in these instances: whether we collaborated with God and how well, or whether we yielded to the influence of evil in some way. Pray to feel and express gratitude for our response to God and, if necessary, regret for yielding to the promptings of evil.

5) Determine, quite explicitly, how to collaborate more effectively with God in the future and how, with God’s assistance, to avoid or overcome the influence of evil in the future. Beg God’s grace and assistance for our resolve and decisions.

Conclude with an “Our Father.”

**NOTICE** the basic pattern in the Examen: “experience, reflection, decision, and action.” According to Jesuit General Congregations 32, 33, and 34, this pattern is “the Ignatian method of prayerful discernment...the Jesuit ideal of being contemplative in action.” (See, for instance, General Congregation 34, Decree 26, no. 8)

## 7. *Collatio: A Method of Group Prayer*

A traditional method of group biblical prayer used by Jesuits and colleagues is called the *collatio*. It is a Latin word that means “bringing together” or “sharing.” This method permits small groups of Christians (seven to nine is ideal) to share their reflections and prayers over a particular passage from Scripture.

The method follows a simple structure:

- First, there is silent listening to the scriptural Word;
- Second, there is personal reflection on the passage by group members;
- Third, there is spontaneous prayer by group members in response to the Word.

Over the decades, there have been many variations on the *collatio*. The following is a version used in the Jesuit novitiate at Wernersville under the direction of Father George Aschenbrenner, S.J., when he was Director of Novices. Since then, it has been used and found helpful in school and parish groups.

*Opening:* The session leader begins with a prayer to the Holy Spirit for guidance during the meeting. An appropriate hymn, such as “Come, Holy Ghost,” can also be used to set an atmosphere of praise and supplication.

*First Reading - Silence:* The session leader slowly reads the chosen Scriptural passage. A period of silence follows, in which the individual members of the group can prayerfully ponder the Word.

*Second Reading - Reflection:* The session leader slowly reads the same passage a second time. After the reading, individual members make brief reflections on the read-

ing. Reflections should be personal, sharing with others a word or image that struck the listener or sharing a brief insight.

*Third Reading - Prayer:* The session leader slowly reads the same passage a third time. After the reading, individual members pray vocally to God in terms of a response to the Word. These brief, spontaneous prayers are often ones of petition, thanksgiving, or adoration.

*Conclusion:* The session leader concludes the session with a prayer. This could be accomplished by a spontaneous prayer synthesizing the grace of the meeting, an Our Father prayed by all, and/or a hymn of thanksgiving, such as “Now Thank We All Our God.”

This flexible form of group prayer permits many variations. Some groups will be more comfortable with silence, others with song, others with more personal sharing. After using this method with various Jesuit and lay groups, I would caution that most of us tend to rush too quickly into the second stage of reflection, where we are often too prone to speak at length. A good measure of silence after the first reading and sufficient time for brief but heartfelt vocal prayer after the third reading is often helpful for attending to the Word.

Many *collatio* groups often use the gospel appointed for the upcoming Sunday Mass as the scriptural text for their prayer. The method, however, can be used easily to permit groups to share prayerfully their responses to scriptural passages which dwell on the Graces of the Province’s Year of Prayer: Gratitude, Healing, Call, and Co-Laboring as Ignatian Companions with the Lord.

## The Use of Repetition

Repetition is an important way to deepen our experience of God’s presence in our lives. St. Ignatius recommended its use both during the directed retreat and for one’s daily prayer exercises. Repetition can be utilized both when my prayer is especially rich and fruitful, and also when it is difficult and uninspiring. I may find it helpful to pray over the same passage of scripture, or the same topic several days in a row, discovering new insights and nuances, and allowing God to penetrate my consciousness more deeply. Repetition is NOT repeating the material for prayer as one repeats a study assignment for more thorough understanding; nor does it mean that I return to the same matter for prayer in order to dig for something new or different; nor does it mean that one always returns to all the material of the last prayer period.

Repetition IS returning to those points where I have experienced “greater consolation, desolation or greater spiritual appreciation” [from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius #62]. Hence I return to those points where I have experienced significant movements; not to the whole scripture passage itself; not to a parallel scripture text from another Gospel. Rather I return to the remembered experience and, more importantly, to those points of the prayer exercise or parts in scripture where the experience occurred.

For example, I am using my imagination in praying over the Baptism at the Jordan. In my review after the period of prayer I notice that I was with Jesus but his back was to me and I had a feeling of sadness. So in the next period of prayer I return to the place where Jesus was turned away from me, and the experience of sadness occurred. A second example might be that I am praying over my cooperation with evil, my sinfulness, and I am requesting from God a deeper awareness of those hidden disordered tendencies that affect the decisions I make. This is now being given to me. In my review I have a sense that the Spirit desires to show me more. So I keep on returning to the same material.

When Ignatius writes in the Spiritual Exercises — “I will remain quietly meditating upon the point in which I have found what I desire without any eagerness to go on till I have been satisfied.” — he means not only within the one period of prayer, but also over several periods of prayer, and even days of prayer. Through repetition we allow God’s mystery to touch our mystery at deeper levels of our being. Often, through repetition, a kind of simplification of our own activity takes place as we become more and more passively receptive to God’s activity. Often what starts off as meditation, through the use of repetition, eventually becomes stillness.

*Adapted from the work of John Veltri, S.J.*

---

## The Influence of Images on Prayer

Experience suggests that it might be particularly important to pause for a moment on the way our images influence not only our praying, but our faith and its expression in decisions and behavior.

On page 33 of his excellent introduction to Ignatian spirituality, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear*, the English Jesuit David Lonsdale says,

Our images of God ... are the forms in which we represent God either inwardly for ourselves or externally to others. These images, like the images that we have of other realities such as ourselves and the world in which we live, have a powerful influence on our behaviour ... help to give shape to our lives as Christians. If the dominant image I have of God is some kind of taskmaster, I will tend to see my Christian life largely as a series of tasks or duties to be performed in order to satisfy God.... [U]nder the dominance of images of this kind [many people]... often feel burdened and oppressed. On the other hand people for whom God is ... the father in Jesus' story of the prodigal son experience and live Christianity very differently: with more gratitude and love and correspondingly less fear.

Lonsdale goes on to develop the possible images people can have of God, self, others, and the world at large — and shows how profoundly they affect our outlook, moods, decisions, and behavioral patterns. Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein said, “A ‘picture’ held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.” “Picture for Wittgenstein is the same thing as “image” for Lonsdale. With a touch of humor, Wittgenstein explains why he’s bringing the power of “pictures” to our attention. “My aim is: to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense!”

There are a number of inaccurate images abroad that may be influencing us, often unbeknownst to ourselves. They are like the “default settings” on our computer programs. One of the aims of prayer and the Examen is to raise these images to conscious awareness, evaluate them, and choose them or not. It is in prayer and reflection that we can also replace them with a true and accurate image of God, ourselves, other people, the world we live in and the deepest purpose of our lives.

At the risk of caricature, but for whatever help they may be for prayer and reflection, here are some possible inaccurate images to think about.

1. The “watch maker God” of the Enlightenment philosophers. This God “wound up the world,” ourselves with it, and threw it out into space to tick away and do its best to survive and succeed. God “stayed home” in heaven. God, therefore, is “up there” and we are “down here.”



The truth, by contrast, is that God actively lives in us more intimately than our own breathing or desiring. The transcendent God above is the immanent God within. As transcendent God is of an altogether different, a divine, order of reality than we creatures are. But as immanent God is dwelling within the world he creates and the People he redeems. So Paul (and we) can say, “I live now not I, but Christ lives in me (and vice versa).”

2. The task master God: Lonsdale mentioned this image (above). It is the God with the big stick whose principal role is to catch us out and punish us. A dear friend who died much too young used to say, “The Catholic Church needs a motto. Maybe it could be something like a Hallmark Greeting that says, ‘When in doubt give guilt — the gift that keeps on giving!’” She admitted that it was her “default-set” image of God.

The truth, of course, is that God is totally and unconditionally forgiving of our sins. That’s the message that thunders from the cross on Calvary. We are punished, not for our sins, but by our sins. And certainly not by God.

3. The free standing, individualistic self. This is the tendency to imagine ourselves as, first and foremost, alone and independent, and, then, having to enter into relationships. In this image, relationships are secondary not only to my independent existence, and also to my success in life. We need to “go it alone” (our existence) and we need to “do it my way” (our success). There is a kind of ego titillating exhilaration built into this self-image, but it is ultimately unbearable — causing depression, neurotic behavior, or worse. See Robert Bellah’s description in his classic book, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*.

In actual truth, we are first and foremost, not individual, but relational. We are members of God’s human family, members of our birth family, members of our extended family, and members of a wide range of communities. Then, as we grow up — it is obvious at adolescence — we identify our individuality and uniqueness. And in maturity we know ourselves to be (a) unique (b) members of the family which is Kingdom of God. Once again there is not a dichotomy, but a unity, here of uniqueness and relatedness.

4. We pray to appease God. Our role in life is to “praise, reverence and serve God,” Ignatius says in the Principle and Foundation of the Spiritual Exercises. And, if infected by a false image, we go on to say, “And we do so because that makes God feel good, and his good-feeling is why he created us.”

Most often the image won’t allow us to travel to the ultimate conclusion — “In creating us God was only thinking of himself! God is selfish.” In that case, we’d see right through it. And that would be a corrective to and the death of the false image — at least for the moment!

5. Be wary of feelings; you can’t trust them. A retreat director said just that to a group of Jesuit novices over 50 years ago. His illustration was: “I have heard of a blind man being led by a seeing eye dog, but I have never heard of a seeing eye man being led by a blind dog! If you follow your feelings, you’re being led by a blind dog!” He was

an unwitting product of the Enlightenment, which so gloried in the discovery of reason that it passed over into rationalism. “Mind is the measure of all reality.” It resulted in a host of “-isms:” fideism (faith without intellectual content), secularism (let’s at least pretend there’s no God, since there probably isn’t), materialism (living at least as though we have no spiritual dimension), and consumerism (which is materialism in the market place). See the work of Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* for more on this topic.

By contrast, it’s the heart that is the measure of reality. “The heart has reasons that reason does not know,” Pascal said. Ignatius agreed. Hard-nosed realist that he was, Ignatius looked to affections, feelings, and movements of the spirit to tell him what was really going on in himself, in others, and in the world around him. And Jesuit Bernard Lonergan says of feelings that they give “mass, momentum, drive, power. Without these feelings our knowing and deciding would be paper-thin. Because of our feelings... we are oriented massively and dynamically in a world mediated by meaning.” (*Method in Theology*, page 31)

Obviously, the heart is foremost in the Ignatian tradition of spirituality and ministry.

6. We need to earn salvation. There’s a way in which this is perfectly true, but it can readily be mis-interpreted to mean that we have to and are able to “pull ourselves into heaven by our own bootstraps.” That implies that we can do it without the help of God. This was condemned as a heresy that goes by the name of “Pelagianism,” named after Pelagius, one of its early proponents in the 5th century.

The truth is that we need to “let go” — of the resistance of egoism and pride and complacency — and “let God” save us by the gift of his love. Salvation is already offered and given us. There’s nothing to earn! Ours is to allow God’s love to woo us into embracing it.

7. It was easy for Jesus. He’s God. The implication here is that Jesus, as human, had all the knowledge and certainty of God. His flesh was vulnerable to injury, but “inside — in mind and heart — he was invulnerable. Hence, he is hardly a role model for us.”

To the contrary, we read in the epistle to the Hebrews that Jesus “was like us in all things, sin alone excepted” and that “Son though he was he learned obedience from what he suffered.” Karl Rahner, S.J., says that Jesus was certainly conscious of himself as Son of God — just as all of us humans are conscious of our “who”, i.e., of ourselves as being the subject or agent of activities we’re engaging in, like talking, thinking, or working. But though subjectively conscious of himself this way, this brought Jesus no additional, much less divine, objective knowledge of God or other persons or events in the world. (“Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ,” *Theological Investigations*, Volume V, page 206.)

These are some of the images that we hear and sometimes experience. The point in mentioning them is simply to offer an invitation to review your own operative “default-settings” to see if some of them are blocking your full appreciation of GOODNESS and LOVE — God’s and your own. Sometimes, noticing a false image and holding it

up to God for his healing touch is like being cured of paralysis. Maybe that's the point of Jesus' cure of paralytics and cripples!

## Bartimaeus: A Role Model for Our Year of Prayer

During the Year of Prayer, we will all be thinking about and talking with some special people who are role models and mediators for us. Jesus tops the list, followed closely by his mother Mary. Peter and probably Paul rank up there, along with Ignatius Loyola, and special "saints," dead or alive, of your own.

One intercessor and role model that we all might think of and pray to is Bartimaeus, the man who used to sit begging by the road out of Jericho. He has something special to share with retreatants like ourselves.

Look at the story as told by Mark (10:46 - 52) and then, check out the short list of reflections below.

*As Jesus and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus, a blind man, son of Timaeus, a blind man, was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

*Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

*Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.*

*Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "Teacher, I want to see."*

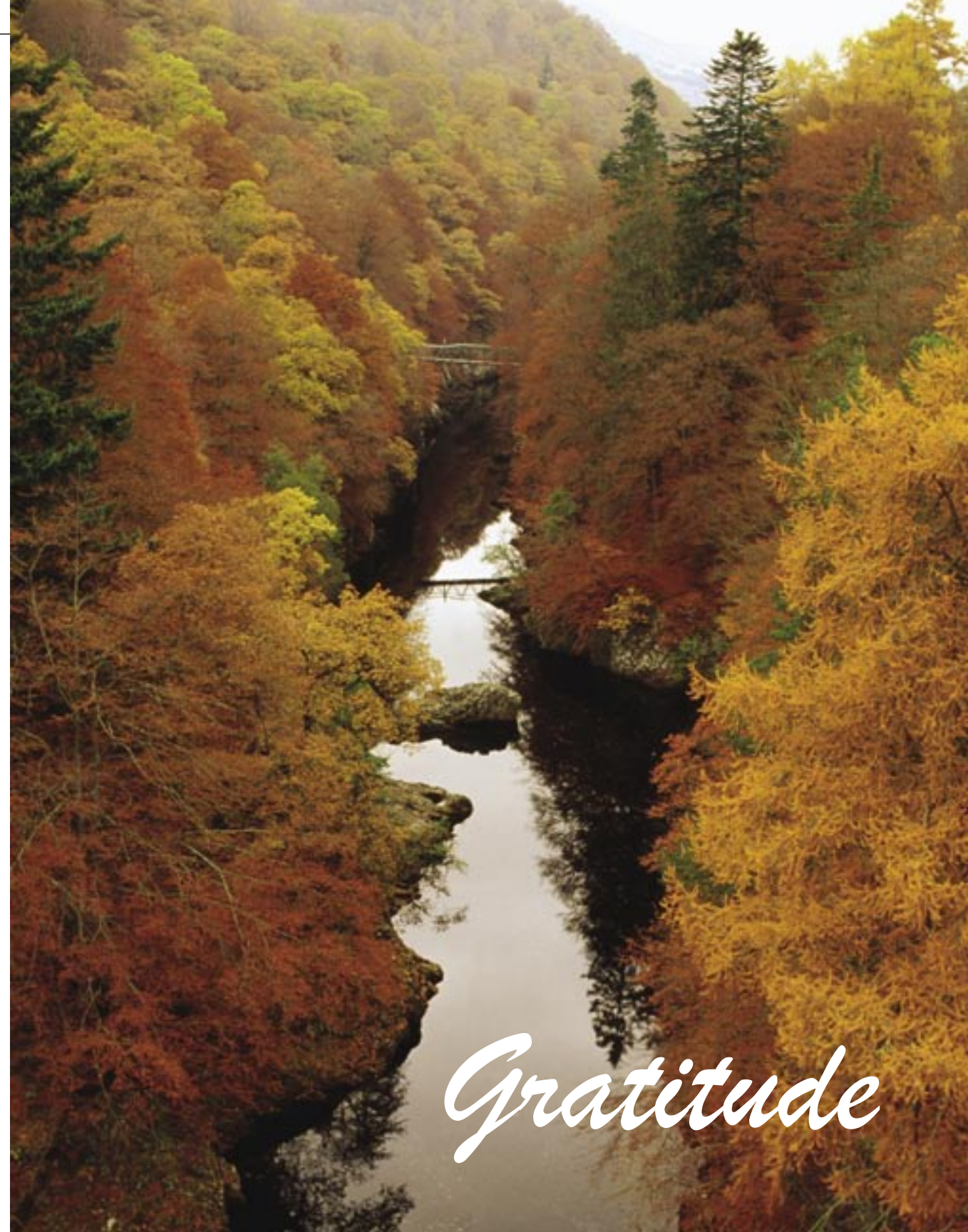
*Jesus said to him, "Be on your way; your faith has saved you." Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.*

Where we might hope to see ourselves in Bartimaeus:

- Jesus is passing by. But he's on his way out of Jericho. This might be the last opportunity to reach him! The last chance?
- Begging — how he spends each day. He's used to begging. Beggar: that's who he is. Everyone knows him that way. He's comfortable with that.
- "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!" He heard it was Jesus and acted energetically — he begged!
- Townsfolk try to shush him up. "How uncouth — disrespectful — of him! Embarrassing us." He cried out the louder — thoughtless of others' opinion of him. He kept crying out with determination for what he wanted.
- "Call him here." Throwing off any encumbrance, like a cloak, and freeing himself of "baggage," he leapt up with alacrity and ran to Jesus.

- “What do you want?” “What grace do you desire?” “What can I do for you?” Why does Jesus even ask it of a man who is obviously blind?
- “I want to see.” “Be on your way: your faith has saved you.” “And immediately he saw.” It was as though scales dropped from his eyes. More than physical sight, it is a vision and appreciation of Jesus, others, and the whole world he had never dreamed of before.
- He didn’t go his way. He followed Jesus on Jesus’ way — to Calvary. His faith, this new vision of his, has made a dedicated disciple of him.

Parallels to our situation, during this Year especially, are very consoling. Let’s keep praying to Bartimaeus for one another — “that we might see and follow.”



*Gratitude*

## Season of Grace — *Gratitude*

To understand and to rejoice gratefully in the persons we are and are called to become — by God's gracious and loving desire and design.

### Introduction to the Season of *Gratitude*

Why do we start with gratitude as our first grace in this Year of Prayer? Gratitude comes first because gratitude opens our eyes, our minds, and our hearts to recognize our true selves, our identity. Through the eyes of gratitude we come to realize how gifted we are! Each of us is the product of many more "GIVERS" than we can possibly name.

We have been **given** ourselves by our parents, our siblings, our relatives, our neighbors, our friends, our educators, our co-workers, and so many others who have affirmed and nurtured and supported us — in order that we might be ourselves.

And below and beneath them all is God who has given us the very gift of **life itself**, and all the gifts that are inherent in human being — in being human. Think of our sensation, intelligence, freedom, feeling, imagination, consciousness, creativity, desire for loving and of being loved, of choosing and acting and living to the full. And thanks to the nurturing of others, the education we've received, and the experiences we've had, all these human gifts gradually realize their potential and grow to maturity and refinement.

How gifted we are! How, in fact, we **are** gift! And how wonderful are the givers. We can see quite clearly why gratitude is called, "the springboard to love."

Gratitude relates us appropriately and affectionately to God, to other human beings, and to the natural environment that is our "home." And these relationships in turn awaken in us a sense of responsibility to reciprocate the love others have showered on us. It is by sharing the gift we **are** and the many gifts we **have** that we best say "Thanks" to the givers.



Gratitude unlocks the truth of us. And this bedrock truth becomes the foundation on which all else can be built, including all the other graces we will pray for in the course of this Year of Prayer: Healing, Calling, and Co-Laboring.

Over the course of the first “season” of our Year of Prayer we hope to pray for a deepening of the grace of gratitude — by reflecting on scripture passages, by mulling other appropriate readings, and by remembering gratefully the many persons who have gifted us, and the gifts they have given us.

We will look first at the creation of the world and of the human family in Adam and Eve in the first two chapters of Genesis. We will look at the “Father” that Jesus calls “Abba” (a name akin to our “Daddy”) in the “Our Father.” We will pray over St. Ignatius’ praise for our creative God in his “First Principle and Foundation” and also his “Contemplation to Attain Love,” the first and last exercises of the Spiritual Exercises respectively. We will suggest many other texts for mulling, musing, and praying, as well.

In the process we will identify and pray over certain of the most precious aspects of our human being: our relationships with one another, so profound as to constitute us as “one body;” the way we complement and enrich one another through gender and sexual diversity; the marvelous gift of stewardship to which God calls us by our very creation; our calling as co-creators with God for building up the Kingdom of unity and peace, the “whole body” of Christ.

The aim in all this, as we have said, is not to improve our purely intellectual grasp of these things, but to “taste” interiorly, to savor, to relish, to be possessed by, filled with, and thrilled by the realization of these realities-of-us-all. Quiet pondering and the openness to listen to God’s still voice within is what we want.

A schematic listing of the “Unfoldings” of the Grace of Gratitude is this:

After a prayerful reading and pondering of the Creation story in Genesis 1 and 2 we give specific consideration to:

#### 1. The Creation Stories of Genesis 1 and 2

- The Glory of the Universe
- The Glory of God
  - o As the Wise Initiator of Creation
  - o As the Self-Giving Friend of us all
- The Glory of Being Human
  - o As “breath of God’s breath and life of God’s life”
  - o As “essentially social” family members
  - o As “man and woman God created them”
  - o As Stewards and Co-Creators with our Creator God

#### 2. The Creation Story of Jesus: the “Our Father”

- Ours is an “Abba” God
- We are “Kingdom People”

#### 3. The Creation Story of Ignatius

- The Creating God of The First Principle and Foundation
- The Laboring God of the Contemplation to Attain Love

#### 4. The New Creation story of the Eucharist

- Our Community Meal of Thanksgiving
- “In Memory of Me”

## Getting Started: A prayerful pondering of the full Creation story in Genesis 1 and 2

To dispose ourselves to come to a grateful appreciation of God’s creation and all the gifts that are enfolded within it, start by reading Genesis 1 and 2 several times through in the course of the first days of the Year of prayer. And do so within the context of the following explanation of what the early chapters of *Genesis* intend.

**So first an explanation...** of the kind of literature we find in Genesis 1 and 2.

Genesis 1—11 was written late in the history of Israel and it didn’t aim to give a scientific or strictly historical explanation of the beginnings of things. It was an effort of those people to describe and express to themselves the root reasons for their own behavior — right here and now. Who are we and why do we act the way we do?

Eden is an imaginative way of describing the author’s conviction of the way it is “meant to be” for human beings in their relation with one another, nature, and God — in harmony and peace. “That’s us at our very best.” It’s the way it “must have been” by God’s intentions and action at the very start. And, in that sense, it is the way it “was” until something very terrible happened.

The book of Genesis, chapters 1 to 11 is not history in the strict, scientific sense. Neither is it “myth” in the sense of fantasy, pure imagination, or a world of make-believe. It is a profoundly insightful theological, psychological, and sociological diagnosis and depiction of “What is really going on with us” in the language of literary symbolism.

Such human experiences cannot be expressed, much less explored or explained in “scientific” categories, concepts, and language, because scientific categories intentionally (and correctly) prescind from the personal and interpersonal. The early chapters of Genesis, for their part, aim precisely to describe personal and the interpersonal relations. They speak of their relationship with God and their inter-relationships with one another in the wonderful world God provided them as their home.

In other words, it was **contemporary** self-understanding that early Genesis sought to express for the Jewish community of the time — probably around the sixth century B. C. And it is also does so for us in our times. Like all of Scripture, this **ancient** story line tells us who we are **today** and who we are being called to become with God’s graceful love and guidance.

The classic *Jerome Biblical Commentary* in its commentary on Genesis, pp. 8-9, puts it this way:

The biblical writers have produced a version of a common Mesopotamian story of the origins of the populated world, exploring major questions about God and humanity through narrative. The ancient East had a tolerance for versions, for different stories of the same event....

Genesis 1-11 then is a single story, **an unusually sustained “philosophical” and “theological” explanation of the human race** — its relation to God, its institutions (marriage, languages, ethnic and national divisions, metal working, animal husbandry, etc.), its flaws, its destiny — **and of God and God’s justice and abiding fidelity to the race**. Modern readers, who are not used to narrative as the vehicle of serious thought, often find it difficult to appreciate the profundity and abiding relevance of these chapters. Some readers even end up concentrating their energies in defending a “literal interpretation” of especially chapters 1-3 against modern evolutionary theory, something that the ancient authors of Genesis, with their tolerance of versions, would never have done. [emphasis added]

In his fine book, *Reading the Old Testament*, Lawrence Boadt, C.S.P. explains the origin and aim of Genesis 1 to 11 on his page 110:

Finally, in the days of King David’s new world empire, it seemed important to prepare a preface that would place God’s saving actions for Israel in the light of his care for the whole world. Thus Genesis 1-11 began to take shape, and although it has the first place in the Bible, it is by no means the first part to be written. Rather it is the fruit of prolonged thought and reflection over several centuries. But it is the place to begin the biblical *story*. **Its strong images and rich language explore the depths of human experience at its most mysterious** — the awesome wonder of creation, the joys of life, the agony of sin, the fear of death, the terrible human capacity for evil, the existence of God and the questions about his patience and justice. In bold strokes it makes us understand what God’s salvation meant to Israel. [emphasis added]

We should note that there are two “creation stories” in Genesis 1-2: (1) Genesis 1:1 to 2:4, called “The Priestly Creation Story,” and (2) Genesis 2:5-2:25, called “The Yahwist Creation Story.” The Yahwist (because it refers to God as “Yahweh”) is the older of the two, having been written about the 10th century B.C. while the Priestly (because it was written by priests to be used in liturgical worship) was written about the 6th century B.C.

The Priestly Story is solemn, rhythmic, ordered, poetic, dramatic, and “cosmic” in its scope. It has the soaring refrains of a hymn. It speaks of God’s Majesty and dominion. And in the climax to the creative process God shares his dominion over the new creation with Adam and Eve.

The Yahwist Creation Story is much more a story about persons. The Yahwist story begins with the creation of the man, who immediately realizes that he needs a companion. Rather than cosmic, the Yahwist story is anthropological. God relates informally with his newly created human friends, Adam and Eve. And it certainly seems that all three of them regularly walk and talk together in the cool of the evening.

Finally, the ancient Israelites saw no problem in putting the two creation stories, with all their differences in tone and content, side by side. They felt that together they spoke to the human condition much better than either one alone could do. For instance, the Majestic God of the “P” tradition is indeed the very good friend of the “Y” tradition.

#### **And now to our prayerful pondering of the text.**

We start by asking God for the **grace** of heartfelt **gratitude** for being such a God, Creator, and “Giver of All Good Gifts” — and for admiration and praise.

Then, read thoughtfully through Genesis 1 and 2. As you read prayerfully, jot down briefly in your notebook what especially strikes you and moves you. Pause and ponder as you wish.

The following questions are meant simply to help stimulate your reflection as you ponder the text.

**What is God like?** What personal qualities are apparent in the way God behaves? What are the actions God does? How do they differ from each other and what do they have in common? What about God’s intelligence? What do you notice about it? How about God’s feelings and felt values? What’s good and what’s not — in God’s view? What about God’s decisiveness? In the course of God’s working can we discover what purpose(s) God has in mind? What else do we come to know of God — the God in whom the ancient Israelites believed?

**What do we find out about the human beings?** How do they differ from the animals, vegetation, and physical nature — rivers and stream, stars and moon, rocks? How do they seem to be like God — what specific qualities or attributes or gifts? How do they seem to differ from God? How do they get along with one another? What do they mean to and/or for one another? How do they differ from one another and how are they alike? How do they eat, dress, recreate, work, and so on? Do they talk with each other? How do they seem to get along with God? And how does God seem to get along with them?

**What about the rest of natural creation?** What one word sums up your basic view or feeling about it all? As we review the first six days of creation in Genesis 1 what does it tell us about the natural world? Are there any relationships built into it? Do natural things and beings have desires? — needs? — interior moving or motivational

forces? If so, how would you describe them? What's the relationship(s) of the humans to nature and natural beings, and vice versa? How is nature expressive of God and God's desires and intentions? Is nature "in" the humans? Are the humans "in" nature? Is God in nature? In humans? In each instance, how?

Close your prayer, perhaps, with the Canticle of the three young men in the fiery furnace — in Daniel 3:56 ff. "May you be blessed, Lord, God of our ancestors ... All things the Lord has made, bless the Lord: give glory and eternal praise to him."

Conclude with an Our Father — in a spirit of gratitude.

Note: Before moving to the meditations below that focus on specific aspects of Creation, you may want to spend several meditations on this "whole sweep of the Creation Story of Genesis." Ignatius advises us not to feel pressured to move on in prayer, but to "stay wherever you find fruit."

## The Glory of the Created Universe

### 1. The Grace We Desire

To be overwhelmed with gratitude and awe at the marvelous universe and world which God has created and given us.

#### Prayer Focus

**The Gift of God's Creation** — see and ponder the whole sweep of the universe and of our world in all its splendor and beauty — this home and environment which God provides — the expanse of the galaxies, the stars, the moon, the seasons, the glory of the earth — use Ignatius' prayer form called the "application of the senses" where we listen and hear, see and observe, taste and smell, touch and feel. How our universe staggers the imagination of scientists like Einstein and Teilhard — continually so!

#### Suggested Prayer Texts

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Genesis 1                               | "God saw and said, 'It is good. It is very, very good!'"   |
| Psalms 104                              | Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great... wrapped in light as with a garment. You stretch out the heavens like a tent, |
| Daniel 3:57-88                          | Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord  |
| Psalms 93                               | The Lord is king, with majesty robed...The world you made firm, not to be moved  |
| Psalms 148                              | Praise the Lord from the heavens...praise the name of the Lord. He commanded: they were made. He fixed them forever...                       |
| Let nature be your "Book of Revelation" | Find God here. And THANK GOD. (This meditation could take weeks — even a lifetime, perhaps.)   |

*"I want to know God's thoughts... the rest are details."*

*"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed."*

Albert Einstein

*"All around us, Christ is physically active in order to control all things — from the ultimate vibration of the atom to the loftiest mystical contemplation. From the lightest breeze that ruffles the air to the broadest currents of life and thought....Everything that is good in the universe is gathered up by the Incarnate Word as a nourishment that it assimilates, transforms and divinizes."*

Teilhard de Chardin

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

**Exercise:** Take a walk through the countryside where you can be in touch with nature. Be holding the two chapters of Genesis 1 and 2 in your hand. Let the countryside and the chapters of Genesis be in dialogue with one another. Be looking at the glory of the universe as we see it and know it — and as we hear Genesis 1 and 2 describe its beauty, order, and marvelous design.

This is the home that God gives our human family to live in, enjoy, and care for. It is our home that gives us the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink and bathe in, the animals who accompany us, protect us, and serve us, the raw materials in which we are clothed for warmth, protection, and dignity, the seasons that refresh the earth's vegetation and provide beauty in abundance, and the rich variety of sunsets and sunrises, mountains and valleys, oceans and rivers.

**Exercise:** Go out on a clear, starry evening — or remember such an evening — and look up — what do you see? Name it. See still farther — look at the breadth of the heavens from east to west and north to south — then, look "beyond" the stars, the moon, the planets — keep looking beyond and be gripped affectively by its endlessness — its infinity (how many light years, millions of miles? — its awesome beauty. Who is our God? Talk about it with God. And listen for God.

**Exercise:** Go physically or imaginatively to the shore of the ocean and look out to the line of the horizon — know that it doesn't close down out there, but stretches on and on beyond — far beyond — our sight. And within that horizon all the things in our foreground are "located." It is in relationship to the horizon that they take their places. Look to right and left up and down the shore and beyond — to its bewildering expansiveness — its beauty. Talk about it with God. And listen for God.

## The Canticle of Brother Sun

Most high, all-powerful, all good, Lord!  
All praise is yours, all glory,  
all honor and all blessing.

To you, alone, Most High, do they belong.  
No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made,  
And first my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day;  
and light you give to  
us through him.

How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor!  
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars;  
In the heavens you have made them,  
bright and precious and fair.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,  
And fair and stormy, all the weather's moods,  
by which you cherish all  
you have made.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water,  
so useful, lowly, precious and pure.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire,  
Through whom you brighten up the night.  
How beautiful is he, how joyful!  
Full of power and strength

All praise be yours, my Lord,  
through Sister Earth, our mother,  
Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces various fruits with  
colored flowers and herbs.  
All praise be yours, my Lord,  
through those who grant pardon  
For love of you; through those who endure sickness and trial.  
Happy those who endure in peace,  
By you, Most High, they will be crowned.  
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death,  
From whose embrace no mortal can escape.

*St. Francis of Assisi*



# The Glory of God the Creator: As the Wise Initiator of Creation

## 2. The Grace We Desire

To experience admiration, awe, and deep gratitude for a God so wise and inventive as to have “spoken” a universe so marvelously designed.

### Prayer Focus

#### **What an amazing God!**

**God the Author and Initiator** — In Genesis 1:1 we see, prior to creation, only chaos, darkness, and total disorder. Senseless, murky mud. No light. No shorelines. No rhythm of days, weeks, months, or years. Imagine chaos. Meaningless. Purposeless. Impossible for human habitation, even devoid of vegetation, much less animal life. Ponder this age-old chaos. Let its horror touch you.

Then something begins. God, the Initiator, starts something. God works in chaos — forming, shaping, designing, ordering. The Author of the world and life as we know it. It all began THEN, when God set his mind on starting it all. Of all this, at that first moment, God is the Alpha, the first, the beginner, the originator, and author. Be there. See it. God be praised.

**The Word and the Wisdom of God** — It all begins with a word from God — “Let there be...” — God speaks with wisdom (ordering and designing) and that wisdom is, astonishingly, “built right into” all it creates. As the fruit of God’s loving word of wisdom, all things and we people are designed with purpose and the desire to achieve it. It is a word which sustains as long as it is spoken — as long as it “lingers in the air.” It is a word never to be retracted. A reliable word, steadfast and faithful. A word that can be trusted, since it is a word also of promise.

## Suggested Prayer Texts

Revelation 22:13	I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.
John 1:1-5	In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
Wisdom 13:5	For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen.
Isaiah 55:10-11	Just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down... So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth
Proverbs 8:27-32	When he established the heavens, I [wisdom] was there...

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

“We can say that Jesus does what human beings on their own could not do: he accepts his existence as a gift from God and does the only thing one can do appropriately on receipt of a gift—say “thank you” both in word and deed.

John Baldwin, S.J.  
*Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation: Understanding the Mass*  
pp 6-7

## God's Grandeur

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;  
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.

Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.

When [God] He created the world by His Word (cf 2 Corinthians 4, 6), God called into being what did not exist (Romans 4, 17). This first activity continues as He animates creatures; for in Him we have life, movement, and being (Acts 17, 28; 1 Timothy 6, 13). He created the world and all that is in it” (Apocalypse 10, 6; Acts 14, 15; 17, 24; Hebrews 2, 10); all exists by Him and for Him (1 Corinthians 8, 6; R 11, 36; Colossians 1, 16). Therefore everything created is good, and all that is from God is pure. (1 Corinthians 10, 25f; 1 Corinthians 2.20ff).

Leon-Dufour  
*Dictionary of Biblical Theology*  
page 82

---

## The Glory of God the Creator: As the Self-Giving Friend of Us All

### 3. The Grace We Desire

To experience deep gratitude, for a God who, in the giving of his gifts,  
gives his very self, his life.

#### Prayer Focus

##### **What an amazingly generous God we have!!**

**The Self-giving Spirit and Love of God.** God's spirit hovered over the waters of chaos (Gen 1:2) and it is God's spirit that is breathed into the nostrils of the mud-pack man-to-be, Adam, giving him life-giving spirit (Gen 2:7). *Ruah*, the ancient Hebrew word for "breath" and "spirit," is the power of God bringing life and order out of chaos. This is God's *own* spirit — God's life — that is breathed into Adam. The ancients identified life with breath — since life began and ended with breathing or not. There is a deep intimacy in this life-giving love. To receive a gift from God is to receive God's self in love. God's self-giving is utterly altruistic love, not acting out of self-regard or for any advantage to oneself — a generosity that defies imagining. And it is this God-life that we have received at creation as a life to be shared with others.

**God Our Friend** — In Genesis 3:8 we see "God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze" looking for his human friends Adam and Eve apparently for a visit. Eden, as we've said, is not a place, but a state or condition. And here we see how it is a condition of warm friendship and welcoming ease with a friend who is God! Even after the Fall, God is solicitous for his human friends, preparing better garments for them, giving them instruction, consolation, and an implicit promise of eventual restoration. Throughout the subsequent history of Israel God stays close to them and their descendants, actively involved in their history for their benefit, guiding and protecting them "with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm." (*Deuteronomy 26:8*)

## Suggested Prayer Texts

Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised ... for Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."

St. Augustine, Confessions

Isaiah 43:1-5

I have called you by name; you are mine... Fear not, for I am with you

John 5:1-24

The Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing: for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise

Ezekiel 37:1-6

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he ... set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones...they were very dry... Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause *breath* to enter you, and *you shall live*. [Emphases added]

Isaiah 49:13-16

Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you

**Exercise:** Sit quietly with eyes closed and feel your interior activity — restlessness, wonder, curiosity, boredom, desires, appreciations — and tell God you know he is the energy source of this activity (the Alpha) and also the Omega, ultimate goal toward which our desires and wonders reach. Beg for a vivid experience of God's "coming with his gift," his self-communication to you, in all you are and do. Sit quietly in this knowledge and experience of God's presence.

### 2. Our Friend God walks with us in our history

"The Bible is a 'historical' literature in which God is proclaimed as the chief actor in history who alone gives history its meaning. ... The biblical eye of faith was not focused internally, in the belief that religion is primarily an internal experience... The eye instead was focused on the great external events of world history during that age.

"There are, then, five 'events' in the Old Testament in which the whole faith seems to center. These are the call of the fathers, the deliverance from slavery, the Sinai Covenant, the conquest of Canaan, and the Davidic government.... One of the oldest confessions [of faith is an historical recital of the great deeds of God] in Deuteronomy 26:5-9.

"A wandering Aramaean was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and there became a nation, great, mighty and populous. But the Egyptians treated us evilly, afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice ... and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand ... and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even the land that floweth with milk and honey."

G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller  
*The Book of the Acts of God*  
pp. 7, 9-10

**Exercise:** As above we sought to know and feel God in the operations of our own interior, now we ask God the gift of experiencing his active presence in our unfolding history, the interactions we are having with people, in the plans we are executing to attain certain goals, in cooperation with others to achieve some outcome, in the suffering that others occasionally impose on us — as energizer of people in time and society, God is intimately engaged — either by being ignored or recognized and invited in as a Collaborator with us. Think of particular instances. Wonder how and where God is working there. Rest quietly and gratefully where you think you find him and for the Providential care God is always showing on you.

Texts for lectio divina or prayerful mulling

### 1. God's loving gift as GOD HIMSELF

"**God wishes to communicate himself, to pour forth the love which he himself is.** That is the first and the last of his real plans and hence of his real world too. Everything else exists so that this one thing might be: the eternal miracle of infinite Love. And so God makes a creature whom he can love: he creates man. **He creates him in such a way that he can receive this Love which is God himself,** and that he can and must at the same time accept it for what it is: the ever astounding wonder, the unexpected, unexacted gift. And let us not forget here that ultimately we only know what 'unexacted' means when we know what personal love is, not vice versa.... God must so create man that love does not only pour forth free and unexacted, but also so that man as real partner, as one who can accept or reject it, can experience and accept it as the unexacted event and wonder not owed to him, the real man...The capacity for the God of self-bestowing personal Love is the central and abiding existential of man as he really is." [emphases added]

Karl Rahner, S.J.  
"Relationship between Nature and Grace"  
*Theological Investigations*  
pp. 310-311, 312

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

- Pay attention to your breathing and consider that each breath you take is God continuing to give you life. Imagine, or better “realize,” that the breath given to you is the breath of God that made and continues to make all of creation.
- **“WHO IS MAN THAT YOU SHOULD CARE FOR HIM?”**  
 ...Ponder the following material on space and time. Let the numbers defy your imagination. Ask the Lord to awaken your sensibility to awe. Reflect that “If this is the doing of God, what must God be like — in terms of wisdom, breadth of imagination, wisdom?” Ask God that his creative self-revelation might be “real” and not just be “notional” for you.

### A Visual Image of the Time Since the Beginning of Creation

To get a visual image of how much time has elapsed since the beginning of creation, sometimes known as the “Big Bang,” imagine the thickness of this sheet of paper is equal to one day.

- **365 sheets of paper would be equal to one year.**
- **365 sheets of paper stacked up are 1.825 inches high.**
- **One year is 1.825 inches.**

Scientists estimate that the universe has been in existence for 13 billion years. **Thus, the visual image of time that the universe has been in existence (1.825 x 13,000,000,000 years) would be**

**374,448 MILES HIGH!**

Jan.	The “Big Bang” happens on the very first moment of Jan. 1																		
Feb.																			
March																			
April																			
May		Our Milky Way Galaxy is formed																	
June																			
July																			
Aug.																			
Sept.		Our solar system begins																	
Oct.		Our earth is created																	
Nov.																			
Dec.		Homo Sapiens comes on the scene about 10:30 p.m. on Dec. 31! Our “now” is at the stroke of midnight on Dec. 31.																	

Based on this “calendar,” Jesus Christ would have been born on December 31st, 4 seconds ago, at 11:59:56 p.m. Thus, 4 seconds = approximately 2,000 years...Your expected lifetime is about 0.1 to 0.2 second in duration.

Taken from the work of H.Cornell Bradley, S.J.  
*The 19th Annotation in 24 weeks, for the 21st Century*  
 pp. 40-41

## The Glory of Being Human As “breath of God’s breath and life of God’s life”

### 4. The Grace We Desire

To be filled with gratitude for the wonder of ourselves,  
created and gifted by a loving God

#### Prayer Focus

##### A Chip off the Old Block

Made to God’s likeness, we are given the gifts of life, freedom, consciousness, intelligence, desires and the capacity to love, and a deep yearning for fulfillment and rest in God.

#### Suggested Prayer Texts

Genesis 1:26-31

Let us make man in our own image

Psalms 8

What is man that you could spare a thought for him?

Psalms 139:1-18

Yahweh, you examine me and know me

*In the famous prologue to his Gospel, John announces that “in the beginning was the Word,” and that he was “with God” and that he “was God:” he also communicates that the Word, without whom “not one thing that is came into being,” was life and the light of men, life and light even of men who did not recognize him; and he affirms that anyone who does recognize that light and life will be given the “power to become children of God.” After this, John sets before us the unprecedented fact: “And the Word was made flesh.” In this way, he shows us that we do not find ourselves simply in front of the communication of truth, a revelation of the mystery of being, which is nonetheless, vital for our search for the meaning of life and history. No, we are before the communication of the divine itself, of man’s sharing in God’s life, the ontological density of which is only hinted at in the expression “children of God.” We are dealing with a communication touching and transforming the whole being of man. Within the man to whom Christ draws near, and who freely desires and accepts the relationship with him...his nature as a man changes. This is an ontological “exaltation” of the “I,” a leap in quality in the participation of Being. In the life of the Church, Being, God, the Word made flesh, Christ communicates to man the gift of a more profound participation in the origin of everything. In this way, a man remains man but becomes something more...*

Luigi Giussani, *Why the Church?* p. 180

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

### 1. From Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*

“Man achieves authenticity in self-transcendence [when knowing what truly is so, choosing what is genuinely good, and loving God and others.] (pp. 104-105)

“God too is self-transcending and ... the world is the fruit of his self-transcendence, the expression and manifestation of his benevolence and beneficence, his glory. As the excellence of the son is the glory of his father, so too the excellence of mankind is the glory of God. To say that God created the world for his glory is to say that he created it not for his sake but for ours. He made us in his image, for our authenticity consists in being like him, in self-transcending, in being origins of value, in true love. (pp. 116-117)

“Without faith, without the eye of love, the world is too evil for God to be good, for a good God to exist. But faith recognizes that God grants men their freedom, that he wills them to be persons and not just his automata, that he calls them to the higher authenticity that overcomes evil with good. (p. 117)

“The power of God’s love brings forth a new energy and efficacy in all goodness, and the limit of human expectation ceases to be the grave.” (p. 116)

Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Method in Theology*

#### **Exercise:**

Self-transcendence or transcending oneself is “getting out of oneself” and relating with attentiveness, openness, interest and compassion, and embracing other persons lovingly and in grateful response to the love with which God first (always the Alpha!) loves us. What the self transcends is the pull to be self-centered and exclusively self-enclosed. Ponder the many instances of your own self-transcendence in any given day of your life: when you are genuinely open to find out “what’s *really* going on” or “what that thing *really* is” (and not what I would prefer it to be). Or when you reach out in sympathy and compassion to others in need. Or when you are filled to tears with gratitude for something someone said to or did for you. Remember the experience and try now to “feel” the way self-transcending feels. We are experiencing how we are “image of God.” More than that, in this experience we are experiencing in ourselves the self-transcending God who enables and energizes us to self-transcend at all.

### 2. From Pope John Paul II in his Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*

John Paul II develops this central notion of human transcendence by contrasting it with its opposite, “alienation.” Alienation can be individual (a person’s willful self-enclosure) or social (a group of people who are so smug and self-complacent that they regard other people as mere means to their own ends).

“[T]he main thread and in a certain sense the guiding principle of Pope Leo’s encyclical [Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*] and of all of the church’s social doctrine is a correct view of the human person and of his unique value inasmuch as ‘man ... is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself’ (*Second Vatican Council*, “The Church in the Modern World,” No. 24). God has imprinted his own image and likeness on man (cf. Genesis 1:26), conferring upon him an incomparable dignity, as the encyclical frequently insists. In effect, beyond the rights which man acquires by his own work, there exist rights which do not correspond to any work he performs but which flow from his essential dignity as a person. (11) ...

“The concept of alienation needs to be led back to the Christian vision of reality by recognizing in alienation a reversal of means and ends. When man does not recognize in himself and in others the value and grandeur of the human person, he effectively deprives himself of the possibility of benefiting from his humanity and of entering into that relationship of solidarity and communion with others for which God created him. indeed, it is through the free gift of self that man truly finds himself. This gift is made possible by the human person’s essential ‘capacity for transcendence.’ Man cannot give himself to a purely human plan for reality, to an abstract ideal or to a false utopia. As a person, he can give himself to another person or to other persons, and ultimately to God, who is the author of his being and who alone can fully accept his gift. A man is alienated if he refuses to transcend himself and to live the experience of self-giving and of the formation of an authentic human community oriented toward his final destiny, which is God. A society is alienated if its forms of social organization, production and consumption make it more difficult to offer this gift of self and to establish this solidarity between people.” (41)

**Note:** Cardinal Avery Dulles has written in *America* and elsewhere on the insight and power of Pope John Paul’s understanding of the human condition, thanks to his indebtedness to the personalism of Max Scheler on whom he wrote his doctoral dissertation.



---

## The Glory of Being Human As “essentially social” family members

### 5. The Grace We Desire

To be filled with gratitude for the gift of relationships which all of us humans enjoy with one another — a gift of a loving, creative, and relational God.

#### Prayer Focus

**We are essentially social, brothers and sisters of one another.** “It is not good for man to be alone” — and we see how harmful it is when we become isolated from one another. This essentially social condition of human kind is the very fiber of our being. And with this social giftedness comes the responsibility to be and live as community-builders. We **are** “our brother’s and sister’s keeper!”

#### Suggested Prayer Texts

Romans 13:9-10

Love your neighbor

John 17:21-22

May they be one

I John 4:20

I cannot love God and hate my brother

*God creates the human community for its full flourishing  
by thanking and praising God and  
serving one another with God’s help.  
All other things on the face of the earth are means to that end:  
the coming of the Kingdom of truth and love, justice and peace.*

James L. Connor, S.J.



## ***Exercises in lectio divina or prayerful pondering***

### **1. “NO MAN IS AN ISLAND”**

”The statement ‘No one is an island’ articulates the simple fact of experience that human existence is a web of interpersonal relationships. One cannot conceive of a human being in total isolation. Coming into existence necessarily implies a relationship to at least two other people. The process of education involves the association with many more. The possibilities of language and sex are a demand for complementarity, since each individual possesses only one part of a complete reproductive system and the purpose of language is communication with another. The amenities of daily life are dependent on the cooperation of a great number of individuals. My security depends on the police, my transport on bus drivers and motor mechanics, my recreation on movie makers, TV producers, and authors, my food on butchers and bakers. The list could be extended indefinitely. Hence, just as Aristotle described man as a ‘social animal,’ so Heidegger insists that human being is necessarily a ‘being-with-others’. In this encounter with other persons the individual is confronted with the choice between authenticity and inauthenticity. “

Jerome Murphy O’Connor, OP  
*Becoming Human Together: The Pastoral Anthropology of St. Paul*  
p. 124

**Exercise:** Think back over an ordinary day and identify the literally hundreds of people upon whom you and your activities have been dependent that day. Take out a piece of paper and start listing them. Many of these people are long dead — especially those who contributed significantly to the culture that nurtures us, and the educational resources that feed us. Lonergan observes that 99% of what we know we get from others (and most of that we take on faith!); rare is the person who develops a genuinely new idea. Think then of the hundreds and hundreds of people that have relied and do rely somehow on you — often without their even knowing it. Let appreciation of our “essentially social being” sink in. Be astonished at it again. Thank God that we share the reality and the joy of God’s own being—social. It is, at heart, Trinitarian life we live, as will one day be fully revealed in the Messianic Banquet. Conclude with an Our Father.

### **2. We are a “product” of society and vice versa**

What follows are excerpts from a book by Peter L. Berger, entitled, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, chapter 1, “Religion and World Construction.” (Emphases and divisions are added.) Take one section at a time. Mull and ponder that section. Ask questions of your life-experience in light of that section. Talk with the Lord about your experience. Pray for the grace of insight, conviction, and commitment. And above all rejoice gratefully that in this essential dimension we are indeed in the “image and likeness” of our very social, Trinitarian God.

## ***Society is a “product” of man***

”Society is a product of man. It has no other being except that which is bestowed upon it by human activity and consciousness. There can be no social reality apart from man.”

### ***Man is a product of society***

“Yet it may also be stated that man is a product of society...Society was there before the individual was born and it will be there after he has died. What is more, it is within society, and as a result of social processes, that the individual becomes a person, that he attains and holds onto an identity, and that he carries out the various projects that constitute his life. Man cannot exist apart from society. “The two statements, that society is the product of man and that man is the product of the society, are not contradictory. They rather reflect the inherently dialectic character of the societal phenomenon.”

- ***Ponder, mull and pray.***

### ***A Human “must” Pour Self Out***

“Externalization is an anthropological necessity. Man, as we know him empirically, cannot be conceived of apart from the continuous outpouring of himself into the world in which he finds himself. Human being cannot be understood as somehow resting within itself, in some closed sphere of interiority, and **then** setting out to express itself in the surrounding world. Human being is externalizing in its essence and from the beginning.”

### ***In “making the world” we “finish ourselves!”***

“Like the other mammals, man is in a world that antedates his appearance. But unlike the other mammals, this world is not simply given, prefabricated for him. Man must **make** a world for himself. “The same process that builds his world also “finishes” his own being. In other words, man not only produces a world, but he also produces himself. More precisely, he produces himself in a world...This world, of course, is culture. Its fundamental purpose is to provide the firm structures for human life that are lacking biologically.”

- ***Ponder, mull and pray.***

### ***Our Essential “Sociality”***

“Society occupies a privileged position among man’s cultural formations. This is due to yet another basic anthropological fact, namely the essential sociality of man. Homo sapiens is the social animal. This means very much more than the surface fact that man always lives in collectivities and indeed, loses touch with his humanity when he is thrust into isolation from other men.

Much more importantly, the world-building activity of man is always and inevitably a collective enterprise. While it may be possible, perhaps for heuristic purposes, to analyze man’s relationship to this world in purely individual terms, the empirical reality of human world-building is always a social one. “Men **together** shape tools, invent

languages, adhere to values, devise institutions, and so on. Not only is the individual's participation in a culture contingent upon a social process (namely, the process called socialization), but his continuing cultural existence depends upon the maintenance of specific social arrangements."

- **Ponder, mull and pray.**

Vatican II  
Pastoral Constitution  
on the Church in the Modern World  
*Gaudium et Spes*

24. God, Who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood. For having been created in the image of God, Who "from one man has created the whole human race and made them live all over the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26), all men are called to one and the same goal, namely God Himself.

For this reason, love for God and neighbor is the first and greatest commandment. Sacred Scripture, however, teaches us that the love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbor: "If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.... Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law" (Rom. 13:9-10; cf. 1 John 4:20). To men growing daily more dependent on one another, and to a world becoming more unified every day, this truth proves to be of paramount importance.

Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, "that all may be one... as we are one" (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God's sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.

## Spontaneous Grace

One of the many incredible stories associated with September 11th was the evacuation by water of nearly half-a-million people from the tip of Manhattan.

Shortly after the second plane slammed into the Towers...even before their collapse...marine traffic throughout the Harbor charted a course that must have looked like Dunkirk, determined to render whatever assistance they could. Captains would later report that they instinctively knew the subways would be inoperable, the highways jammed and the streets dangerously crowded with the terrified and bewildered.

The effort, as choreographed as a ballet, involved several hundred vessels. They ranged from passenger ferries that could carry scores to fishing boats that could handle barely a dozen. Most made multiple trips throughout the day, patiently lining up for precious dock space under conditions of unimaginable chaos and uncertainty. Yet by nightfall, thousands were out of "harms way."

No one was in charge. No call went out from a harbormaster instructing shipmates to "cowboy up." Some, in fact, had never even plied those waters. No one orchestrated the "toing and froing" that provided so much sanctuary and peace of mind.

So how did it happen? And what does it mean? Our leaders would tell us that it reflects the fundamental nobility of the American character...a patriotic expression of solidarity in response to national threat. Locals would tout the grittiness of New Yorkers... Rocky in Gotham, so to speak. Social theorists would wax rhapsodic about self-organizing principles and complex-adaptive systems. And anchormen everywhere would celebrate the essential goodness of man.

It is all this and more...much more. It is above all an act of grace — regardless of one's theology — a "coincidence" that seems almost divinely inspired. It confronts us with a coincidence on such a scale that it is difficult to pass off as "chance." On some level it was arguably the response to a universal, non-denominational prayer... a wailing or inaudible "*oh...my...God*" sent up by stern men and stranded alike. It was uttered as all real prayers are said and always have been...in overwhelming and help-less reverence for the unthinkable. And in our wildest imagination, who *in the world* could have responded with such "spontaneous grace?" Who indeed?

*Michael Kipp, August 2004*

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

- Who are the people, living or dead, for whom you feel special gratitude or affection? (Realize that gratitude is the springboard to love.) Make a list, and dwell on each person in memory, mind, and affection. Speak to them prayerfully. Perhaps, write a note to them individually.

- What are the things for which you are grateful, such as opportunities, health or sickness, crises, studies, jobs, strange growth-filled embarrassments, wake-up calls, conversion events, and enriching experiences? Dwell prayerfully on them, asking the Lord what they mean.

## The Glory of Being Human As “man and woman God created them”

### 6. The Grace We Desire

To be deeply grateful for the gifts of variety and complementarity in our human companionship by reason of gender and marriage.

#### Prayer Focus

##### **Blessed with Communion**

At creation, man and woman experience original unity. They are “naked and unashamed” in their peaceful, un-self-conscious trust in one another — sharing in the trust, respect, orderliness of God — internally well ordered (free of unruly passions) and therefore socially well ordered (relating peacefully with one another.) The call to unity expressed in Ephesians is true for all of us, living in Christ as one flesh, forming together the body of Christ. We are existentially (in very existence and being) one in him and with him. As a Sacrament (efficacious sign) of the Church, marriage is a manifestation and symbol of the union of Christ with and in all people.

#### Suggested Prayer Texts

Genesis 1:26-31	Let us make man in our own image
Genesis 2:18-25	It is not good for man to be alone; they were naked and unashamed
I Corinthians 12	For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.
Colossians 4:1-16	There is one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all
Ephesians 5:28-31	Husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

“Male and female he created them” — creation, as forming goodness out of chaos, culminates in a community of man and woman. God envisions man and woman as complementary, and endows them with an equal dignity. Their *original unity* is precisely the way in which they image God. When the original human (Adam) is naming the creatures, he is self-aware, but not self-fulfilled — he is alone; he is lonely, incomplete. The joyful cry of Adam when he sees Eve for the first time (Genesis 2,) “This at last is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh,” is echoed in the words of Vatican II’s document *Gaudium et Spes*, especially paragraph 24.

“Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when he prayed to the Father, ‘that all may be one ... as we are one’ (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason. For he implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons and the union of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that ***man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.***” (Emphasis added)

Man and woman are intended for partnership. The fact that the first humans are united allows them to look one another in the eye. They are “naked and unashamed” — sharing in the work of God — contributing by their lives to the ordering of the universe — not just maintaining but developing, as they “increase and multiply.” To increase and multiply means not only reproduction of the human species, but also an ongoing responsibility to do as God does — to create new possibilities out of love.

John Paul II cites “self-transcendence” in his encyclical *Centesimus Annus* as the core to being in “God’s image and likeness” — expressed primarily in love, but also in creativity, imagination, decisiveness, and other-orientation.

- How do I respond to this concept?
- What feelings? Thoughts? Observations?

In the first chapter [of the Book of Genesis], the narrative of the creation of man affirms directly, right from the beginning, that man was created in the image of God as male and female. The narrative of the second chapter, on the other hand, does not speak of the “image of God.” But in its own way it reveals that the complete and definitive creation of “man” (subjected first to the experience of original solitude) is expressed in giving life to that community personarum that man and woman form. In this way, the Yahwist narrative agrees with the content of the first narrative.

If, vice versa, we wish to draw also from the narrative of the Yahwist text the concept of “image of God,” we can then deduce that man became the “image and likeness” of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons which man and woman form right from the beginning. The function of the image is to reflect the one who is the model, to reproduce its own prototype. Man becomes the image of God not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion. Right “from the beginning,” he is not only an image in which the solitude of a person who rules the world is reflected, but also, and essentially, an image of an inscrutable divine communion of persons.

Pope John Paul II  
*Theology of the Body*

From the 34th General Congregation  
of the Society of Jesus, Decree 14,  
Jesuits and the Situation of Women in Church and Civil Society

(See Resource Book for full text)

**370** 10. We know that the nurturing of our own faith and much of our own ministry would be greatly diminished without the dedication, generosity, and joy that women bring to the schools, parishes, and other fields in which we labor together... Many women have helped to reshape our theological tradition in a way that has liberated both men and women. We wish to express our appreciation for this generous contribution of women, and hope that this mutuality in ministry might continue and flourish.

**371** 11. We wish to specify more concretely at least some ways in which Jesuits may better respond to this challenge to our lives and mission. We do not presume that there is any one model of male-female relationship to be recommended, much less imposed, throughout the world or even within a given culture. Rather we note the need for a real delicacy in our response. We must be careful not to interfere in a way that alienates the culture; rather we must endeavor to facilitate a more organic process of change. We should be particularly sensitive to adopt a pedagogy that does not drive a further wedge between men and women who in certain circumstances are already under great pressure from other divisive cultural or socioeconomic forces.

**372** 12. In the first place, we invite all Jesuits to listen carefully and courageously to the experience of women. Many women feel that men simply do not listen to them. There is no substitute for such listening. More than anything else it will bring about change. Unless we listen, any action we may take in this area, no matter how well intentioned, is likely to bypass the real concerns of women and to confirm male condescension and reinforce male dominance. Listening, in a spirit of partnership and equality, is the most practical response we can make and is the foundation for our mutual partnership to reform unjust structures.

The Glory of Being Human  
As Stewards and Co-Creators with Our Creator God

7. The Grace We Desire

To feel and express our deep gratitude for the respect God has shown us in the responsibility he has given us for caring for his gifts as faithful stewards.

Prayer Focus

Stewardship for Creation

Humans are given stewardship over all creation. God shows an unbelievable regard for and trust in us by handing the whole universe over to our safekeeping! Not only are we to maintain God's creation, we are to develop it and to "increase and multiply" as co-creators with God. We are responsible to be conscientious caretakers, faithful guardians, and creative investors of the Lord's gifts.

Stewardship is an expression of discipleship that recognizes God as the source of all gifts. The U.S. Bishops' pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response* makes the point that: "As Christian stewards, we receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord."

Suggested Prayer Texts

Genesis 1:27-31

Be fertile and multiply, fill the earth and care for it

Job 12:7-10

If you would learn more, ask the cattle, seek information from the birds of the air

Psalms 65

You care for the earth, You fill it with riches... You bless its growth

Psalms 145:9-11

God's tenderness embraces all His creatures.

Matthew 6:26-30

Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them

Matthew 25:14-30

The parable of the talents

Luke 12:35-44

The faithful steward

Luke 22:24-30

Greatness necessitates service; dominion necessitates responsibility



## Suggested Readings and Reflections

1. The word ecology is derived from the Greek word, “Oikos”, which means “house” or “place” in which to live, and relates to unity and the inter-relationships which God wills for the universe, and all that lives in it. What does it do for me to care for creation? How does this relate to my spirituality?
2. What does it mean to be a steward — and of what a creation! — all that God creates, including my person?
3. Do I foster a real sense of self-worth and dignity in others and myself? Do I strive to live the Christian virtues of forgiveness, patience, reconciliation, compassion, and sharing (especially of self)?

**Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection.** For each one of the works of the “six days” it is said: “And God saw that it was good.” “By the very nature of creation, material being is endowed with its own stability, truth, and excellence, its own order and laws.” Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things which would be in contempt of the Creator and would bring disastrous consequences for human beings and their environment.

God wills the **interdependence of creatures**. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other.

The **beauty of the universe**: The order and harmony of the created world results from the diversity of beings and from the relationships which exist among them. Man discovers them progressively as the laws of nature. They call forth the admiration of scholars. The beauty of creation reflects the infinite beauty of the Creator and ought to inspire the respect and submission of man’s intellect and will.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church: Catechesis on Creation  
# 339-341(emphasis added)*

*A prayer*

*— Praised are you, O God, Creator of the universe,  
Who graciously bestows all good gifts upon us.  
You have made us stewards over the world  
so that in honoring your creation we may honor you.*

*Grant that we may use your gifts gratefully and  
that we may have generous hearts and minds.  
Help us return to you in gratitude and in delight  
all the good things you have given us.  
We ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

Source: Stewardship Commission  
St. Mary’s Catholic Church, College Station, TX

## The Creation Story of Jesus: the “Our Father”

### 8. The Grace We Desire

To express our amazement and gratitude to a God who is happy that we call him “Abba!”

#### Prayer Focus

**Ours is an “Abba” God.** We know the Our Father by heart and pray it often. So, saying it regularly is a very available way to re-commit ourselves to our mission of justice. Its origin is Jesus himself: a prayer certainly composed by Jesus and taught to his disciples (Matthew 5:9-13). The contents include: An invocation (“Our Father”) and seven petitions, in the style of the psalms, but with a Christian content, especially petitions 2 (“Thy Kingdom come”) and 5 (“forgive us...as we forgive”). Forgiving is the strategy for the attainment of our goal, God’s Kingdom on earth, a just society. It is characteristically Christian: “....but I say to you, love your enemy.” The invocation and the petitions can be understood simultaneously (a) our requests of God, (b) a call to us from God — our vocation and identity, (c) our pledge or vow to God, and (d) our promise to others, our neighbors. (“This is who I will be for you.”)

#### Suggested Prayer Texts

Matthew 6:7-15	How to pray
Luke 12:22-32	Trust in Providence
Isaiah 55:1-11	An everlasting covenant with Yahweh
Matthew 7:21	Who will enter the kingdom of heaven?
II Corinthians 3:16-18	Where the Lord is, there is freedom
II Corinthians 9:6-15	Blessings and thanksgiving
Psalms 116:12	What return can I make to the Lord?

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

Make the Our Father an exercise *in lectio divina* — prayerful pondering. Walk through it appreciatively — phrase by phrase, slowly, breath by breath.

Let's do it together:

**"Father"** — fathering us now at this very moment — giving us life, breath, vitality and desire every instant of our life — without you, Lord, I simply would not be — I could do nothing — I feel you right now coursing in my pulse beat and in my restless desires to know and be known, love and be loved — thank you, Fathering and Mothering God.

As an "Abba" Father you are the Generator of our lives and energies — generating us every moment of our lives — our passions and desires — our movement toward doing and achieving — in somewhat the way an electrical generator empowers and enables and energizes entire cities, enabling light, warmth, computers, factories — with the continual influx of electrical energy. Without the generator and the generating, all go dead, since of themselves they are "empty of dynamism" — and so with us, Abba — without you we are dead, with you nothing is impossible to us.

**"Our"** — Father of us ALL — all humans alive today and all the way back to the first human and ever hereafter to the last human — The one Father originating us as one — one race, one family, brothers and sisters of one another — our deepest, truest identity and designation — we **are** and I **am** relationship to You and one another — I am not autonomous or free-standing — unthinkable! — and **"Justice,"** according to the Scriptures, "is **fidelity to the demands of our relationships**" — to God, to one another, and to the natural world in which we live." (John R. Donahue, S.J. in *The Faith That Does Justice*)

**"Hallowed Be Thy Name"** — We praise you, we bless you, we give you thanks! — You are wonderful! — We are so happy to have you as our Abba Father — We are delighted to be created, sustained, and liberated by you — we rejoice in living the life you are giving us! We bless life. Blest be you for who you are in yourself and for us. We rejoice in your power — we rejoice to be made in your image.

THIS THEN (above) IS OUR **IDENTITY**, Lord, and in it we rejoice

**"Thy Kingdom Come"** — Thy reign (your Lordship and Majesty), thy rule (your dominion, authority, and loving design for us), and your realm (us — the community of your children living in justice and peace, truth and love, mutual respect and forever forgiving) — we pray that this Thy Kingdom come — we rejoice that we already live, to some measure, in and as that Kingdom — already but not yet — to its achievement we pledge ourselves — by living in fidelity to the demands of our relationships — to the demands of WHO we are — to our very identity.

**"Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"** — may we on earth do your will — work for the ever fuller establishment your Kingdom — as do the angels and saints in heaven. May we relate with the same fidelity, joy, and love that you, Father, and you, Son, and you, Holy Spirit, relate to one another in your Triune community — in whose

relational image we are made.

THIS THEN (above) IS OUR **MISSION**, Lord, and in it we rejoice.

**"Give us this day our daily bread"** — give us manna in our sojourn through the desert — today and each day — without your sustenance we cannot survive or move forward — give us the bread of energy, of enthusiasm, of wisdom, of patience, imagination, courage, and perseverance — all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."** — Teach us, Lord, what "as" means here — we can forgive because you forgive us and we have accepted it — we can receive your forgiveness only when and as we forgive our offenders — Help us to know with St. Francis that "It is in forgiving that we are forgiven" — help us to feel with Jesus: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" — Forgiveness is the form love must often take in a sinful world — in our mission to build your Kingdom help us to be reconcilers not retaliators, peacemakers and community builders not dividers.

THIS THEN (above) IS OUR **STRATEGY**, Lord, and to it we are committed

**"Lead us not into the Great Trial"** — let us not be torturously engulfed in the temptation of Eve to "become like god," to be my own god for myself, to determine for myself and by myself what's "good and evil" — to presume to become autonomously self-sufficient — to "Do it my way!" — to deny my identity as thoroughly relational with you, with my brothers and sisters, and with all the world — and thereby to deny the justice which is "fidelity to the demands of my relationships" — spare me this, Lord, because it often seems so attractive that it almost overwhelms my power to stay the course.

**"But deliver us from the Evil One"** — because it is the Evil One, Lord, who is trying to seduce me to autonomous self-sufficiency, as he did Eve — and as he tried to seduce Jesus in the Temptations in the desert and in the Garden of Gethsemane — help us to say with Jesus, "not MY will — my autonomous self-preservation — but THY will be done."

THIS THEN (above) IS OUR **ENEMY**

BUT OUR **HOPE** IS IN YOUR NAME, LORD,

**"For THINE is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory. Now and forever. Amen."**



## The Creation Story of Jesus: the “Our Father” We are “Kingdom People”

### 9. The Grace We Desire

To be joyfully grateful that God’s Kingdom is our true home — where we have come from by God’s intent, where we are, and where we will celebrate with our full family forever.

#### Prayer Focus

**We are Kingdom to the core.** The coming of the kingdom of God is the deepest desire and the challenging mission of every human being. It is explicitly and consciously the mission of Ignatian companions on mission.

The kingdom of God is a Reign, a Rule, and a Realm. “Realm” connotes place and people — people in a place together. And over them a Sovereign Majesty “reigns.” It is the Lord’s Realm in which they live. And the Rule of this Lord’s Realm is love: love of God, love of neighbor, love of self, and love of the created universe, which is our home. The summary of the “whole law,” as Jesus said, is: love the Lord your God with your whole mind and heart and your neighbor as yourself.

In God’s kingdom love in-forms, animates, and in-Spirits every action, every transaction, and every interaction of the citizens of this kingdom of God. Little wonder that Jesus calls the Kingdom the “pearl of great price” and “the treasure hidden in the field.” (Matthew 13: 24 ff). This kingdom responds to the deepest desire of every human heart.

It is for the coming of this kingdom on earth that Ignatian companions bend every effort. “Thy kingdom come! — on earth, as it is in heaven.” “Come, Lord Jesus.”

#### Suggested Prayer Texts

Isaiah 25:6-8; 55:1-2;  
65:13-14

The messianic banquet

Luke 12:37; 13:29; 14:15;  
22:16, 29-30

The Kingdom

Revelation 3:20; 19:9

Personally invited to the feast

I Corinthians 12:4-12

The analogy of the body

Exodus 24:3-8

This is the blood of the covenant

Genesis 2:21-24

Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

God does not create isolated individuals — autonomous entities — scattering them around the world disparately and totally independent of each other. Rather, God created a human family, a community of persons. And he called and covenanted a People. Each of us is wonderfully made and unique. But we are so only within the family, the People. Outside the Body we could no more exist than could the branch outside the vine. We are all related, interdependent.

Notwithstanding, as Robert Bellah has noted, our culture teaches us the exact opposite. It teaches us to be air-tight compartments, insulated from others, and competing with them in promotion of self. In his classic *Habits of the Heart* Bellah says: “Individualism lies at the very core of American culture. The individual is prior to society, which comes into existence only through the voluntary contract of individuals trying to maximize their self-interest...” (p. 143)

Self-promotion at the expense of others goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden, but it seemed to take center stage as an unquestioned “matter-of-fact” in the wake of Enlightenment rationalism, Reformation individualism (*sola fides, sola scriptura*), and the commercial competitiveness of the capitalist economy.

Schooled by our culture in a thousand ways daily we come to imagine ourselves this way — and then this self-image directs and motivates our decisions and actions. And this is unfortunate, Robert Bellah says, because: “Modern individualism seems to be producing a way of life that is neither individually nor socially viable.” (*Habits*, p. 143)

The grace we desire is “the mind and heart of Christ Jesus.” We want to be able to look around and see ourselves “instinctively” as members of the human family, members of a body, participants in a community, and branches alive in the vine. We want our imaginations to be shaped, molded and re-made in prayerful reflection on the experience of our human family over the centuries, as described in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. And this, in turn, prepares us to reflect fruitfully on our daily lives.

## Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*

32. As God did not create man for life in isolation, but for the formation of social unity, so also “it has pleased God to make men holy and save them not merely as individuals, without bond or link between them, but by making them into a single people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness.”(13) So from the beginning of salvation history He has chosen men not just as individuals but as members of a certain community. Revealing His mind to them, God called these chosen ones “His people” (Ex. 3:7-12), and even made a covenant with them on Sinai.(14)

This communitarian character is developed and consummated in the work of Jesus Christ. For the very Word made flesh willed to share in the human fellowship. He was present at the wedding of Cana, visited the house of Zacchaeus, ate with publicans and sinners. He revealed the love of the Father and the sublime vocation of man in terms of the most common of social realities and by making use of the speech and the imagery of plain everyday life. Willingly obeying’ the laws of his country He sanctified those human ties, especially family ones, which are the source of social structures. He chose to lead the life proper to an artisan of His time and place.

In His preaching He clearly taught the sons of God to treat one another as brothers. In His prayers He pleaded that all His disciples might be “one.” Indeed as the redeemer of all, He offered Himself for all even to point of death. “Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). He commanded His Apostles to preach to all peoples the Gospel’s message that the human race was to become the Family of God, in which the fullness of the Law would be love.

As the firstborn of many brethren and by the giving of His Spirit, He founded after His death and resurrection a new brotherly community composed of all those who receive Him in faith and in love. This He did through His Body, which is the Church. There everyone, as members one of the other, would render mutual service according to the different gifts bestowed on each.

This solidarity must be constantly increased until that day on which it will be brought to perfection. Then, saved by grace, men will offer flawless glory to God as a family beloved of God and of Christ their Brother.

---

## The Creation Story of Ignatius The Creating God of the First Principle and Foundation

### 10. The Grace We Desire

To praise our God with joy and gratitude for revealing his love in the gift of human life.

#### Prayer Focus

**The First Principle and Foundation.** God created us to share in God’s love in time and in eternity. And God created all other things to help us live his love. Ignatius counsels us, therefore, to adopt an interior disposition of “Holy Indifference” or “spiritual equilibrium” or personal freedom in regard to all those things that we might possibly choose to use in our life’s journey. Our primary relationship with God is the touchstone and “place marker” for all our other relationships, whether with people or with things. Our relationships with them will therefore be an expression of our love of God in them – a God who is “All in all.” Our highest priority is to allow our relationship with God to permeate our entire life, including all our choices and everything that flows from these choices.

#### Suggested Prayer Texts

Deuteronomy 30:15-20	God allows me to choose
Psalms 104	My dependence on God, who created all things
Romans 7:14-25	The inner struggle
Philippians 3:8-16	I only want Christ and be given a place with him
Matthew 6:19-21	Wherever your treasure is, there your heart will be
Luke 12:13-21	Filling barns of false security; be rich toward God
1 Peter 2:19-22	People are slaves to whatever masters them
1 Corinthians 3:10-15	The foundation must be Christ
Principle and Foundation	

## Contemporary Reading of Ignatius' Principle and Foundation

### The First Principle and Foundation

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.

The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created.

Hence, man is to make use of them in as far as they help him in the attainment of his end, and he must rid himself of them in as far as they prove a hindrance to him.

Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life. The same holds for all other things.

Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created.

*Translation of the original text by David L. Fleming, S.J.*

God who loves us creates us and wants to share life with us forever. Our love response takes shape in our praise and honor and service of the God of our life.

All the things in this world are also created because of God's love and they become a context of gifts, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we show reverence for all the gifts of creation and collaborate with God in using them so that by being good stewards we develop as loving persons in our care for God's world and its creation. If, on the contrary, we take them as the center of our lives, we break our relationship with God and hinder our growth as loving persons.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some responsibility. 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 more loving response to our life forever with God.

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

*David L. Fleming, S.J.*

*"Ignatius does not want us to simply leave something, but find something—the person of Jesus Christ... Indifference leads us to desire the will of God so strongly that we wish to choose the better way of praising, reverencing, and serving God"*

John English, S.J.

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

Re-write the text of The Principle and Foundation as an invitation from God to you. Change the pronouns and the tense of verbs, making it personal. Read it aloud. Then rewrite it as your response and offering of self addressed to God. Read it aloud again. Notice your interior responses and examine what they may be telling you.

1. What is my reaction to Ignatius' call to "indifference?" How is "indifference" unlike "lack of interest?"
2. What are the areas of my life where I am most attached to my own will?
3. Do I trust that God has hopes for my life that may be different from what I have discovered so far?

## The Creation Story of Ignatius The Laboring God of the Contemplation to Attain Love

### 11. The Grace We Desire

To live in the experience of "feeling" God present and laboring in me,  
making me a lover IN-DEED.

### Suggested Prayer Texts

#### **The Contemplation to Attain Love** (Spiritual Exercises ## 230-237)

1. I recall many of the gifts I have received from God:

- Creation — my own existence, the people with whom I live, the productivity of the earth in all its life forms, and ...
- Redemption — Christ's gift of freedom from the prison of egoism, freedom from fear about my worth, God's unfailing forgiveness of sins, the support of the community of my fellow believers, my faith, and...
- My history — loving persons in my life, the blessings of my circumstances, my talents, the opportunities for service, and ...

I ponder with deep feeling how much my Divine Benefactor has done for me; how much God has given me; how God desires to dwell with and in me. Then I ponder over what I ought give in return: "What shall I give in return for all that God has done for me?" In response I can make a suitable offering of myself in my own words...

2. After naming and appreciating the various gifts I have received I ponder how, on so many different levels, **God dwells in these gifts**:

- By giving and sustaining the very existence of all created things;
- By giving plants life and growth;
- By giving animals feeling;
- By giving human beings power of intellect with understanding and the ability to make free and loving choices.
- Then I reflect on how God gives and sustains and animates my very being with sensation and understanding. God has made me a temple in God's own image. Then, as in the first point above, I ask and respond to the following question: "What shall I give in return for all that God has done for me?"

3. Next I ponder how **God works and labors in all things** in the heavens, on the earth, in the plants and animals giving them being, preserving them, giving them vegetation and sensation and all for the benefit of all including myself. Then, as in the first

point above, I ask and respond to the following question: “What shall I give in return for all that God has done for me?”

4. Finally, I ponder how **all the good things and gifts descend from above**. My power comes from the supreme and infinite power of God. My justice, my goodness, and my mercy derive from God who in God’s very Self is justice, and goodness, and mercy, etc. Every good thing descends from above as rays descend from the sun and tributary rivers from their source. Then, as in the first point above, I ask and respond to the following question: “What shall I give in return for all that God has done for me?”

*Adapted from the work of John Veltrie, S.J.*

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

Ignatius reminds us that genuine love is manifested through actions more than through words, and is mutual in its self-giving. The lover communicates with and gives to the beloved what one has or is able to give and the beloved to the lover. Each shares with the other what each has. I contemplate the tremendous gifts God has given me, and examine my response.

1. Am I aware of the many ways in which God continually parents me? What is my response — gratitude, indifference, or resentment? What does this response tell me about my relationship with God?
2. Do I seek God’s Kingdom of truth and love, justice and peace? What evidence is there that I do or do not seek it?

## The Jesus Code

We all love to unearth hidden things, to crack some puzzle or code. We need only to look at the hoopla surrounding *The DaVinci Code* to see how true this is. Like children, we all still believe there’s a buried treasure somewhere, a secret wisdom, just waiting to be found....

Love is the deepest mystery within the universe. It lies at the base of everything, the cosmic, the biological, the emotional, the psychological, the sexual, the spiritual. There is no level of reality where one doesn’t see the relentless deep pull inside of all things towards a unity, community, fusion, and oneness beyond self. Love stirs all things, speaking to every element in the language it can understand. Deep inside of us, we know too that this alone can bring us home.

And there is an inner code, a certain DNA, within love itself. It too has inner secrets, an inner structure, and a code that needs to be cracked if we are to properly understand its dynamics. And we don’t crack that code all at once, at a weekend retreat or at a religious rally. We crack it slowly, painfully, with many setbacks, over the course of a lifetime.

But Jesus gave us the keys to crack it. They can be named: vulnerability, the refusal out of love to protect ourselves, self-sacrifice, putting others before ourselves, refusing to give back in kind when someone hurts us, a willingness to die for others, the refusal to give ourselves over to cynicism and bitterness when things beset us, continued trust in God and goodness even when things look the opposite, and especially forgiveness, having our hearts remain warm and hospitable, even when we have just cause for hatred.

These are the keys to the wisdom that Jesus revealed, and the gospels tell that we are “inside” or “outside” the true circle of love, depending upon whether or not we grasp this wisdom.

Excerpt from *The Jesus Code — Unraveling The Secret*  
Ron Rolheiser, OMI

*Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my intellect, and all my will — all that I have and possess. Thou gavest it to me: to Thee, Lord, I return it! All is Thine, dispose of it according to Thy will. Give me only Thy love and grace, for this is enough for me.*

St. Ignatius Loyola

---

## Eucharist: The New Creation Story

### 12. The Grace We Desire

To live what we do in Eucharist: that is, to give ourselves ever more gratefully to God and to others in companionship with Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### Prayer Focus

“Eucharist” in Greek means “Thanksgiving.” And the Eucharistic Liturgy is the most complete and perfect expression of thanks conceivable. Eucharistic “thanks” is the “thanks” Jesus offered his Father, a loving gift of himself unto death — a “thanks” possible for him only by reason of the prior loving self-gift of God the Father to him. In Eucharist we now can share in Christ’s “thanks” to the Father because, by reason of Christ’s gift to us of forgiving love unto death, we share Christ’s own life — sisters and brothers of Christ. No “thanks” could be more sublime.

Maryland Province Jesuit Father Jerry Hall puts it this way:

The divine action in the liturgy continues [God’s] self-communication offered in Jesus’ life; the Church’s response continues Jesus’ answer of self-sacrificing love of the Father ... [It] involves a dynamic of dialogue between God and humankind. ... [I]n the entire liturgical action God communicates sanctification and the community of faith responds in praise.

Jerome M. Hall, S.J., *We Have the Mind of Christ*, pp. 48-49

It is over Eucharist, then, and over our participation in this perfect gift of loving Thanksgiving that we want to pray at the culmination of this “Season of Gratitude” in our Year of Prayer.

In so doing, though, we might seem to be jumping ahead of ourselves. It is only when we move into the grace of “Call” that Jesus explicitly enters onto the scene. True enough. Yet it seems warranted, nonetheless, since we know in our hearts and will see more explicitly in the weeks and months ahead that every gift we have ever received ultimately comes to us from God through Christ. So it is from that perspective that we want to appreciate and feel grateful for all the many gifts we have identified already in the course of this Season of Gratitude.

Let’s be very concrete in the way we pray over the Eucharist. In all our considerations and meditations on the Eucharist, let’s imagine ourselves as right now present with others in Eucharist assembly — in the community in which we actually worship regularly. Be participating with these others in the Eucharistic liturgy as it unfolds — gesture by gesture, action by action, and prayer by prayer. Start each meditation period by recalling that in each Eucharistic celebration this assembly is the whole Church in microcosm. Recall, too, that what the Church *does* at Eucharist is what the Church *believes*, and what the Church believes and does in Eucharist is what the Church *is* — and therefore should be *doing* always and everywhere in daily workaday



life. Worship and life are, and are meant to be, “inside” each other.

As we locate ourselves imaginatively and affectionately within this community we should find ample material for a rich week of prayerful reflection on the Eucharist, to arouse our hearts to ever deeper gratitude to God, to Christ, to our companions in worship and service, and for all those we are called to serve.

## Suggested Prayer Exercises

- Take up a hand missal (Sunday or weekday) or a missalette and slowly, thoughtfully “walk through” the unfolding phases of the Eucharistic celebration — the acts in the drama, or the stages in the story — in order to be given an understanding of and an appreciation for the full sweep of the mystery in which we are engaged as participants. As mentioned above, imagine yourself as actively participating in a liturgy as you take this “walk.” You’re not simply a spectator. You will be feeling as you see, responding as you hear, and so on.
  - o What are the **major movements** within this drama — or the “parts of the Mass,” as we used to call them? Why are they in this sequence? What is the underlying “logic” of their order? What does this tell us about who and what we believe we are as Church, how we understand ourselves, and what we want to be, and what we are called to do? What does it tell us of the mind and heart of Jesus, as he lived in Palestine and as he lives today? What does it tell us of God, our Father and Origin, and Giver of All Good Gifts?
  - o Who are the major “**actors**” in this unfolding drama? Name them. What role does each play? What precisely does each contribute? What gift(s) do they bring? How are they related to one another personally, socially, and in the Eucharistic roles they play?
  - o What are the various **actions** that are performed? Gestures? Processions? Movements? Greetings? How are they related? What do they tell us about ourselves as a Church at worship? What do they say about our relationships to others, to one another, to Christ, and to God?
  - o What **readings** do we proclaim and hear? Where were they drawn from? Of whom or what do they speak? Why were they chosen for Eucharistic celebration? How do they relate to one another?
  - o What **prayers** do we say? How do they differ in kind and desire? To whom are they addressed? In whose name are they offered? For whom do we pray? How are they related to one another and to the full sweep of the Eucharistic celebration?
  - o What and when and why do we **sing**?
- o In view of all the above, what are we basically doing at Eucharistic liturgy? What is happening to us? Who are we becoming? What are we being called to? How are our relationships deepening — quite specifically? How to describe those relationships? How are we being “gifted” in our participation at Eucharist and in this meditation on Eucharist? What do we feel moved to say to God in prayer?
- Having experienced and prayed over the full sweep of a Eucharistic celebration, you may then want to go back and ponder prayerfully the individual “acts” in which the drama unfolds. Our desire here is to be attentive to recognize the particular gifts the Lord desires to share with us in each of these movements of the Liturgy, and to hear what the Lord is saying to us and how he is calling us to respond. It would be profitable to spend a meditation period on each one of these movements — a meditation in which we remember, reflect, respond, and relish our giftedness with gratitude. It would also be profitable to open your missal and read and meditate on the prayers and reflections that accompany these “movements.” What we say is commentary on what we do and desire. Some of these movements or “acts” would be:
  - o Our assembling as a congregation
  - o Greeting, rite of reconciliation, and opening prayer
  - o Liturgy of the Word: readings, homily, Creed, and prayers of petition
  - o Bringing and offering of gifts
  - o Eucharistic Prayer: Preface, invocation of the Spirit, narrative of the Lord’s supper, memorial acclamation, the memorial prayer, invocation of the Spirit, intercessions for the church and the dead in communion with the saints, and the concluding doxology
  - o Communion Rite: the Lord’s Prayer, exchange of peace, breaking of the bread, procession for the reception of Communion, and prayer after Communion
  - o Concluding Rite: greeting, blessing, and dismissal of the assembly
- As you pause and meditate on each of these Eucharistic movements above, you may experience regret that you do not know more about the historical development and the theology of the Eucharist or about the meaning and relationship of the actions, words, or gestures, as well as the ministerial roles. You may be informed and inspired by reading a short and engaging book to which we have already referred. It is entitled, *Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation: Understanding the Mass* by John F. Baldovin, S.J. (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., NY, 2003). At the end of each chapter there are thoughtful questions for reflection, discussion, and prayer.



“Be what you  
receive, receive  
what you are –  
the BODY OF  
CHRIST!”

St. Augustine

## Suggested Prayer Texts

Principle and Foundation

Contemplation to Attain Love

Matthew 26:17-29

The Last Supper

Mark 14:12-25

The Last Supper

Luke 22:1-20

The Last Supper

John 13:1-26

Jesus serves his disciples

John 15:9-17

Remain in my love

“True sharing in the prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist means that I listen, receive, and that the door opens up within me, so to speak, through which Christ may enter into me. And, on the other hand, that my own self becomes so free and open that I can begin to enter into HIM.”

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger  
*God and the World*, p. 409

### Second Preface of Christmas

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. Today you fill our hearts with joy as we recognize in Christ the revelation of your love. No eye can see his glory as our God, yet now he is seen as one like us. Christ is your Son before all ages, yet now he is born in time. He has come to lift up all things to himself, to restore unity to creation, and to lead mankind from exile into your heavenly kingdom. With all the angels of heaven we sing our joyful hymn of praise...

### Pray over the 2nd Preface of Christmas

“We do well to give you thanks with hearts of joy...in Christ we see the revelation of your love in one like us... to restore unity to creation and lead us from exile into your kingdom.”

- What does this mean for you, me, us *today* – what is the exile, what is the kingdom *today*?
- Where is God visible, as Christ, *today*?
- What do we have to say to God about this – do with God about this – *today*?

Think of the Last Supper, while reading one of the three Gospel texts. Think of the many meals Jesus celebrated with others, friends and foes alike. “Jesus ate his way through Palestine,” one scripture scholar says.

- Why? What’s in a meal? What’s it got to do with, “Repent! The Kingdom of God is at hand?”
- Why does Jesus describe eternal life as “the Messianic Banquet?” And what’s that eternity got to do with our time-bound today?

Pray over each phrase of the Eucharistic narrative, “Before he was given up to death, a death he freely accepted, he took the bread...” all the way to “Do this in memory of me” after sharing the wine. Be present there and hear Jesus talking to you, to us who are making this Year of Prayer.

- What are we to “do” in memory of him?
- What was *he* doing (we’re are told to “do this”)?

---

## Summary Reflection on the Grace of Gratitude As We Prepare to Pray Over Sinfulness and the Gift of Healing

As we have seen, it is the life of God that we have been given. This God-life in us, therefore, is our inner dynamism, dynamism of giving, of loving, of caring for others, and of creating what they need for growth. It is a life — in God’s likeness — of noticing, understanding, deciding, and doing: of co-creating order where there is chaos and of co-designing harmony among people and things. It is a life of friendship in a condition of peace. And if ours is God-life — and surely it is — then, this is not just what we do, but who we are, who we are called to become, and therefore how we are to behave.

It is an unbelievably glorious *gift* — to be like God!! It is also an invitation and a vocation to live that way — and to live out that gift with fidelity. It is, as well, our primary *responsibility* in life.

But, insofar as we are conscious, intelligent, and free, our perennial temptation is to claim ourselves as our own and to use our gifts for our own enhancement. This would be to deny our giftedness, to displace God, to obviate gratitude, and to exploit others for our own purposes.

And that is why Gratitude is the first and fundamental grace we pray for. It is the “heart-set” which enables us to have an accurate “mind-set” on God, others, the world, and self. It is the mind-set for a truly valuable, loving life.

Gratitude also enables us to understand the fundamental “heart/mind” flow at the core of sin — and also its tragedy: “Whoever would seek themselves (*ho euron ten psuchen autou*) will destroy themselves (*apolesei*) as we read in Matthew 10: 38-39. Gratitude also enables us to understand and appreciate the mission of Christ and our mission with Christ — disposing us, that is, for the graces of Healing, Call, and Co-Laboring which we will pray through together as our Year unfolds.



*Healing*

## Season of Grace — *Healing*

To rejoice gratefully in the realization of God's unfailingly steadfast and forgiving love — revealed in Christ crucified.

### Introduction to the Season of *Healing*

The grace we seek in this Season of Prayer is profound gratitude for the healing of sin and sinfulness, which God has given us and assures us.

It is only in our assurance of God's steadfast forgiveness that we have the courage and the peace to look at sin for what it is — the tragic destruction of ourselves and the waste of all the gifts we had received from God and others. As one theologian has put it, "We are punished *by* our sins, not by God *for* our sins."

In our prayer over Genesis 3 we will see how, by accepting the Great Lie as true, Adam and Eve *reversed* the forward flow of all their gifts, turning them back destructively on themselves. What was given as compassion for others is reversed into pre-occupation with oneself; what was given as love is reversed as suspicion of others and fear for oneself; what was given as an invitation to imaginative co-creation with God is reversed into a greedy ambition for self-promotion; what was given as community-building forgiveness is reversed into a rationalizing self-justification.

It is only when we "taste," feel, and appropriate interiorly the destructive reversal that sin is that we come to understand the healing reversal Christ brings. What God gives us in Christ is not simply a "re-reversal," but a thoroughgoing transformation, which is a revolutionary renewal, "making all things *new*."

We stand firmly on that far shore of radical renewal in Christ. And that gives us, as mentioned above, the courage and peace to look sin right in the face — and to look at sin's power in us and in our contemporary society. And it is essential that we do so. It is the way to unmask the deceiver. Liars live and flourish in darkness. Light re-

veals their contempt for us — while they, with their seductive blandishments, seek to destroy us. Sin always masquerades *sub specie bonitatis* — in the guise of goodness — as St. Thomas Aquinas taught long ago.

So, in our grateful joy over the gift of healing, we are equally grateful to have a better understanding of, horror at, and defense against sin.

These graces we seek in this second season of our Year of Prayer.

A final note: as you pray, expect to find “the Father of Lies” operating actively in your consciousness, on your feelings, in your imagination, in the explanations that occur to you, and in the very convictions that you would like to hold most dearly. Mostly, the “Father of Lies” seduces our feelings into disgust (“what bull!”) and our minds into cynicism. (“What intelligent person could possibly believe this garbage about God?”)

This is to be expected. Don’t be surprised, much less discouraged. It is the road to growth, the same road that Jesus experienced. He was like us in all things [temptation included], save sin. Son of God though he was, he *learned* obedience [to his Father, to the dynamism of his own human consciousness, and to his mission] through what he suffered. (See the Letter to the Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:14-16; and 5:7-10.)

## Unfoldings of the Grace of Healing

Note: Under each of the “unfoldings” of the grace of HEALING we should make an effort to move through several “layers” and ways in which the particular “unfolding” is found in, for instance, the behavior and experience of:

1. Adam and Eve in the Garden (Gen 3)
2. Other people in the Bible, Old Testament and New
3. Contemporary society, national and international
4. Myself, in my own life

In each instance we are looking for the influence of our adversary, the “enemy of human nature” (Ignatius), “a liar and the father of lies,” and “a murderer from the beginning” (as Jesus calls Satan in John 8:42-47).

The graces for which we will pray are the following:

1. To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate ***the lie about self-sufficiency imbedded in temptation and sin.***
2. To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate ***the lie about God’s selfishness imbedded in temptation and sin.***
3. To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate ***the lie about its benefits to us imbedded in temptation and sin.***

4. To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate ***the lie about our prestige in the eyes of others imbedded in temptation and sin.***

5. To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate ***the lie about our power over others imbedded in temptation and sin.***

6. To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate ***the lie about the advisability of secrecy imbedded in temptation and sin.***



---

## The Season of this Grace — Healing

### 1. The Grace We Desire

To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate ***the lie about self-sufficiency imbedded in temptation and sin.***

#### Prayer Focus

**I will decide for MYSELF what's good...**

“Eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” equals appropriating to oneself control over the moral order, or establishing oneself as the arbiter of what is good for me and bad for me — with absolute autonomy. “Knowledge” in ancient Hebrew is not abstract or theoretical but empirical, experiential, as in, for instance, “Adam ‘knew’ Eve.” And “good-and-evil” is a concrete way of expressing, by use of opposite extremes, what the Hebrews had no abstract language for, namely, “the moral order.” To act on this suggestion, then, is an impulse toward autonomy, self-sufficiency — a pattern of “achievement” versus the gratitude of “receiving,” as John Haughey expresses it. We have seen how Robert Bellah, in his *Habits of the Heart*, highlights the exaggerated individualism in contemporary society and the way in which it is strangulating people.

It's important to be attentive to the internal attitudes from which the external act proceeded. At the persuasion of the serpent, Eve and Adam *desire to be as gods* (3:5), knowing good and evil. The sense is not that they desired to know all things, nor that ***they desired to decide between good and evil, but that they desired to decide for themselves what should be good and what should be evil and to act according to this decision***, thereby assuming complete ***moral autonomy***, according to which “I am my own moral law for myself.” This is a denial in action by humans of their condition of creaturehood, subverting the order established by God. People who regard God as a peer implicitly assert that they have no need of God. Thus the relationship of the human person to God is literally turned upside down.

Therefore the first sin has always been correctly understood as human rebellion against the supreme dominion of God, a sin, namely, of pride. Concretely, this pride and rebellion are expressed by transgression of a precept. Trace the unfolding history of the disorientation of sin by reading through to the end of Genesis 11. “Like father/mother, like son/daughter.”

## Suggested Prayer Texts

Genesis 2-3	The sin of Adam and Eve, a prototype of all sin, self-promotion to deity
Genesis 11:1-9	Tower of Babel
Romans 7:14-20	The inward struggle
Matthew 6:22-23	The eye, the lamp of the body
Revelation 12:1-13:8	Frightful ingratitude of angelic creatures who turn away from God

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

### The Nature of Sin in Genesis 3 What We Learn About Us, and What We Learn About God

Immediately after Sacred Scripture tells what **God** is:  
the Creator omnipotent and transcendent

He who gives with utter liberality and generosity

who makes nothing but what is good

creating human beings to His own image

and all other things for the sake of humans,

such that we have dominion over all else,

After this about God,

the author turns to the **humans**.

We learn that they are sinners,

ungrateful in the extreme

such that from this revelation about their human conduct,

**We learn something more about God:**

that He is merciful and

utterly steadfast in his fidelity and love.

“It is no accident that the story of the origin of sin in the Genesis account of creation centers around eating. It is possible to live without engaging in sexual relations, but it is not possible to live without eating and (for humans) without meaning.... Notice how the Eden story combines eating and significance. The serpent says, “You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4, NRSV). The first parents clearly have enough in the Garden of Eden, but they want more. And they don’t want the “more” God’s way; they want it their way. They do it by eating what is not theirs to eat—the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil....

“What is sin, then, but a radical turning away from God and a turning in toward oneself in a desperate effort to achieve self-significance? Sooner or later every sin comes down to this. You could call it selfishness but I think it’s better to call it self-centeredness. The origin of this self-centeredness is a human inability to let God be God. The original parents of the Genesis story cannot trust God’s word and they end up wallowing in recrimination: ‘It’s somebody else’s fault’.”

John Baldovin, S.J.

*Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation: Understanding the Mass*, p. 5.



---

## 2. The Grace We Desire

To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate ***the lie about God's selfishness imbedded in temptation and sin.***

### Prayer Focus

#### **As Eve flirts with temptation...**

Eve comes to the conclusion that the command God had given was not for the sake of Adam and Eve's good, but for the good only of God, namely, in order that God's privileges might be preserved. "For God knows that you will be as gods," the serpent says, implying that God has to protect Himself against these humans.

Thus Adam and Eve consider themselves as a rival to God, thereby perverting totally the relationship between human beings and God. The whole notion of God is turned inside out: the absolutely transcendent God who needs nothing and desires only to bestow benefits upon man becomes — in this distorted view — a mere creature who is in need and is thus concerned only with furthering God's own self-regarding interests. God is seen as selfish and self-interested, using and exploiting humans to procure his own aims.

### Suggested Prayer Texts

Genesis 3:1	"Is it true that God commanded you..."
Genesis 3:2	"God commanded us not to eat..."
Genesis 3:4	"No, you shall not die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God."
Genesis 3:6	"She took of its fruit and ate..."
Luke 6:43-45	By their fruits you shall know them
Luke 12:33-34	Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also

“Sinfulness ...is the privation of total loving; it is a radical dimension of lovelessness. That dimension can be hidden by sustained superficiality, by evading ultimate questions, by absorption in all that the world offers to challenge our resourcefulness, to relax our bodies, to distract our minds. But escape may not be permanent and then the absence of fulfillment reveals itself in unrest, the absence of joy in the pursuit of fun, the absence of peace in disgust — a depressive disgust with oneself or a manic, hostile, even violent disgust with mankind.”

Bernard Lonergan, S.J.  
*Method in Theology*, pp. 242–3

You are called to be truly human, but it is nothing short of the life of God within you that enables you to be so, to be remade in God’s image. ...[H]ow arrogant it would be even to think of trying to reshape our world without being indwelt, energized, guided and directed by God’s own Spirit. Once you realize that true divinity is revealed, not in self aggrandizement, as the Enlightenment supposed, but in self-giving love, you realize that when you worship the God revealed in Jesus and so come to reflect that God more and more the humility of God and the nobility of true humanness belong together.

NT Wright  
*The Challenge of Jesus*, pp. 193–4

### 3. The Grace We Desire

To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate  
***the lie about its benefits to us imbedded in temptation and sin.***

#### Prayer Focus

##### The Hypnotic Lie...

Eve circles around and around the tree after the serpent makes his suggestion — exposing herself to its attraction.

“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food,  
and that was a delight to the eyes,  
and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise...”

Temptation always presents itself *sub specie boni*, under the guise of GOOD. Eve flirts with it long enough to allow her base emotions to be engaged. This process is a mis-education of affections, and a blunting of the refinement of feelings. It is the path to developing addictions to flattery, to pleasure, to possessions. Co-dependencies set in, and there is loss of one’s personal core. We become captive (Paul: “Who can liberate me from this captivity to sin? The good that I would I do not...”) Sin gives birth to moral impotence.

#### Suggested Prayer Texts

Genesis 3:6

That tantalizing fruit...

Romans 7:14-25

The inward struggle — “I do not do what I want to do, and I do the things I hate.”

Ezekiel 16:1-22; 59-63

An allegorical history of Israel, and of myself

I John 1:5-2:2

How to walk in the light: break from sin; keep the commandments, especially the law of love; detach from the world; be on guard

***Might this be the truth that counters the lie?***

“If sin is grasping, then redemption is letting go. If sin means symbolically grabbing at food, then redemption means sharing it and giving it away. Jesus accepted his creaturehood with open hands as a gift. Ironically, being divine for Jesus meant accepting humanity to the fullest. As has often been said, in revealing his divinity Jesus also reveals to us our humanity — our ultimate destiny. ...[T]he reality that the Mass manifests is the process of divine self-emptying in a ritual nutshell... Jesus makes himself literally the food of Christians. And so what is potentially the source of sin and self-centeredness becomes the source of reversing sin. Yes, indeed, much does depend on dinner!”

John Baldovin, S.J.  
*Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation: Understanding the Mass.* p. 7

Suggested Readings and Reflections

**BE YE PERFECT...**

Lord, I'd love to be  
That long straight shoot of a tree  
Unblemished.  
But do I?  
That knotted piece of driftwood  
That lay there  
Gnarled and weathered  
Is more my style  
Waiting for another to lift it up  
Care for it, thus  
Heal its crookedness.

J. William Michelman, S.J.  
1981

4. The Grace We Desire

To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate  
***the lie about our prestige in the eyes of others imbedded in temptation and sin.***

Prayer Focus

**I am alone**

Shame in their nakedness before one another is less involved with sexuality, than with social and personal vulnerability. They are threatened by one another — each has opted for SELF-autonomy and SELF-sufficiency, so the other is a threat. Moreover, they prefer to “cover up” the fact of their REAL orientation (self-promotion) in life. They prefer secrecy, privacy — “Keep it in the dark!” — pretend to be sociable and concerned for the other, as a tool for self-defense. St. Ignatius tells us that Satan wants us to be secretive, lest Satan’s machinations be discovered. He uses the example of a suitor of a married woman who tries to keep her from telling her husband, because once the secret is out of the bag, all danger evanesces. By contrast to this good advice, Adam and Eve make clothes to cover themselves from one another — to hide their true thoughts and desires from the other.

Satan prefers darkness. Blindness and an inability to see or tolerate the light characterize sin. (See John’s Gospel where Christ is the Light of the World.) Adam and Eve experience a basic alienation and division from one another, when they have denied the intrinsic dignity of the other by their claim to autonomy over the moral order.

The malice of sin, therefore, is not so much in the external act of disobedience, but in the interior and psychological distortion and perversion, by which the very personality of human being is corrupted. French Jesuit Gérard Gilleman, in his book *The Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology*, says that in the sin of Adam and Eve, the real malice is to be found in their infidelity to love. The exterior transgression is but a moral and exterior aspect of a real corruption of our power to love.

## Suggested Prayer Texts

II Samuel 11:1-12:15	King David is rebuked for his sin
Psalms 51	King David's response
Luke 18:9-14	The Pharisee and the publican — holiness doesn't always look holy
Luke 5:17-26	My friend, your sins are forgiven...pick up your mat and go home
John 1:4-5	A light that shines in the dark
Luke 11:33-36	The parable of the lamp

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

Read the story of Nathan confronting David with his sin (II Samuel, chapters 11-12) and David's response (Psalm 51). Put yourself in the place of David. Notice that David inadvertently judges himself. As you imagine the scene, try to focus on the feeling of facing up to your sin. What do you really deserve?

“Our long tradition names seven temptations to sin with which we all struggle: covetousness, lust, pride, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth. How specifically are these present in my life? What contributes to my being more critical of others' shortcomings and less adept at recognizing my own? In what way have I been blinded to addictive patterns in my life, which inflict harm on myself or others? What are the secrets that have power over me and I am afraid to name? In what relationships do I need to express God's mercy and forgiveness to others? Is there anyone I need to forgive or from whom I need to ask forgiveness? I know God forgives me; do I have trouble forgiving myself?”

H. Cornell Bradley, S.J.

THE 19TH ANNOTATION IN 24 WEEKS, FOR THE 21ST CENTURY, p. 91

## 5. The Grace We Desire

To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate ***the lie about our power over others imbedded in temptation and sin.***

### Prayer Focus

#### The Devil made me do it!

Adam and Eve, by choosing self-autonomy, are *ipso facto* relegating the other person to the role of means to ends for MYSELF. The immediate effect of the sin, even before any penalty is formally promulgated, is a *definite change within the sinful human being*, expressed symbolically. Whereas Adam and Eve had previously been unashamed in their nakedness, now they are ashamed. Whereas before they had talked familiarly with God, now Adam flees from God (2:25 and 3:8). There is absolutely no change in God as a result of their sin. God comes looking for Adam “in the cool of the evening;” it is Adam who flees.

The change within the human beings affects their relationship not only to God but also between themselves. Adam and Eve feel ashamed, humiliated, and threatened in the naked presence of each other. When questioned by God, Adam attempts to throw full blame on Eve, thus exposing her to suffering in order to protect himself. Eve, in turn, attempts to shift full blame to the serpent.

The penalty follows: death and expulsion from Paradise, and thus access to the tree of life is lost. “Death” is not to be understood in the physical sense, but in an interior and psychological sense: loss of happiness and of the joy of living which humans can find only when properly related to God and one another.

The combined effect of this sin may thus be described as a kind of exile: from God, from other humans, from paradise, and the tree of “life.” Adam and Eve are exiled and held captive, each within themselves. And of and by themselves each is incapable of breaking out of this exile, this captivity. Each needs another to draw them out and lead them forth from this prison of self-centeredness and fear.

Thus the Old Testament sees the sin of Adam and Eve in terms of the Israelite servitude in the land of Egypt, which is described as the “house of slavery” (Exodus 2 0:2) and “the land of sin” (Ezekiel 20:5-9). Adam and Eve are in need of a “Passover” — and a “Passover Person” who can love them out of prison.

As well as human misery on account of sin, Genesis 3 also describes the goodness and the mercy of God, who in 3:15 promises that Eve and Adam will overcome the serpent and their condition of slavery.

## Suggested Prayer Texts

Genesis 3:8-13	Blame enters the world
Ephesians 2:1-10	When we were dead through our sins, God brought us to life with Christ
Romans 5:1-11	At our lowest God saw something beautiful and loveable
Luke 7:36-50	Sinful woman at Simon's house
Luke 15:1-32	Jesus teaches in parables about God's mercy
Matthew 26:6-13	The anointing of Jesus at Bethany

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

### Learning from the Story of the Prodigal

Read the story Jesus tells in Luke 15:11-32. Imagine yourself in the place of each of the characters: the prodigal son, the prodigal father, the older son. What do you learn about yourself as each of these characters? What do you learn about God? With which of the brothers do you most identify?

Spend some time before Jesus on the Cross. Ask him, "How did you get there? Why did you ever allow it?" Listen for his response.

### From the Spiritual Exercises:

#### Colloquy

Imagining Christ our Lord present and placed on the cross, let me make a colloquy, how from Creator He is come to making Himself man, and from life eternal is come to temporal death, and so to die for my sins. And so, seeing Him this way, nailed on the cross, to go over whatever presents itself. I ask myself:

- In the past, what response have I made to Christ?
- How do I respond to Christ now?
- What response should I make to Christ?

And I talk with Mary, Jesus and the Father about these insights.

Gilles Cusson, in his book *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, has put it well: The Ignatian vision of the relationship that exists between the world and God is one of continual exchange inspired by love. Sin is, simultaneously, an infidelity to God's indefatigable love and a deformation of the real world order, an order relating to the loving God. Sin is defined from the human point of view as a disordered use of creation. The human free will, meant to portray the trace of God, profanes itself and devotes itself to serving another purpose — its own satisfaction. Creation, which should find in human beings a road to God, comes up against a wall of selfishness that upsets the destinies of human beings and the universe.

John J. Callahan, S.J.  
*Discovering a Sacred World:*

*Ignatius Loyola's Spiritual Exercises And Its Influence on Education*

## Some Biblical Images of Sin

### 1. Focus on sin as a personified power

- Military Motif
- Ransom Theory

Christ as Victor  
Christ as Redeemer

### 2. Focus on sin as a personal condition

- Thirsty
- Blindness
- Filth
- Profanation
- Disease
- Death
- Lost
- Error
- Orphaned
- Self-righteousness

Christ as Living Water  
Christ as Light of the World  
Christ cleanses  
Christ consecrates  
Christ as physician  
Christ as the Life  
Christ as the Way  
Christ as the Truth  
Christ as Brother  
Christ as Compassionate Love

### 3. Focus on sin as estrangement from God

- Simple mediation
- Law Court motif
- Liturgical motif
- Covenant Motif

Christ as mediator  
Christ as Advocate  
Christ as Priest and Sacrificial Victim  
Christ as Principle of New Covenant

### 4. Focus on the activity of Christ

- Passage, crossing, Passover
- Ascent after Descent
- Self-Emptying — Glorification

## 6. The Grace We Desire

To be given by God the grace to understand and appreciate  
***the lie about the advisability of secrecy imbedded in temptation and sin.***

### Prayer Focus

**“Peter, do you love me?”**

Our sense of sin and our ability to acknowledge ourselves as sinners are proportionate to our sense of having been loved, graced. Perhaps sin is only realized in proportion to love. The more we love another person, the more we have insight into what that person wants and desires. The more aware we become of the love of God, the more aware we are of the inadequacy of our response to that love and the more conscious we are of our sinfulness. This explains why the saints are the ones who are most aware of their sin. St. Francis of Assisi readily and sincerely acknowledged that he was the *greatest of sinners*.

Ignatius learned from his own life experience how human beings, in their freedom, can choose not to live out God’s loving desires for them. Fleeing God’s love, they live in darkness — a life of secrecy and self-deception.

“Once in Manresa he [Ignatius] was ill with a high fever which brought him to death’s door, and he felt sure that his soul was about to leave his body. At this moment the thought occurred to him that he was a just man. It annoyed him to such an extent that he did nothing but resist it and place his sins before his eyes. He had more trouble with this thought than with the fever itself...as the fever abated a little and he was no longer in immediate danger of death, he began to cry out to certain ladies who had come to visit him that for the love of God if ever they saw him at the point of death again, they should cry out and remind him that he was a sinner and should remember the offenses he had committed against God.”

*St. Ignatius’ Own Story  
as told to Luis Gonzalez de Camara; Point 32*

## Suggested Prayer Texts

John 21:1-17	Simon, son of John, do you love me?
Luke 9:23-26	The condition of following Christ
Micah 6:8	You know what is good
Romans 8	The Christian's spiritual life
Luke 5:1-11	A miracle, awareness of sinfulness, and a call from the Lord
John 3:16	God so loved the world...
Luke 5:12-14	If you want to, you can heal me...

The church is a redemptive process. The Christian message, incarnate in Christ scourged and crucified, dead and risen, tells not only of God's love but also of man's sin. Sin is alienation from man's authentic being, which is self-transcendence, and sin justifies itself by ideology. As alienation and ideology are destructive of community, so the self-sacrificing love that is Christian charity reconciles alienated man to his true being, and undoes the mischief initiated by alienation and consolidated by ideology.

Bernard Lonergan, S.J.  
*Method in Theology*, page 364.

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

Make a preparation for a general confession — not “general” simply in the sense of many, many sins, but in the radical sense of praying the grace to reach down to the ROOTS — moral, personal, social, etc — of my SINFULNESS. Sinfulness is an orientation. Sin is simply the orientation's manifestation in acts. We want to get to the fountainhead, the source.

Preparing to confess is to be acknowledging — with utmost joy and gratitude — the steadfast and unfailing love and forgiveness of God in Christ. So we say with Peter, “You KNOW that I love you.” And we say it three times.

### Confronting Your Sin

“Of the points that Ignatius gives in this portion of the Spiritual Exercises, one is particularly important at this stage of our journey. It is a review of all one's sins... Remember you are dealing with a God who is love, not with a person who needs every little account settled. The way to go about this point is with the Risen Lord. Ask him to take you hand-in-hand down memory lane — now looking at this, then looking at that. Let memories bubble to the surface. Allow memories to touch off other memories. Talk to Jesus about them, and with him, try to come to some understanding of the sin dimensions of your past. In many ways we are our past, and broken and sinful dimensions of our lives often stay with us. They influence our choices even now and into the future.... Recall the sin events of your past with detail. Look at the persons involved. Listen to what they are saying. For example, you might look at how you cheated in a game of marbles in elementary school.... See your decision to do so.... See the marbles.... Be with the kids with whom you were playing.... Use imagination with them.... Try to get hold of *the incipient evil* within that one event.... Talk with Jesus about it and ask him for the gift of true sorrow....”

From the work of Fr. John Veltrie, S.J.



## A Meditation

*'Forgive them, for they know not what they do.'* Luke 23:34

The first word given to us today is of forgiveness.... Forgiveness is always first.... Before we ever sin, we are forgiven. We do not have to earn it. We do not even have to be sorry. Forgiveness is there, waiting for us....

Forgiveness means that we dare to face what we have done. We dare to remember all of our lives, with the failures and defeats, with our cruelties and lack of love. We dare to remember all the times that we have been mean and ungenerous, the ugliness of our deeds. We dare to remember not so as to feel awful, but so as to open our lives to this creative transformation. It does not leave us as we are, as if nothing we did ever mattered. If we step into that forgiveness, then it will change and transform us. Whatever is sterile and barren will bear fruit. All that is pointless will find meaning.

Who are the people whom we crucify now, with our economic imperialism that is producing so much poverty?

Who are we crucifying through our violence and war?

Whom do we wound even within our own homes?

Because we know that forgiveness comes first, then we can dare to open our eyes.

Timothy Radliffe, OP  
*Seven Last Words*, pp. 11-13

## Discovering myself in discovering God

To learn what we must learn in our measure of days we must surely unlearn a good deal of what passes as virtuoso performances by "self-made" men and women seeking fulfillment with concentrated gaze and hard drive. So busy do we become living purposefully that we miss a simple truth: our lives are gifts which are only fully lived by becoming receptive and reflective of the reality all around us.

To arrive at the knowledge of the self is to encounter God. Having such encounter is the purpose our existence. Our deepest knowledge begins with the recognition of self as gift and God as Giver. Yet we can no more encounter true self and God by our own strivings than we can will ourselves into existence, for the encounter is a divine initiative. Our part is to desire and prepare for it, believing as Thomas Merton did, that

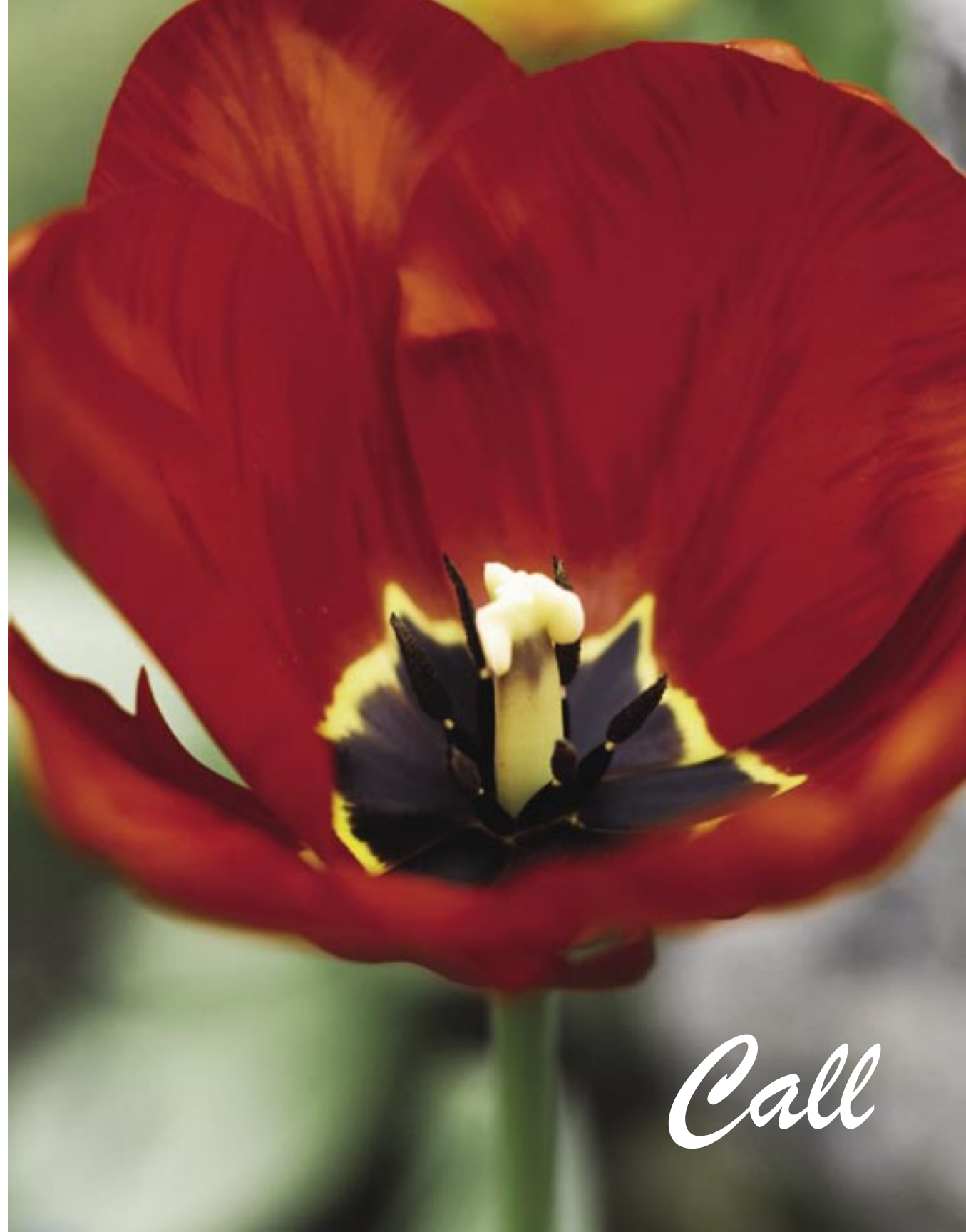
"...there is only one problem on which all my existence, my peace and my happiness depend: to discover myself in discovering God. If I find Him, I will find myself and if I find my true self I will find Him." (Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation*, p. 13.)

Michael K. Duffey

"Called to Be Holy: The Reconvergence of Christian Morality and Spirituality"  
SPIRITUALITY TODAY, Winter 1986, Vol. 38, pp. 349-360.

## The Twelve Steps in Three

1. Trust God
2. Clean House
- 3.. Help Others



*Call*

## Season of Grace — *Call*

To respond enthusiastically to Christ's call to join him in building up the Kingdom of truth and love, justice and peace on earth.

### Introduction to the Season of *Call*

In the Season of Gratitude we saw that there is a call built right into our human being, as children of God, formed in God's own image and likeness, in community with one another as brothers and sisters, and charged with stewardship for the our world. In the Season of Healing we saw how, at some long past time in our history, that call was frustrated and the power of its attractiveness became lost on us. Will that call ever be recovered and, if so, what will it take to recover it?

It is within the framework of this question that we come to this Season of Call. The grace we seek is to be able to look and listen for — and hopefully respond generously to — a possible new call of God to us today. We will seek to hear and respond to that call of God as it comes to us in the course of our lives and work. To that end, we will prayerfully accompany our many predecessors who have responded to God's call. We will begin with a contemplation on the Trinity themselves who compassionately looked and listened and responded to a call they heard in “the cry of the poor,” who were held captive in the misery of sin. Then, we will listen to the call that the Trinity offered to many others — to all of us — down through the long corridors of history.

We will see that the response to that call can be ideal, very good, or tragic. We will see the ideal response of Mary and of Jesus. We will see the very good responses of Peter, the Twelve, the seventy-two, Mary Magdalene, and other disciples. We will also see the sadly tragic responses of Judas, Pilate, and some Pharisees and Scribes, Chief Priests, and Sanhedrin members. We will ask ourselves, “What explains the difference? What are the various mindsets, values, and steps in the process of hearing and responding to, or refusing to hear and heed, God's call?”

God's call is offered in and through the historical and social needs and opportunities of a given day. And as circumstances vary, so does the call, and so too must the response. The call-response dialogue will develop in clarity of focus and depth of concern over the course of one's lifetime — as it did for Jesus.

We will be praying with special attention to Jesus' continuing response to God's call, because his call is our call. Different though his historical circumstances were and so the concrete features of his response and mission, the underlying dynamic of the struggle of good and evil for the soul of the world is the same today as it was in first century Palestine. In Christ's role in this struggle we see, we hear, we feel, and we long to embrace the call that God, in Christ, address to us today. That is the hope and prayer of this Season of the Grace of Call.

## 1. The Grace We Desire

To rejoice in the compassionate love of God, who chooses to save and redeem rather than forsake or condemn.

### Prayer Focus

#### **“What shall We do?” the Trinity asks. And Mary responds!**

There are three “panels” or scenes in this contemplation. It is a triptych – the Trinity, the world the Trinity sees, and the young girl Mary in Nazareth.

First, we see the three Persons of the Trinity as they look down upon our world.

Second, we seek to see, through the eyes of the Persons of the Trinity, the world they see. It is a world without Christ or redemption that Ignatius asks us to see. People are being born and are dying, are laughing and weeping, are bickering and fighting with one another, are cursing in anxiety. Because of their inability to love — an alienation resulting from each one's claim to self-sufficiency through self-promotion — they are inevitably destined for self-destruction. “[B]ehold all nations in great blindness, going down to death and descending into hell.” (Spiritual Exercises, #106) We try, like the Trinity, to “hear the cry of the (materially, but especially the spiritually) poor.” As a very inadequate analogy of an unredeemed world, it might help to recall and “see” some of the tragic human situations of suffering in our own world today: Darfur, babies with AIDs in Africa, starvation in Niger, slave trafficking of women, terrorism, and so on. For a powerful description of the world unredeemed, see St. Paul's letter to the Romans 1:16-32, and 7:15-25.

Turning back to the Persons of the Trinity, we strain to hear what they are saying to one another as they describe what they see. We hear them discussing what it all means — what are the reasons, what are these people thinking about, what are they really desiring for themselves? What drives them? What went wrong? We feel their heart in the tone of their voice: compassion, heartbreak, and disappointment — what Jesus will feel in Gethsemane.

We listen as they ask themselves, “What's to be done?” And “What are the options?” “What would possibly help our people?” Heartbroken, they probe possibilities.

And then we hear, “It's up to *us*. We have to enter into this history, this human history. We ourselves, one of us! The only way to help is by getting right into the mix of it, becoming a flesh and blood *companion* with our people, working with them in their struggles without hampering their freedom. They need Wisdom and they need Love. Let's send the Word in company with the Spirit.” The Trinity reaches a decision.

The Trinity acts on its decision, a heartfelt decision arising out of a loving heart, a decision that will unfold in Jesus over the course of his lifetime and in the lives of millions of others over the course of human history. So far-reaching is the Trinity's decision that divine salvation will reach out to and touch all humankind.

Finally, we move to the third panel of the triptych. We see Mary quietly going about her business in her home in the small village of Nazareth. The Trinity's decision is about to enter into and make history. "In the fullness of time, the Trinity sends the angel Gabriel to our Lady." Ignatius invites us to see Mary in Nazareth being approached by the angel, and to "listen to what the angel and our Lady are saying," as recorded by Luke 1:39-56.

We can imagine that Mary is fantasizing about the joys of her up-coming married life with Joseph. Suddenly there in an interruption — an intervention — that will change her life. Mary is disturbed, but listens. She questions and takes in the answer. She is not fully satisfied intellectually, but she trusts. "Be it done unto me according to your word." *Genoito moi kata to rema sou.* "YES!" — a heartfelt "yes" to the decision from the Trinity's heart, which henceforth would be the compass of her life.

## Suggested Prayer Texts

### Psalm 33

"From the place where he dwells [the Lord God] looks down on all the dwellers on the earth, he who shapes the hearts of them all, and considers all their deeds."

### Romans 1:16-32 and 7:15-25.

"... every impiety and wickedness of those who suppress the truth." ... "I see in my members another principle at war with the law of my mind, taking me captive to the law of sin."

### Luke 1:26-38

"Fear not, Mary. Behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son." ... "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to your word."

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

### ANNUNCIATION

Were others asked?  
A lassie from an isle in a distant sea?  
A maiden in North Africa  
or a slave girl from the Congo?  
  
How many times were angels sent  
and returned, unheard, unheeded?  
Was Mary tenth on salvation's list, or the hundredth?  
  
And you, my soul,  
was "fiat" spoken  
when the angel came?

— Robert F. Morneau

### The Discernment and Decision Making Process of the Trinity and Mary:

#### A Reflection

In the Trinity's process toward decision and in Mary's process toward her "Yes," notice the pattern that moves from seeing and hearing, to describing what's going on, to discussing reflectively what might be done, and, finally, to making a decision and acting. It is the "experience, reflection, decision and action" of Ignatian discernment (see the citation from Decree 26 of General Congregation 34 just below). It is the pattern Jesus will be following in the course of his mission (in this season of "Call"). It is what we disciples of Jesus will be doing in our mission (as we will see in the Season of "Co-Laboring").

#### Contemplative in Action

...The God of Ignatius is the God who is at work in all things; laboring for the salvation of all... working immediately and directly... laboring as Christ the King for the liberation of the world...beginning, preserving, directing, and advancing the Society of Jesus...

## 2. The Grace We Desire

To be amazed and humbled to see how significant a heartfelt human “yes” is in God’s plan for salvation.

### Prayer Focus

#### The unfolding drama – the infancy narratives

We heard Mary say “Yes” to the Trinity’s call for her to collaborate with God in working the salvation of her people. Now we watch Mary as she continues to respond to her call — mulling, praying, reflecting, holding all these things in her heart, treasuring them — “hearing and heeding the word of God” in her life. It is through Mary’s experience and eyes that we see the baby born at Bethlehem and the boy Jesus growing up in Nazareth. We watch carefully as this divine-human drama unfolds in the Infancy Narratives, through Mary’s faith, courage, service, and humility. The Magnificat is the signature of Mary’s heart. “Nothing is impossible to God” is the conviction and culture of the home in which Jesus will be raised.

The Infancy Narratives are the “Overture to the Opera” or the “Prologue to the Story.” All of the major themes of Christ’s active life of ministry will be sounded in these Narratives, the constructive themes and the destructive themes, the harmony and the cacophony, the “welcome” and “the rejection.”

Luke’s Gospel highlights for us the ways in which Jesus is a sign of contradiction and a reversal, not only of sinful dispositions, but also of contemporary religious and human expectations. Matthew’s Gospel leads us through Israel’s salvation history, and introduces us to Jesus, who comes to fulfill the promises of God to his People, linking the new with the old. Jesus initiates the Reign of God, foretold long ago, in our lives today. But surprisingly so, since this fulfillment is not bred of human expectations, but born of God’s own dreams for us.

### Suggested Prayer Texts

Luke 2:1-20	Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem
Luke 2:21-38	Jesus is presented in the temple and recognized by Simeon and Anna
Luke 2:41-50	The Twelve Year Old Jesus in the Temple, and his life in Nazareth following that event
Luke 2:39-40, 51-52	Hidden life at Nazareth
Matthew 1:1-17	Jesus’ lineage
Matthew 1:18-25	God with us
Matthew 2:1-23	The infancy of Jesus
Ephesians 1:3-14	God’s plan of salvation

For a Jesuit, therefore, not just any response to the needs of the men and women of today will do. The initiative must come from the Lord laboring in events and people here and now. God invites us to join with him in his labors, on his terms, and in his way. **To discover and join the Lord, laboring to bring everything to its fullness, is central to the Jesuit way of proceeding. It is the Ignatian method of prayerful discernment, which can be described as a constant interplay between experience, reflection, decision, and action, in line with the Jesuit ideal of being contemplative in action.** Through individual and communal apostolic discernment, lived in obedience, Jesuits take responsibility for their apostolic choices in today’s world. Such discernment reaches out, at the same time, to embrace the larger community of all those with whom we labor in mission.

*Documents of the 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus:  
Decree 26, #2 pp. 236-237. (Emphasis added)*



## Suggested Readings and Reflections

In the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius suggests that we approach these passages of scripture “...as if I were there with all possible respect and reverence.”

- Be at the birth of Jesus...does Mary invite you to hold her baby and your Savior and Lord??!!
- Stand with Mary and Joseph as they listen to the words of Simeon and Anna about this child. Nunc dimittis: “Now you can dismiss your servant in peace, for my eyes have seen the Promise to Israel fulfilled!” “...thine own soul a sword shall pierce.” “This child is set for the rise and the fall of many in Israel” – “out of hearts thoughts (motives and mindsets, meanings and values) will be revealed,” “... a sign of contradiction.”
- Experience the arrival of the Magi – what can their journey mean for the world? For me? For the Herods of this world?
- Join in the worry of Mary and Joseph, as they fear “he is lost!”
- Listen to the Word of Truth that comes from Jesus’ lips: “Didn’t you know I must always be where my Father is?” What is this truth saying to Mary, Joseph, and Jesus himself regarding their relationship to him?
- Journey with them as they return to Nazareth with this Word of Truth, where he obeys them.
- With Mary, ponder, mull, and treasure all these things in your heart.

## 3. The Grace We Desire

To open our minds and hearts to learn from Jesus how to walk with him on mission.

### Prayer Focus

#### **The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!**

Be with Jesus as he begins his public ministry:

**The baptism:** As Jesus walks into and is immersed under the water, he expresses his solidarity with the whole human family — he is one of us. It is his solidarity with the sinful human condition — it is now his. He is showing his solidarity with John the Baptist, the last and the greatest (as Jesus will say) of the Jewish prophets — they are two cousins, so different, yet one.

**The desert experience:** prayer, a retreat of self-questioning and reflection, discernment, the tussle with “spirits” — much as Ignatius tussled after his wound at Pamplona while recuperating at Loyola. Christ is “like us IN ALL THINGS,” sin alone (i.e., the actual commission of sin) excepted.” ... “Son of God though he was, he LEARNED obedience from what he suffered.” Compare Jesus’ desert retreat experience to the Year of Prayer.

Look at the temptations — all of which are, at heart, the Adam and Eve temptation: “I’ll do it MY WAY!” — a self-promotional autonomy. “Throw yourself from the Temple — make a big splash, impress people, show off.” “Turn these stones into bread and feed yourself. Use miraculous powers for your own convenience and pleasure.” “Worship me and all Kingdoms are yours” — power, fame, total worldly empire.” What is his answer? “It is not the Father’s will. It’s not who I am — a Son of God the Father, a servant of my sisters and brothers. Therefore, it’s not my will. I won’t do it.”

At the end of these temptations, Jesus is left in a fire of intimacy with his Father, like the quiet white heat at the center of the flame. Jesus’ choices and values are a resounding victory for humanity, and for God. Scripture tells us that the devil, having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, left him for the time being — to return at the appointed time.

**Jesus opens his ministry with** “Repent — have a metanoia, a change of mind and heart — and believe the Good News! The Kingdom is at hand.” Why a change of mind and heart? What was the prevalent mind and heart? “By their fruits ye shall know them.” What were the “fruits” at that time, among Jesus’ contemporaries? What was the religious situation, the social and political situation? The personal, spiritual situation? What does “metanoia” really mean — what is a change of mind/heart? Have we experienced it?

**The sermon at Nazareth.** Jesus preaches his first (and probably last) sermon in the synagogue of Nazareth. Note the unfolding of events on that occasion. Jesus proclaims the Word of God, and at first the people are astonished, thrilled, filled with anticipation. Then the “serpent” begins to whisper to them as to Eve...”Surely this is



Joseph's son! Who does he think he is? He's nothing but a carpenter! Why should we listen to him? I don't like what he's saying – *it's too much!* He's no better than we are! He's just showing off! *He's too much!*" And they decide to kill him. We can see that this is the pattern, in summary form, of the entire public life of Jesus: enthusiasm ending in murder. Sometimes it's the pattern of our feelings about God, the Good News, and God's prophets. And we certainly see it in others around us – sometimes directed at us.

## Suggested Prayer Texts

Matthew 3:13-17	Jesus' baptism
Luke 4:1-13	The Temptations
Isaiah 61:1-11	Yahweh has anointed me to bring good news
Luke 4:16-30	Jesus' homily in Nazareth
Mark 1-16	(Read the whole Gospel in one sitting. Let the entire drama wash over you and give you Jesus' mind, mission, and heart.)

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

**1. Two value systems.** Ignatius challenges us to look carefully at the two value systems presented in the temptations — one emphasizes riches, honors, and pride; the other emphasizes detachment, humility, and service.

- Which do I really prefer — operationally?
- Do I actually feel closer to Christ when I live out of voluntary and humble service?
- In what ways might my choices and values be more closely aligned with those of Christ?
- Concretely and right now, what choices and values would lead me toward a fuller life of genuine love?

**2. Jesus' Sermon in Nazareth.** Trace the progression in the synagogue in Nazareth as Jesus proclaims that the Isaiah text he has just read is now fulfilled in him.

- Where are the "hearts and minds" of the people?
- Why do they resist and resent a conversion — a turn-about — of heart, of mind? What "button" is Jesus pushing?
- Mary is in the congregation. How does she feel about Jesus' sermon? How does she feel about her neighbors, as she sits with them? How does she

think the neighbors are looking at her right now? And what does she think about that?

### 3. "Jesus – a scandal to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 13): Why?

The Jewish society into which Jesus was born and lived was a society humiliated and constrained by Roman occupation. Most Jews chose one of three options. There were the "Quietists" who lived *in* this world, but not *of* the world; they prayed and waited for God to come into this wicked situation and work his will. Second, there was the compromise option, typified by Herod and some of the religious elite. "Go along to get along" in your relations with the occupiers, while lording it over your fellow Jews. Third, there was the zealot option, which consisted of plotting to take up arms and violently throw off the yoke of Rome in order to reclaim national sovereignty, political freedom, and control of one's land and destiny.

None of the three camps doubted that God wanted them to have their own land, sovereignty, and political freedom. That's what God had always wanted for them, ever since he led them out of exile in Egypt and into the Promised Land, the land promised centuries before to Abraham and his descendants forever. This had always been central to God's purposes for them and is the heart of God's "Kingdom." That this should be God's intention now was self-evident to all three of these options.

It was not at all self-evident to Jesus, according to Scripture scholar N.T. Wright in his book *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is*. Wright says, "[Jesus] was neither a quietist nor a compromiser nor a zealot. Out of his deep awareness, in loving faith and prayer, of the one he called 'Abba, Father,' he went back to Israel's Scriptures and found there another kingdom-model, equally Jewish if not more so." (p. 37) Through parables, healings, and his own personal embodiment of the message, Jesus proposed a shockingly new Kingdom. Jesus proposed a new way of being Israel through turning the other cheek and losing your life to gain it. He made associating and dining with "disreputable" people a central feature of his program. Radical acceptance and forgiveness of others was also central. He was creating a new people, a new context, a new world, and a new way of life through forgiveness, prayer, and jubilee – and for his program he sought no justification or authorization from religious officials at the Temple.

Thereby he was turning the world upside down and inside out. Look at the Beatitudes; look at his mother's Magnificat. The poor are the rich! The hungry are getting their fill! It's the persecuted who should be rejoicing, and servants of all who are the greatest of all. The last seats are now first. All the "sensible" values of "sensible" people are being thrown out the window. And what's more Jesus is claiming God's authorization for this program.

And he goes on to say that if Israel does not embrace his program but, instead, takes up arms to assure their national sovereignty by violence, they themselves will become the victims of violence. They will have chosen the path to destruction. In N.T. Wright's words: "If they would not follow the way of peace, they would reap the

consequences.” (p. 50) “[T]he fall of Jerusalem, when it came, would indicate clearly enough that Jesus’ way had been right.” (p. 52)

Jesus is saying, in a word, that the source of human happiness is personal and spiritual, not political or economic. And the source of unhappiness is sin, not foreign occupation. In his *Dictionary of the Bible* Scripture scholar John L. McKenzie agrees:

Through its history Israel learns that salvation is not achieved through cultural and political institutions; salvation is achieved only through the intervention of Yahweh, and since the obstacle to salvation is man’s refusal to accept it, the intervention frequently takes the form of judgment. ... [W]hile [deliverance] is the work of Yahweh, it is a work in which man must share. (p. 571)

But in Jesus’ time, his fellow Jews had not yet learned that lesson. And Jesus’ message redirects them to the message that they should have known. Jack Miles explains Jesus’ response, in his provocative book entitled, *Christ: A Crisis in the Life of God*.

[Jesus] speaks of bondage only to redefine it immediately as bondage to sin. But if bondage is now bondage to sin rather than to Rome, then liberation is liberation from sin rather than Rome. And what liberation now leads to is not the unencumbered, uncolonized, free possession of a promised land, but eternal life. (p.177)

Miles “graphs” Jesus’ message to his contemporaries this way:

- **For Caesar** Jesus substitutes **the Devil as our enemy**
- **For oppression by Rome** Jesus substitutes **bondage to sin**
- **For the re-conquest of Judea** Jesus substitutes **eternal life**
- **For the Messiah as Prophet and King** Jesus substitutes **the Messiah as God Incarnate**

If Christ’s call and mission is ours, and vice versa, it is not surprising that the justice we want to bring to our tormented world is a justice that only faith can do. Our Ignatian mission is to share the “faith that does justice.” (GC 32, 33, and 34)

## 4. The Grace We Desire

To learn and appreciate the heart of Christ’s call and the invitation he offers to Peter.

### Prayer Focus

#### Peter

Who is this man that Christ calls? Peter is a man aware of his strengths, and gradually he becomes much more aware of his weaknesses; a man who is bumbling, but honest. He’s a man who is so like us — filled with a mixture of good intentions and poor delivery; a man courageous and cowardly; a man of vision and blindness. Jesus calls Peter, not because he is perfect, but because he is open. And he can face and acknowledge his sinfulness. Peter’s sinfulness, brokenness, and neediness are actually indispensable to the call. They open him to Christ’s saving love. Through Peter’s weakness, Christ will show his strength. Though Peter in himself is little more than a “stumbling block,” Jesus makes him ROCK.

### SUGGESTED PRAYER TEXTS

Luke 5: 1-11	A miraculous catch of fish, and Peter’s cry, “Leave me Lord, I am a sinful man!”
Matthew 14: 22-33	Peter walking on the water — briefly — and his plea, “Save me Lord!”
Matthew 16: 13-20	Simon, son of Jonah...you are <i>petros</i> ...ROCK
Matthew 16: 21-23	Peter’s demur and Jesus’ rebuke

The mission of the reconciled sinner is the mission of reconciliation; the work of faith doing justice...Today we bring this countercultural gift of Christ to a world beguiled by self-centered human fulfillment, extravagance, and soft living, a world that prizes prestige, power and self-sufficiency. In such a world, to preach Christ poor and humble with fidelity and courage is to expect humiliation, persecution, and even death. We have seen this happen to our brothers in recent years. Yet we move forward resolutely out of our “desire to resemble and imitate in some manner our Creator and Lord Jesus Christ...since he is the way which leads men to life.” (SpEx 53) Today, as always, it is deep, personal devotion to Jesus, himself the Way, that principally characterizes the Jesuit way of proceeding.

From Decree 26 of *General Congregation 34*

## 5. The Grace We Desire

To hear clearly the call of Christ as he offers it to the twelve, to others, and to me.

### Prayer Focus

#### And the beat goes on...

In these passages we see God's call to all of humanity, as it resonates in every life, in every age, and continues to invite humans into the work of co-creation and co-redemption. We see this call in Jesus' activity as he calls the 12, the 72, and others to join in his mission. In this prayer we ask Jesus to help us see the world with his eyes, hear its cries with his ears, and to respond to the world with his heart.

### Suggested Prayer Texts

Luke 6:12-16	Jesus chooses the twelve disciples
John 1:35-39	John directs his disciples to Jesus and they follow him
Luke 10:1-16	The call and commission of the seventy-two
John 4:5-42	The Woman at the Well, the first missionary
John 11:17-29	Martha recognizes and proclaims Jesus as Messiah
Luke 19:1-10	Jesus calls Zacchaeus
Acts 9:1-30	The call of Saul/Paul
Acts 1:21-22	The call of Matthias — re-fulfillment of the Twelve
Matthew 28:16-20	The mission to the world

### Suggested Readings and Reflections

- The Call of Jeremiah with a reflection by Rosemary Haughton

The word of the Lord came to me, saying: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations. (Jeremiah 1:4-5)

Jeremiah's calling ... demands that he have no other ties or concerns but the Lord's sending.... But the transforming effect of the decision to surrender to this call is not achieved without a struggle. If the response is to be a real death it cannot depend on a confidence in one's ability to carry out the task commanded. It must be a self-giving in the face of a future which is totally dark, just as in the case of the two lovers...

The Roman primacy is not an invention of the popes, but an essential element of ecclesial unity. .... [The New Testament] depicts the tension between *skandalon* [stumbling block] and rock; in the very disproportion between man's capacity and God's sovereign disposition, it reveals God to be the one who truly acts and is present.... The men in question are so glaringly, so blatantly, unequal to this function that the very empowerment of man to be the rock makes evident how little it is they who sustain the Church but God alone who does so, who does so more in spite of men than through them.... For with the same realism with which we declare today the sins of the popes and their disproportion to the magnitude of the commission, we must also acknowledge that Peter has repeatedly stood as the rock against ideologies, against the dissolution of the word into the plausibilities of a given time, against subjection to the powers of this world. When we see this in the facts of history, we are not celebrating men but praising the Lord, who does not abandon the Church and who desired to manifest that he is the rock through Peter, the little stumbling stone: "flesh and blood" do not save, but the Lord saves through those who are of flesh and blood.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger  
*Called To Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, pp 73-74.

## 6. The Grace We Desire

To hear and energetically respond to the call of Jesus.

### Prayer Focus

#### The Call of the King

As we come to the Call of the King as proposed by Ignatius, we see the King and the Enemy in the context of Genesis 1 to 3 and of what we have come to think and feel about sin in the Season of “Healing.” It is THIS enemy that Jesus the King will come to grips with. But above all notice the personal qualities of the King – generous, willing to live as poorly and dangerously and exhaustingly as the “troops” – sharing praise with them, as well as blame, the victory or the defeat, the reward and the humiliations. He is “one of the troops,” a true companion, a “servant leader” – as the foot washing will reveal.

### Suggested Prayer Texts

Spiritual Exercises	Call of the earthly king, and the call of Christ the King
Matthew 5:1-12	The Beatitudes
Luke 8:4-15	Parable of the Sower
Matthew 13:24-30	Weeds and Wheat
Matthew 13:44-52	The Kingdom is like...

#### *The Call Of The Temporal King*

#### *It Helps To Contemplate The Life Of The King Eternal*

**Prayer.** Let the Preparatory Prayer be the usual one.

**First Prelude.** The first Prelude is a composition, seeing the place: it will be here to see with the sight of the imagination, the synagogues, villages and towns through which Christ our Lord preached.

**Second Prelude.** The second, to ask for the grace which I want: it will be here to ask grace of our Lord that I may not be deaf to His call, but ready and diligent to fulfill His most Holy Will.

**First Point.** The first Point is, to put before me a human king chosen by God our Lord, whom all Christian princes and men reverence and obey.

**Second Point.** The second, to look how this king speaks to all his people, saying: “It is my Will to conquer all the land of unbelievers. Therefore, whoever would like to come with me is to be content to eat as I, and also to drink and dress, etc., as I: like-

This does not mean that people are converted in bits... The person is one whole, and is saved as one whole, not in bits — but the once-for-all salvation in Christ can only reach a man as a person, that is, as a conscious being capable of love. Therefore, his response can only come from him as personal, that is, as defined and aware, one who has come into conscious being under the touch of love... transformed in a love which is not one’s own, yet is most surely one’s real self. ‘I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

Rosemary Haughton, *The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community*, excerpts from pp.117-120

- I hear myself being called by Christ. What does he ask of me?
- I re-live my call of years gone by and, especially, as it has grown during these days of prayer.
- Jesus has called me personally. He offers me life. How best can I share that gift? How well have I done so?

wise he is to labor like me in the day and watch in the night, etc., that so afterwards he may have part with me in the victory, as he has had it in the labors.”

**Third Point.** The third, to consider what the good subjects ought to answer to a King so liberal and so kind, and hence, if any one did not accept the appeal of such a king, how deserving he would be of being censured by all the world, and held for a mean-spirited knight.

### **IN PART 2**

The second part of this Exercise consists in applying the above parable of the temporal King to Christ our Lord, conformably to the three Points mentioned.

First Point. And as to the first Point, if we consider such a call of the temporal King to his subjects, how much more worthy of consideration is it to see Christ our Lord, King eternal, and before Him the entire world. To all and to each one in particular He calls, saying: “It is My will to conquer all the world and all enemies and so to enter into the glory of My Father; therefore, whoever would like to come with Me is to labor with Me, that following Me in suffering, he may also follow Me in glory.”

Second Point. The second, to consider that all those who have judgment and reason will offer their entire selves to the labor.

Third Point. The third, those who will want to be more devoted and to distinguish themselves in all service of their King Eternal and universal Lord, not only will offer their persons to the labor, but even, acting against their own sensuality and against their carnal and worldly love, will make offerings of greater value and greater importance, saying:

“Eternal Lord of all things, I make my oblation with Thy favor and help, in presence of Thy infinite Goodness and in presence of Thy glorious Mother and of all the Saints of the heavenly Court; that I want and desire, and it is my deliberate determination, if only it be for Thy greater service and praise, to imitate Thee in bearing all injuries and all abuse and all poverty of spirit, and actual poverty, too, if Thy most Holy Majesty wants to choose and receive me to such a state and way of life.”

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

- What does it mean to me concretely, in my circumstances, to be with the king, observing his customs, working with him by day and watching with him by night?
- What are the sufferings entailed?
- What will it be like to share in his victory?
- What will we conquer?

Examine The Beatitudes as a special life-style and heart-style that Jesus lives and invites others to join.

- While all of the Beatitudes are intertwined, is there one of the Beatitudes that Jesus is particularly challenging me to live?
- Lights are to shine, not be hidden. How do I shine – without being a show off?
- Such living is also salt for others. What does “Jesus-salt” do for them? How do I bring it?

## 7. The Grace We Desire

As companions called by Jesus, to put on his mentality,  
to get into his heart, and to share his vision.

### Prayer Focus

#### The Logic of Jesus

- “Unless the seed falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit.”
- “He who would save his life, loses his life; but whoever loses his life for my sake (for the sake of others) saves it.”
- “Thank you, Father, for revealing these things not to the wise and clever of this world, but to the *nepioi* (little babies who can only babble).”
- “Foolishness to the Gentiles and a scandal to the Jews — Jesus, the wisdom and the power of God.”
- “When I am weak — poor, powerless — then am I strong.”

### Suggested Prayer Texts

Reflect on these scripture passages, noticing especially those values that are contrary to our fast moving and accomplishment-oriented society. Imagine you are hearing them for the first time. Would you be inspired and energized, or scandalized and threatened?

See and feel the contrast between Simon the Pharisee and Jesus in their regard of the woman who weeps at Jesus’ feet — self-righteous contempt on the part of Simon, and compassionate appreciation on the part of Jesus. Where is each “coming from?” And where is it going to for each of them?

Luke 1:46-53

Mary’s Magnificat

Luke 7:36-50

Simon the Pharisee, and the woman who washes Jesus’ feet

I Corinthians 1:17-31

The true wisdom and the false

II Corinthians 12:1-10

Finding strength in Christ rather than self

Ephesians 3:14-21

May your life be rooted in love

Philippians 2:1-11

Have this mind among yourselves...



## Fall In Love

Nothing is more practical than finding God,  
that is, than falling in love  
in a quite absolute, final way.

What you are in love with,  
what seizes your imagination,  
will affect everything.

It will decide  
what will get you out of bed in the morning,  
what you will do with your evenings,  
how you will spend your weekends,  
what you read,  
who you know,  
what breaks your heart,  
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.

Fall in love,  
stay in love  
and it will decide everything.

— Pedro Arrupe, S.J. (1907-1991)  
Superior General of the Society of Jesus 1961-1984

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

To **what** and to **whom** are we being called?

To see and belong to the Kingdom of God means giving not getting, sharing not grabbing, listening not denouncing, forgiving not retaliating, collaborating not coercing, uniting not dividing, caring compassionately not condemning. In sum, Christ's values lead to living as "a person for others," not an egoist. These inner values are true...truth to live for, truth to die for. They deepen faith in our hearts as we work in contemporary secular society, and fill us with vision for the future.

Jesus calls people to a new way of being, one that turns Adam and Eve's upside down choices for "self" right side up again. Jesus' call comes to those who are open to receive it, regardless of their position in the community, reputation, or past sins. It comes to men and women, old and young, the "franchised" and "disenfranchised." It comes to me. Do I have ears to hear it? Not all do.

## 8. The Grace We Desire

To love Christ so deeply that I choose his standard as my own.

### Prayer Focus

#### Under whose standard will you serve?

The whole underlying dynamic of the Jesus story can be found in the Two Standards of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, a dynamic which Ignatius was able to see as if with x-ray vision. The principle concern of the Exercises is to be found in the Two Standards, namely, the aim to draw us gradually to and sustain us daily along the life-long path of conversion from pride to humble, loving service of others with Christ.

Ignatius had personally experienced the pull and the tug of these Two Standards in his own conversion experience, as we read in his autobiography. The dichotomy between Satan's call and Christ's call can be expressed in different languages — sociological, psychological, anthropological, dramatic, literarily, artistic, philosophical, theological, and so on — and the lived reality of each of these two "fundamental options" can take very varied forms depending on our personality, social context, upbringing, and so on. But at root the option is either egoism or "other-ness." Most of us live our lives dealing with the tension, inherent in us, of both poles. On this side of eternity, most of us can't claim to live fully one or the other. We do, however, have a desire for the desire! And Ignatius assures us that that is no little thing!

### THE TWO STANDARDS

#### The standard or mentality of the Enemy (#142)

- Satan's approach is first to touch the "desire for riches" in me.
- The desire for riches is a desire to be someone on my own — a person of independent means, a self-made person — so I can run my own life and stand on my own.
- This will then lead me to a desire for others to acknowledge who I am and to honor me in my self made identity. Very subtly I develop a prideful reliance on self and a primary focus on ME. Other people become simply mirrors of my magnificence. The audience at my performance.

#### Exercise:

- Let God reveal how these dynamics happen uniquely to me.
- What does it feel like and what do I make of it when it takes me over and sweeps me along? How do I feel when I "lay it against" God's moment-by-moment LOVE??

## The standard or mentality of Jesus (#146)

- Christ's approach is just the opposite, as we see in the Beatitudes. First, Christ calls me to be "poor in spirit" and to live a simple life-style, free of acquisitiveness, and peacefully detached from "things" in my life. God's love is my premiere desire. Without it I am nothing.
- Living out God's love provokes ridicule from "the world," so Jesus guides us to be detached from concern for our prestige — so much so as to prefer humiliation, "without giving cause for it or causing harm to our neighbor" (as Ignatius wrote in the Jesuit Constitutions).
- And finally Jesus leads us to humility and humble service of others. It is a God-centered life for others, not a self-centered life.

### **Exercise:**

- What is my unique experience of this Jesus mentality?
- It cuts across many basic human attachments and drives for pleasure, power, and prestige. How does this mentality feel to me?
- Where is the joy in Christ's standard?

## The Triple Colloquy (#147)

- I talk and pray with Mary, Jesus, and our Father about my struggle with these two diametrically opposed mentalities, and about the true and real desire of my heart, "to be accepted under Jesus' Standard," i.e., to be drawn into and to live out of his mentality.
- This meditation is chiefly about what my desire is after being shown the two mentalities. Get honestly in touch with your deepest desires. Hold them up to God as an offering for his acceptance.

## Suggested Prayer Texts

Luke 15:11-32

The "Prodigal Father" and his two sons

Deut. 30:15-20

You have before you two ways — choose life!

## MEDITATION ON TWO STANDARDS

The one of Christ, our Commander-in-Chief and Lord:  
The other of Lucifer, mortal enemy of our human nature  
***The Text of the Spiritual Exercises***

First we reflect on the idea that Christ calls and wants all under his "standard," and Lucifer, on the contrary, under his. I ask the Lord to show me the deceits of Satan, and to help me to guard myself against them, and for knowledge of the true life that Christ offers, and the grace to imitate him. As I begin my meditation, I try to see the place in my imagination. Ignatius suggests, "...see a great field of all that region of Jerusalem, where the supreme commander-in-chief of the good is Christ our Lord: another field in the region of Babylon, where the chief of the enemy is Lucifer."

First I imagine that Satan is seated in that great field of Babylon, in a great chair of fire and smoke. He is horrible and terrifying, and he summons innumerable demons, scattering them, some to one city, and others to another, through the entire world, not omitting any place or any person. I consider the instructions he gives the demons on how to cast out nets and chains; that they have first to tempt with a longing for riches — as he is accustomed to do in most cases — that men may more easily come to vain honor of the world, and then to vast pride. So that the first step shall be that of riches; the second, that of honor; the third, that of pride; and from these three steps he draws on to all the other vices.

Then, on the contrary, I will imagine the supreme and true Captain, who is Christ Our Lord. I consider how Christ our Lord puts himself in a great field of that region of Jerusalem, in a lowly place, beautiful and attractive. The Lord of the entire world chooses so many persons — apostles, disciples, etc. — and sends them through all the world spreading his sacred doctrine through all states and conditions of persons. I consider the instructions which Christ our Lord makes to all his servants and friends whom He sends on this expedition, recommending them to want to help all, by bringing them first to the highest spiritual poverty, and — if his Divine Majesty would be served and would want to choose them — to actual poverty; the second is to encourage them to desire insults and contempt; because from these two things humility follows. So that there are three steps; the first, poverty against riches; the second, contempt against worldly honor; the third, humility against pride. And from these three steps will come all the other virtues.

Ignatius recommends that this meditation conclude with a Triple Colloquy:

I first address Mary, the Mother of Jesus, to ask for her prayers and intercession that I may be received under Christ's standard; and to receive the gift of spiritual poverty, and — if his Divine Majesty would be served and would want to choose and receive me — also actual poverty; and that I may become more like Christ through suffering the scorn of the world, if I can incur this without another person sinning or the displeasure of the Divine Majesty. I conclude this part of my prayer with a *Hail Mary*.

Now I come to Jesus with the same prayer, concluding with the *Soul of Christ*.

Finally, I come to the Father with the same prayer, that He may grant it to me; and say an *Our Father*.

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

Spend time looking at the Two Standards and “unpacking” it — realizing its absolute centrality to the mission of Christ, the Sin of Adam and Eve, the mission of the church, and OUR mission. We examine the Two Standards under Call because Call is a walk through Jesus’ unfolding public mission where we see the forces of resentment and rejection building up against him. The Two Standards can be the “MRI” of these forces and what is “REALLY” going on beneath the surface of Jesus’ life and mission.

### A Scandalous Story

Fr. Frank McGauley, S.J. tells a story of his work in India. The Jesuits would celebrate Mass publicly in the village squares regularly. Catholics came, but others did as well, standing around the perimeter, watching and listening. It was a great way to catechize and evangelize. One day, the Gospel reading was the parable we often call the Prodigal Son. A Hindu man was standing at the edge of the square, arms folded, brow furrowed. He listened, thought, and at the end of the Mass approached Fr. McGauley angrily, saying, “You have made your God out to be a fool!” The thought that the “father” in the parable would be so forgiving, so undignified, so trusting, was too much for the man to accept. He was horrified, scandalized. Who would teach something this disrespectful about a god? What nerve this Jesus had to portray his God in such a way! But this was just the beginning of many conversations with the Jesuits. The man who was so scandalized by the parable became one of the most devout and devoted of Catholic catechists.

As told to Diane Nicholson

### **George Aschenbrenner on the Two Standards**

#### **The Mentality of Satan**

The mentality of Satan is completely self-focused and turned away from God. This sounds as though it should be easily detected; it is usually well concealed... The vulnerable point is a desire endemic to the human condition — the desire for riches. These riches are not necessarily financial. They can refer to your ambition for autonomy, to be somebody on your own, to take over and run your life your way... This quietly motivating mentality can coexist with regular religious practice and belief in God...

You know how strong is your need to be liked and well regarded. As you begin to steer the ship of your own life, your sails long for the bracing wind of other people’s honor and respect. In fact, a drooping sail seems so discouraging that the needed breeze of public honor and affirmation sets off a dynamic of manipulation... This manipulative way of dealing with other people, if not reflected on, can unconsciously begin to enslave you and squelch any genuine generosity out of most of your interpersonal relationships... You begin to sense deep down a different breeze, a whisper of discontent. But the energetic adventure of keeping the sails of your life stretched and humming distracts you, and so you disregard the quiet whisper.

However inauspiciously this whole mentality may begin, it can so corrupt your heart that finally you yourself are the center and measure of everything. You are serving yourself as wholeheartedly as though you were a god. The desire to be like God, a gifted desire from the beginning, has collapsed into a very different desire: I want to be God. This condition of heart can continue to what Ignatius calls “surging pride.”

#### **The Mentality of Christ**

Diametrically opposed to the satanic mentality, Christ’s attitude of heart is the way to true life ... Christ’s recruiting tactics begin with a desire for spiritual poverty. This evangelical spiritual poverty is rooted in the nature of the human condition.

The message of human living is simple: you are helpless, unable to control even your own breathing. It is easy to assume the disguise of autonomy, trying to run your own life and wearing the mask of one in charge. But Christ’s way is to embrace, not escape, the dependent vulnerability and find buried there the treasure of universal giftedness. A loving gift-giver is blessing you in kindness beyond imagining.

This total dependence on God does not produce an immature passivity. The realization that you are nothing on your own, rather than deflating your spirit, stretches your heart. You wait in hope and gratitude for all the other gifts that accompany life. Everything about you belongs to God. Your stance in daily life is to welcome the Divine Majesty.

This stance in life is countercultural... Crossing the grain of the culture’s moving traffic brings the collision of insult, ridicule, criticism, and contempt. Jesus had these reactions cast in his face frequently. ... The downward mobility of service ... provokes misunderstanding, challenge, cynicism, or the put-down of simple disregard. ...These

negative reactions will not utterly destroy you and your self-confidence if your experience of the understanding and affirmation of God's love in Christ is lively enough to stretch the sails of your heart.

To live daily in the awareness that all is gift describes a humility that is only possible because God has promised always to love and understand you. This takes the eyes of your heart off yourself. Louis Evely describes humility this way: "It is to put one's delight so much in another that one no longer thinks of oneself."

A simple contrast between pride and humility does not capture the richness of this meditation... These hours of prayer will give valuable insight not only into your own inner dynamics but also into the attitudes and vision implied in organizations and systems of our international world.

George A. Aschenbrenner, SJ, *Stretched for Greater Glory: What To Expect from the Spiritual Exercises*, pp. 92-98

## 9. The Grace We Desire

To come to genuine interior freedom in order to hear and respond generously to Christ's call.

### Prayer Focus

#### The Three Types of People

In meditating on Ignatius' exercise on three types of people, we come to see the need for genuine freedom, or in the words of Ignatius, "holy indifference," in the use of God's gifts. We also come face to face with any inordinate attachments that are preventing us from serving with Christ to the fullness of our capacity. As you pray with the following Scripture passages, observe the attitudes of Jesus – his values, his joys, and his sorrows.

### Suggested Prayer Texts

Spiritual Exercises	Three types of people
Mark 10:17-22	Rich Young Man
Luke 10:29-37	Good Samaritan
Luke 21:1-4	Widow's Mite
Luke 16:13	No one can serve two masters
Matthew 5:13-16	Salt of the Earth

### Suggested Readings and Reflections

#### A Parable

There are three types of persons. Each has won \$2,000,000 in a fair lottery. Each person fears their immediate attachment to this sum:

"What is the best use for the money? ... With whom do I share it? ... How will the rest of my life be affected? ... I may end up using this windfall for all the wrong purposes and end up missing my purpose in life! ... I may discover a great deal of hindrance in the peaceful service of God. ... "

However, they all wish to be free from the burden arising from their attachment.

The first type wants to get rid of the attachment to the money in order to find peace in God and to be assured of salvation. But the hour of death comes without making use of any means.

The second type also would like to rid themselves of a possible disordered attachment. But they wish to do so in such a way that they retain what they have acquired, so that God is to come to what they desire. They are not willing to entertain the possibility of giving up the sum of money in order to serve God better, if that should prove more in harmony with God's desires for them.

The third type want to get rid of the attachment but wish to do so in such a way that they desire neither to keep nor to give up the sum acquired. They seek to be free. They desire to choose to keep the sum acquired if God so inspires them to do so; they desire to relinquish the sum acquired if God so inspires them to do so. Meanwhile during the decision process they strive to conduct themselves as if every attachment to it had been broken. They will make efforts neither to want that, nor anything else, unless the service of God alone moves them to do so. As a result, the desire to be better able to serve Jesus Our Lord and his Abba will be the cause of keeping or giving up the sum of money.

From the work of Fr. John Veltri, SJ

A literal and traditional English translation of the text in the Spiritual Exercises – for the “feel” it gives of Ignatius’ mind in the matter.

### Three Pairs of Men In Order to Embrace What is Best

**Prayer.** The usual Preparatory Prayer.

**First Prelude.** The first Prelude is the narrative, which is of three pairs of men, and each one of them has acquired ten thousand ducats, not solely or as they ought for God's love, and all want to save themselves and find in peace God our Lord, ridding themselves of the weight and hindrance to it which they have in the attachment for the thing acquired.

**Second Prelude.** The second, a composition, seeing the place. It will be here to see myself, how I stand before God our Lord and all His Saints, to desire and know what is more pleasing to His Divine Goodness.

**Third Prelude.** The third, to ask for what I want. Here it will be to ask grace to choose what is more to the glory of His Divine Majesty and the salvation of my soul.

**First Pair.** The first Pair would want to rid themselves of the attachment which they have to the thing acquired, in order to find in peace God our Lord, and be able to save themselves, and they do not place the means up to the hour of death.

**Second Pair.** The second want to rid themselves of the attachment, but want so to rid themselves of it as to remain with the thing acquired, so that God should come where they want, and they do not decide to leave it in order to go to God, although it would be the best state for them.

**Third Pair.** The third want to rid themselves of the attachment, but want so to rid themselves of it that they have even no liking for it, to keep the thing acquired or not to keep it, but only want to want it or not want it according as God our Lord will put in their will and as will appear to them better for the service and praise of His Divine Majesty; and meanwhile they want to reckon that they quit it all in attachment, forcing themselves not to want that or any other thing, unless only the service of God our Lord move them: so that the desire of being better able to serve God our Lord moves them to take the thing or leave it.

**Note.** It is to be noted that when we feel a tendency or repugnance against actual poverty, when we are not indifferent to poverty or riches, it is very helpful, in order to crush such disordered tendency, to ask in the Colloquies (although it be against the flesh) that the Lord should choose one to actual poverty, and that one wants, asks and begs it, if only it be the service and praise of His Divine Goodness.

Fr. John McEvoy, SJ, a Director of Novices of the Maryland Province in the 1940's and 1950's, used to describe the Three Types of people in this memorable way:

The jawbone	All talk and no delivery
The wishbone	“Wouldn't it be nice if, but...”
The backbone!	“Do it!”

- Each of the types has good desire for God's greater glory and feels the opposing, impeding attachment.
  1. The Procrastinator — never gets to it.
  2. The “Bargainer” will give God anything but what is being asked — too quickly and impatiently. Identifies God's will with his/her own.
  3. Third type prays his/her way to freedom from attachments and is patient enough for the revelation of what serves God's greater Love and Glory.
- Which of the types best describes you right now?
- What would it be like to live, choose and act always in a way in line with God's Love and Glory for me and for us all?
- Do I want to live this way?
- What do I want to talk about with Mary, Jesus, and the Father as a result of this meditation?



## 10. The Grace We Desire

To discover and appreciate how and why it is that we can be deaf to his call

### Prayer Focus

#### **The people who were deaf to the call.**

To this point, we have looked at affirmative responses to Call. Now we want to look at negative responses for what they might reveal to us about the dynamic rhythm of CALL-RESPONSE.

It is also important to learn how negative responses shaped Jesus' mission, his preaching, his travels, his relationships — even his self-understanding. Remember, he grew from what he suffered.

Moreover, in the face of negative response — in the form, for instance, of trap-setting debates, physical threats, and personal attack (“You’re mad.” “You’re possessed!”) — Jesus surely felt the “call” of temptation.

In watching the negative responses of people to Jesus, we have a “template” against which to understand our own temptations to negativity.

Finally, let's also pray sympathetically for those in the scripture who said or did “NO!” to Jesus. It will ready us to pray for the “nay-sayers” among us today. We need that readiness because, as Jesus told his disciples, “This kind (of devil) is driven out only by prayer.”

### Suggested Prayer Texts

Matthew 11:16-19	We played you a song and you would not dance...
Matthew 12:1-14	The controversy of “work” on the Sabbath
Matthew 12:38-42	The sign of Jonah
Matthew 19:16-26	The Rich Young Man and the danger of riches
John 12:1-11	The Anointing at Bethany and Judas' response
John 13:21-30	The betrayal of Judas
Matthew 26:69-75	Peter's denials
Matthew 27:11-26	Pilate condemns Jesus



## Suggested Readings and Reflections

For an understanding of those “deaf to his call:”

### Jesus the Victim—The Innocent Victim

In his crucifixion as a criminal outcast wasn't Jesus revealed as a misguided failure? What kind of victory is *this*? Certainly those who crucified him didn't feel defeated. And his so-called disciples had cut and run. Where's the “victory?”

Rene Girard, professor of French Language, Literature, and Civilization at Stanford University — and formerly at Johns Hopkins University — has an intriguing explanation, which is growing in acceptance. It was as he worked his own way through the story of Jesus' crucifixion that Girard himself became a Catholic.

Jack Miles briefly summarizes Girard's theory in his (Miles') book, entitled, *Christ: A Crisis in the Life of God*, on p. 311.

For Girard, covetousness and envy are the most primitive forms of desire, all desire being learned. Covetousness and envy that cannot be contained as productive ambition and benign emulation may degenerate into malign and destructive rivalry. When such rivalry grows violent enough and spreads far enough to infect an entire society, it can climax with the identification of a scapegoat who is blamed for the violence and whose sacrifice temporarily restores peace. In Girard's view, the process by which mimetic desire leads to mimetic violence is more ancient than literature, more ancient perhaps than speech. Its most archaic surviving evidence is to be found in the violence of the oldest myths, and these provide most of the evidence for the theory.

Girard reads the Gospels not as one more myth among the many that his theory aims to explain but as, uniquely, the repudiation of the cruel logic that all the other myths have in common, the logic by which an innocent victim is gratuitously defined as guilty, singled out as the source of contagion in a community, and then wantonly sacrificed for the supposed health of the community. In the Gospels, as Girard reads them, the innocent Christ is seen as innocent even as he is sacrificed. It is this which makes the Gospel story exceptional. When his innocence is vindicated, the demonic guilt-transference process is exposed and, in principle repudiated. That repudiation — in which, so to speak, scapegoating itself is scapegoated — is, for Girard, the essence of Christian revelation and the start of Christian redemption.

In this summary Jack Miles acknowledges his indebtedness to Rene Girard's *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, Stanford University Press, CA, 1987. Among contemporary theologians who look to Rene Girard for guidance is James

Alison who develops a Girardian “theological anthropology” in his book, entitled, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin Through Easter Eyes*.

Questions that might be worth exploring prayerfully are:

1. “Covetousness and envy are the most primitive forms of desire.” Does this jibe with your experience? Does it jibe with the Genesis story about Adam and Eve?

2. “All desire being learned.” Do we *learn* to desire? Or does it “come naturally?” And if the latter, Girard must be saying that what we learn is not the activity of desiring, but the things we actually end up desiring. Right? And, even in the latter interpretation, does it jibe with your experience?

3. “Covetousness and envy ...may degenerate into malign and destructive rivalry.” I guess we saw that unfold from Genesis 3 through to the end of Genesis 11. Right? Are there modern instances that come to mind?

4. “When such rivalry grows... far enough to infect an entire society...” Can an *entire society* get so infected? Or does it he really mean a “substantial portion?” We have a lot of hostility in the world today. Can you think of a society that is infected by rivalry which springs from envy and covetousness? If so, which one(s)? Why them?

5. “The identification of a scapegoat who is blamed for the violence and whose sacrifice temporarily restores peace.” Think of instances of scapegoating — perhaps in a business that is running amuck, or maybe in a government agency whose culture breeds resentment, or in a family which is dysfunctional (and keeps walking with feigned blindness around the “elephant in the middle of the living room”). In such instances of your own experience, does Girard's diagnosis of the motivation for scapegoating hold up? Does it seem accurate? If not, what does account for scapegoating?

6. Does Jesus' innocence make his victimization and death *redemptive*? Was that true of Gandhi? Of Martin Luther King? Of the Jesuit martyrs in El Salvador? Have you ever been innocently victimized? How does innocent victimization work redemption in practice?

---

## 11. The Grace We Desire

To learn Christ's call by walking with him to Calvary

### Prayer Focus

#### The Mission

Join Jesus in a special moment on his journey to Jerusalem — the moment of his decision to see the mission through to the end. In John's Gospel (see 11:45-53), it is because of Jesus' raising of Lazarus that the decision for his death is settled and publicized. He is a "hunted man" — what is it like for him, for the apostles, for you? It is Passover time and pilgrims don't expect him to come to Jerusalem this time. He stops at Ephraim on the edge of the desert and makes this most important decision he has had to make so far: will he walk into the jaws of death? Be with him and ask him to share his experience as he weighs this important decision. Why not run and stay alive to help people? How to be true to his Mission and Dream? See the look on his face and hear the tone of his voice as he tells the apostles after this very prayerful discernment with his Father: we are going to Jerusalem!

Be with Jesus and the Apostles at the Last Supper. Look at Jesus, who personifies Love. Watch his love flow into foot washing service, into the gift of his continuing presence, and into the transmission of his mission to those closest to him. At this special Supper of celebration of Passover of God's people from exile to freedom, Jesus breaks the ritual and surprises the disciples. This is My Body and My Blood given for you and *for all*: Jesus dreams of a unity way beyond that of his own people — and he is ready to give his life for that. How eager he was to share that meal with his friends. Be reverently present, watching in surprise with the disciples as he institutes the Eucharist, a whole new covenant.

The Passion can be viewed in 2 ways:

- *Externally* – as a series of cruel events undeservedly visited on this most innocent man – what a horrendous sleepless time he had from Thursday evening until he died in mid-afternoon on Friday.
- *Internally* – what is happening in his heart where he experiences the loving presence of his Father, encouraging and leading him on his journey of sharing forgiving love with all.

Take any scene of the Passion and let these two views develop and coalesce.

Despite our sorrow, we also experience a sense of gladness, rejoicing with awe because of Jesus' JOY. Pray to experience surprise and a lifting of spirit as you realize slowly the VICTORY that the Father worked in and through Jesus.

## Suggested Prayer Texts

John 11:45-57	A challenging moment at Ephraim
Luke 19:45-21:38	What happens when Jesus enters Jerusalem?
John 13:1-20	Washing of the feet
John 17:1-26	The “priestly prayer” of Jesus
Matthew 26:26-29	Institution of the Eucharist
Luke 23:33	Father, forgive them...

Read the full Passion narrative in any of the Gospels

Lord, you are holy indeed, the fountain of all holiness. Let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, so that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Before he was given up to death, a death he freely accepted, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Take this, all of you, and eat it: this is my body which will be given up for you.”

When supper was ended, he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples, and said: “Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.”

*Liturgy of the Eucharist*

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

Read the Gospel of John and observe the themes of the Passion that John highlights:

- Hour for Son of Man to be glorified — the whole Passion of Jesus is the Glory of God
- When lifted up, he will draw all to himself
- With death on his mind, his heart serves in love
- A special consciousness of facing death
- “Joy will be yours if you behave accordingly” — words the apostles remembered long after

### Christ’s death reveals sin

In the light of Easter we can see the Cross as the place where God’s love is offered by Jesus to his persecutors and his betraying disciples, perhaps in muteness, perhaps in words which we find on Jesus’ lips in the Gospels. On Good Friday, the responsive enactment that is going on in those who are related to Jesus is sinful rejection, either by crucifixion or by desertion. The dynamism at work is the power of sin, which, if left to itself, would destroy the human as such and so try to kill God (by killing God’s image). Conversion is not occurring on Good Friday. The accepting love of Jesus has lured out into the open sin with its two faces, aggressive violence and traitorous flight. On the Cross, God’s love, authentic humanity, distorted humanity, and the power of sin meet in full, unsurpassable, mutual encounter. Jesus is the tent of meeting of the human, the divine, and the dark power of sin. Jesus loves, and God loves through Jesus, humankind at its absolute worst, when humans conspire with sin as the blatant, out-in-the-open attempt at God’s life through attack on God’s image. This full-bodied meeting is ingredient in the total process which God is empowering: a process of conversion of humans at their most sinful. The way God chose is the most realistic, involving as it does God’s full self-exposure to the world in its created goodness and bottomless guilt. Jesus is that full self-exposure. Sin comes out of hiding completely in this meeting, shows its utter violence and aggression and meets head-on God’s love in its full incarnation. The power of sin, which derives from secrecy and isolation, is thus destroyed as an ultimate danger to us and to God’s hopes for us.

Brian O. McDermott, S.J., *What Are They Saying About the Grace of Christ?*  
Paulist Press, 1984, p. 26.

## 12. The Grace We Desire

To experience with incredible, incredulous joy the victory of the Resurrection.

### Prayer Focus

#### ***Resurrexit sicut dixit!* He has risen just as he said!**

Having just seen Jesus dying the way he did we have also seen him rising. Jesus' resurrection is not an event that happened sometime *after* Jesus' death. It is a dimension of the selfsame activity that his dying is. His was a "rising-death."

Listen to scripture scholar Xavier Leon-Dufour: "We can say that for John [the Evangelist] crucifixion, exaltation, resurrection and return to the Father are a single mystery, that of the glorification of the Son by his Father (12-23, 28; 17:1, 5)... John had no intention of telling us that 'events' followed the death and resurrection in a temporal succession..." (Xavier Leon Dufour, *Resurrection and the Message of Easter*, p.178)

And theologian Karl Rahner agrees. "The death and resurrection of Christ are a single process, whose phases are indissolubly connected (Luke 24:26, 46; Romans 4:25; 6:4 ff.)... Christ's resurrection [is]...the perfected and perfecting end of his own personal and particular death and each element of the one process must condition and interpret the other." (Karl Rahner, "Resurrection of Christ," *Theological Dictionary*, p. 407)

Above we said that dying *the way Jesus died* was simultaneously rising. What way of dying?

- Voluntarily, by choice, with full freedom. "No one takes my life; I lay it down." He didn't run; he didn't debate his way out of it; he didn't negotiate.
- Definitively — with the definitiveness of life-ending physical death. Giving one's life in death is the ultimate expression of who one is and who/what one loves and lives for. "No greater love has anyone than to give their life for another" — especially for one's enemy.
- Not only with love, but with *forgiving* love. "Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do."
- Transcending the temptation to retaliation or revenge. He was silent when insulted. "Like a lamb led to the slaughter."
- Fully dedicated to fulfilling his Father's will for him, which was to show compassion for us fully.

As we watch this way of dying, from the moment Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane until he breathed his last, we are watching his gradual rising. We watch him becoming who he is. "Son though he was he learned obedience [to himself and to his Father] through what he suffered." That is, he was growing into himself, Son of his Father, through what he was suffering. And when Jesus asks the disciples on the road to Emmaus, "Wasn't it necessary for the Son of Man to suffer and thus enter into his

glory?,” the answer is obvious. “Of course it was necessary!” No dying this way, no rising — and vice versa.

And what is his rising?

For Jesus it is the realization of his full potential for loving, a potential which — Jesus being human — could only have been realized in this kind of death. “Alive with the fullness of love,” is what we mean by Jesus’ “glorification.” Jesus is radiant with the love of God glowing in him. And with this love comes a whole range of other gifts of mind, heart, and spirit.

For us Jesus’ rising means the in-break and availability of divine love permanently in the world and for us. Christ’s death was not just an *act* of love, but a permanent Gift of love, a Covenant, a Promise, and a Guarantee of love — embodied forever in the human family. We never need to ask for God’s love and forgiveness; all we need do is accept God’s love and forgiveness which, as the Holy Spirit, already and always dwells in us.

## Suggested Prayer Texts

John 20:19-29	The Upper Room
Luke 24:13-35	Emmaus leads away from Calvary!
Acts 2:1-41	Pentecost
John 20:1-18	Mary Magdalene meets the risen Christ
John 20:19-29	As the Father sent me, so I send you
I Corinthians 15:12-28	If Christ has not been raised...
John 21	The appearance on the lake shore
Spiritual Exercises	Jesus appears to his mother

*“The day will come, when, after harnessing the winds, the tides, and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in this history of the world, man will have discovered fire.”*

Talk by Harris Wofford at a Woodstock Forum  
on April 11, 2005,  
quoting Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

### Jesus appears to his mother, Mary

*H. Cornell Bradley, SJ*

In the final part of the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius tells us to ask to be glad and rejoice intensely because of the great joy of this dearest of friends, Jesus, in his triumph over sin and death. We are to contemplate the post-resurrection apparitions in the gospels. But Ignatius starts with this observation:

“[Jesus] appeared [first] to the Virgin Mary. Though this is not mentioned explicitly in the Scripture, it must be considered as stated when Scripture says that he appeared to many others. For Scripture supposes that we have understanding, as it is written, ‘Are you also without understanding?’”

I offer some thoughts, then, about that first apparition, inviting you to focus on the intense joy Mary must have felt in seeing her son, Jesus, standing before her.

“Jesus, it’s you!! It’s you!! My soul rejoices in God my Savior! You look so wonderful! It all happened so quickly! You were so magnificent on Friday, but it must have been so painful. My heart was pierced as by a sword, seeing all you had to endure. And I could feel your heart break when you saw your friends run out on you. But even though there was so much shame and ugliness, I was so proud of you. You were like a king before them. I think Pilate really tried to get you off, but Herod — well, I have had a hard time liking him ever since what he did to John, your cousin. Everything was so horrible, just as Isaiah said it would be. But now — here you are! Blessed be God!”

“We did not know what to expect. You talked about rising, but we did not know. Oh this is so far beyond what we could have hoped for!”

“Oh, Jesus, yesterday was a bad day. John has been taking great care of me as you asked, but he feels so badly. You are going to have to visit him. He was trying to console me all day by reciting from Scripture:

- How it was in the beginning at the time of creation, how God saw how good it was;
- About Noah and the first covenant;
- About the covenant with Abraham, and we both cried so much when he recalled Abraham about to sacrifice his only son, little Isaac, and I thought of you when you were lying in that manger when we were in Bethlehem;
- The covenant with Moses;
- The story about the angel of death passing over the homes of the Israelites in Egypt and then their passing over from slavery through the Red Sea to the Promised Land, and we thought about your last meal with all of us last Thursday.



This is a new covenant, isn't it! Oh, Jesus! You are so wonderful and I am thrilled with joy for you! I cannot tell you how happy I am that you are here!!”

“People have been so good. That young married couple from Cana came by to express their sympathy. John likes them and was trying to get a whole lot of details about the wedding. Mary and Martha and Lazarus came by; they are devastated. Can you go and see them? And those friends from wherever it was – the time we came to visit you and you said to the crowd ‘My mother and brothers and sisters? Whoever does the will of my Father is mother and brother and sister to me.’ Well, I have to tell you I was not too thrilled by that at the time – but anyway they were here. Oh, Jesus! It is so good to see you!”

“Peter was by, and you definitely have to see him. He was just afraid. We all were. How many times was I afraid! Remember when Joseph and I lost you as a little boy – I thought the end of the world had come! And your answer to us did not help much in comforting us! I thought back to those words ‘Do not fear, Mary, you have found favor with God’ and my saying ‘Be it done to me according to your will.’ I had no idea of all the things that were going to happen; but now, Jesus, seeing you here, it is starting to make sense! O happy fault of Adam! God is so good!”

“This is a new covenant, isn't it! Oh, Jesus, it is so good to see you! I am thrilled with joy for you!”

May we all, like Mary, “be glad and rejoice intensely because of the great joy” of this dearest of friends, Jesus, in his triumph over sin and death! Victory! Jesus, how sweet it is!

H. Cornell Bradley, S.J.

*The 19th Annotation in 24 Weeks, for the 21st Century*, pp. 244-247.

Be with Mary Magdalene as she approaches the tomb on Easter morning. This Season of “Call” ends with the apparition to Mary Magdalene at the tomb. The “gardener” who turns out to be Jesus says, “Don't hang onto me, GO, rather, and TELL the others what you have SEEN and EXPERIENCED.” Mission is the central message of the Resurrection Narratives.

Read the account from Luke of the disciples on the road to Emmaus and prayerfully ponder:

- Jesus is so gracious, even humorous, as well as challenging.
- How gently and respectfully Jesus insinuates himself into their walk and conversation.
- The two announce only half of the Good News (which, only by itself, is bad news).
- His challenge: Slow to believe! Was it not necessary that the Messiah suffer and so enter GLORY. (Is. 53)
- He tests them. He “made as if to go on.”

o Their hearts are on fire more than they realize. “Do stay with us.”

- At the Eucharistic meal they recognized him – and he disappeared
- The Risen Jesus appears not just to prove (apologetically) that He is Risen, but to help them become familiar with his new presence with them now and forever.
- They return to Jerusalem with hearts afire to tell the story, which is the heart of the Good News. “The Lord is risen!”

### The Scriptural Accounts of the Apparitions of the Risen Lord

According to biblical scholar, Xavier Leon-Dufour, “The intention of that terminology [in apparitions of the risen Jesus] is not to describe a thing, an object, but the presence of a subject, which is not of this world. The risen Christ is present (**initiative**), he is linked with the past (**recognition**) and he gives a command for the future (**mission**).” (p. 216 of *Resurrection and the Message of Easter*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, NY, 1971.)

The “**initiative**” is the appearing itself, the encounter or event, which awakens attention, like the “stranger” who suddenly starts walking beside the disciples on their way to Emmaus.

The “**recognition**” is: “It is the Lord!” the Beloved Disciple cries out, seeing someone on the lake shore cooking fish. Or, the “Rabboni,” which Mary Magdalene says to the “gardener” who has just gently spoken her name, “Mary,” outside the tomb.

The “**command for the future**” is the sending, the mission, as when Jesus says to Mary, “Go, tell my disciples that ...,” or to Peter after breakfast on the lake shore when Jesus says, “Feed my sheep.”

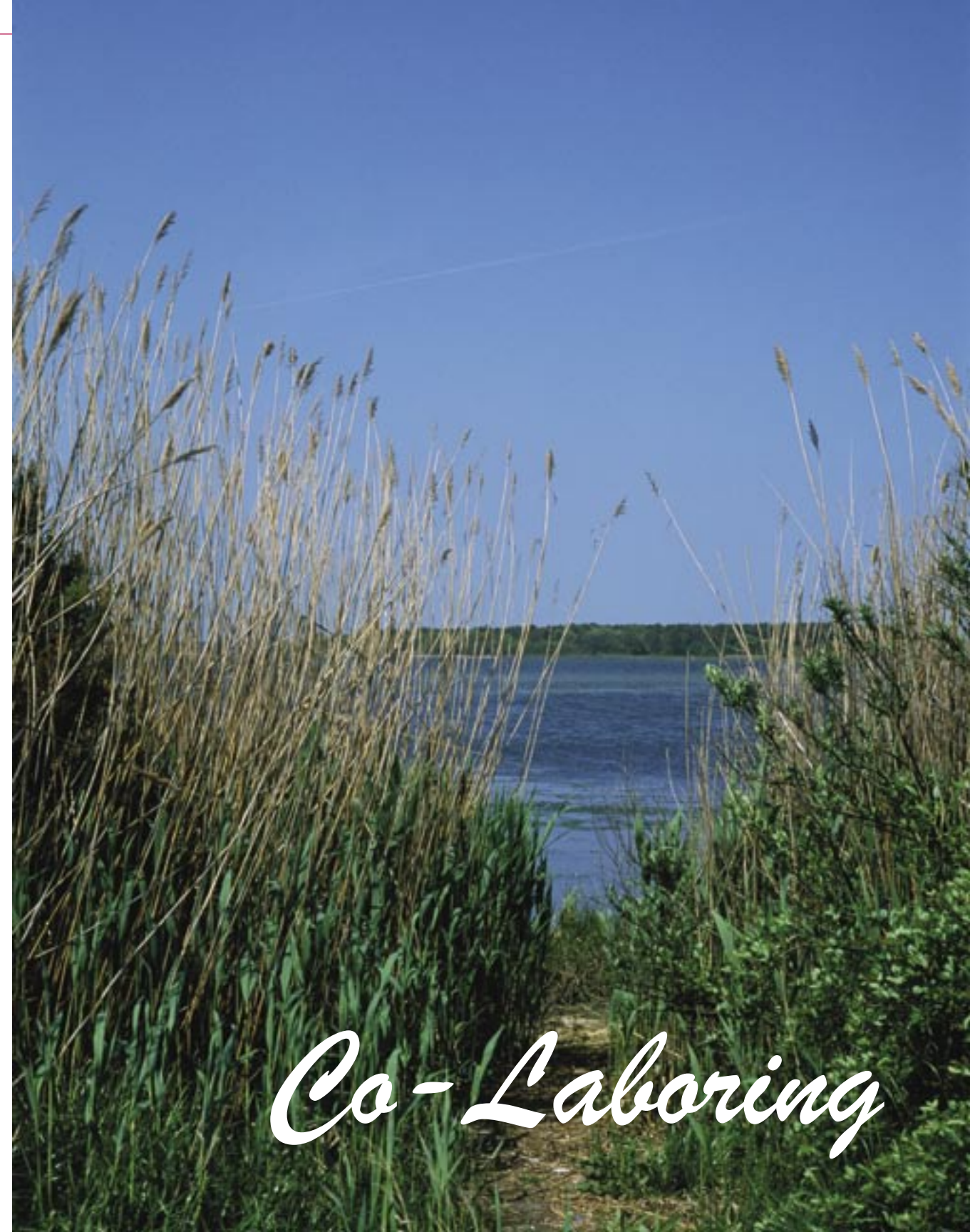
This is the unfolding structure of all the resurrection apparitions of Jesus. All are concerned, finally, with **mission**. But since this mission is announcing to others the lively presence and loving forgiveness of Jesus active in the world, and since the credibility of the witness is the apostle's own personal experience of Jesus' presence and forgiveness, the first two steps – namely the **initiative** of Jesus and their **recognition** of Jesus in these initiating events – are absolutely essential. They make the apostle to **be** what it is she or he is proclaiming to others.

The three-fold aspect of the classical appearance narratives exemplifies in a nutshell the very essence of the Christian life. Reflecting on the apparition to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, Leon-Dufour sees in it “the law of existence according to the plan of God.” It is the way we are called to recognize the crucified-risen Jesus active and calling in the events of our daily lives – and to be guided by him, as we follow with him on his mission of establishing the Kingdom of truth and justice, peace and love in the institutions of our day: family, government, business, education, church community, and so on.



It exemplifies as well the Ignatian “Way of Proceeding” that we find in Decree 26 of General Congregation 34. Speaking of our basic mission to promote justice as a work of faith, the Decree says that “not just any response to the needs of the men and women of today will do. The **initiative** must come from the Lord laboring in events and people here and now. **God invites us to join with him** in his labors, on his terms, and in his way. To discover and join the Lord, laboring to bring everything to its fullness, is central to the Jesuit way of proceeding. It is **the Ignatian method of prayerful discernment**, which can be described as “a constant interplay between **experience, reflection, decision, and action**, in line with the Jesuit ideal of being contemplative in action.” [Emphases added]

In a mini-way, this is also what we do daily in our Examen of Consciousness: “Where was the Lord in the events of this day – and was I **with him??**”



*Co-Laboring*

Season of Grace —

*Co-Laboring with the Lord and one another*

To live and to work willingly as the hands and feet, heads and hearts, of the risen Lord living and working today in us as Ignatian companions, Lay and Jesuit, on mission together in the Maryland Province

## Introduction to the Season of *Co-Laboring*

### **Situating Ourselves**

In the previous “Season,” Call, we watched and walked with Jesus as he attentively discerned his call and carried on his mission. We watched carefully and prayerfully to learn as clearly as possible what his mission was, and how it related to our earlier graces of “gratitude” and of “healing,” that is, to the joyful embrace of all as Gift or to ungracious grasping for the purpose of self-promotion. It was into this ambiguous world that Jesus came on his mission of forgiveness and reconciliation. We saw how and why opposition rose and how it colored and shaped Jesus’ mission. And we continued our walk with him all the way to Calvary where he breathed forth his forgiving Spirit into his new Body — us.

It is here that our fourth season begins: “Co-Laboring.” We are the Christian community that is called, commissioned, and sent to carry on the mission of Christ in our world today. It is the season for the New Body of Christ, born under the Cross, to carry out the mission of “breathing forth” into others the forgiving Spirit of reconciliation, unity, and peace that Jesus “breathed forth” into us. Our mission is to enable Christ, by our “Yes” to his Call, to carry on *his* mission in and through us today. And we Co-Labor accurately with his Call by practicing the same prayerful discernment of the Father’s will that we saw Jesus practice in his ministry.

The better to learn how to respond to Christ’s continuing Call to Co-Labor with him we will pray over the experience of the earliest Christian community in the Acts of the Apostles and in the letters of Paul. That early community faced brutal persecution

and death. Rather than intimidating them, it inspired them to creative vitality, expansion, and diversification. It was clearly a death-resurrection experience for the early Church.

We jump forward to the founding of the Jesuit Order by Ignatius and his companions to learn their sense of Christ's call and their mission. And then we leap-frog right to our own day: to the Society of Jesus of 1975 (General Congregation 32), and 1995 (General Congregation 34). We will pray over what is properly and popularly called "Our Mission Today," namely, "the service of faith and the promotion of justice."

What that mission statement means for us today, how we are called to pursue it, and what difference it will make — these are questions we will ponder and probe in private prayer and in conversation with one another. The grace we seek is to be led by God in our planning and eventual decision making for fulfilling "Our Mission Today" in the Maryland Province as Lay-Jesuit Ignatian Partners on Mission. It is toward these decisions that our whole year has been leading us.

## 1. The Grace We Desire

To learn well and rejoice deeply in the mission we share with Jesus' earliest companions — the mission of forgiveness and reconciliation.

### Prayer Focus

#### **The Original Sending Forth on Mission**

The apostolic community, still terrified, is locked in The Upper Room (John 20:19-23). We join them there, to feel with their feelings as the drama unfolds.

"It is the evening of first day of the week." The language is reminiscent of Genesis 1. Will this be a creation event? A new Creation, Covenant, and Community? The doors are locked out of fear. This is not a community yet; it's an aggregate, locked in fear, ready to cut and run when the coast is clear — like the Emmaus two heading "home" and lamenting, "We had hoped."

Jesus comes and stands among them — locked doors can't keep him out. He intervenes in history, whenever and however he pleases — in space and time, and in people's lives. Are they terrified to face the Jesus they had deserted? His greeting is, "Peace!" — not a reprimand, but forgiveness. By his creative forgiveness Jesus is reconciling them not only to himself, but also to each other. He is bonding them into a community. They "rejoice," and he repeats, "Peace — forgiveness." He breathes into them his Holy Spirit — as God had done to the mud-pack Adam in the creation story of Genesis 2:7. This new community comes alive with the life of Christ.

Having just gathered them, he now sends them forth to share with others the gift he has just given them. He sends them on a mission of forgiveness and reconciliation, for the building up of community, the community to be Kingdom. It is a mission to and a message for the entire human family. "Go to ALL nations and proclaim the GOOD NEWS!" he will say elsewhere. "Give to others the peace, through forgiveness and reconciliation, that I have given to you!"

After the experience of the Upper Room, the fledgling community is transformed! We see the breathtaking "Break Out" from the Upper Room on the first Pentecost described in the Acts of the Apostles (2:1-41). They speak with the "gift of tongues" — which is also a "gift of EARS" for the hearers. It is the reversal of the Tower of Babel, the symbol of pretentious self-promotion by people who started out to rival God with the magnificence of their own achievements — but who, like Adam and Eve, only succeeded in alienating themselves from one another. Moved by the words, the witness, and the miraculous transformation of the apostles themselves, "About three thousand were added to their number that very day."



## Suggested Prayer Texts

John 20:19-23.	The apparition in the Upper Room
Acts 2:1-41	Proclamation of the primordial message or “kerygma” that traces God’s active presence in history
John 21:1-23	Peter, do you love me? Feed my lambs...feed my sheep
Romans 12:4-5	For as in one body there are many members, each with its own role to play, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another
Colossians 4:1-16	I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called
Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13	A call to unity
II Corinthians 5:14ff	He died so that all may live

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

- Compare the Apparition in the Upper Room with the first section (538 4.) of the first characteristic of “Our Way of Proceeding” in Decree 26 of General Congregation 34.
- Compare the second section (539 5.) with the proclamation of Peter and the other apostles on the first Pentecost as described in Acts.
- In each instance, jot down the similarities.
- In 538 ponder prayerfully the implications for Lay-Jesuit Collaboration on Mission and beg God to be shown light on how, concretely, our companionship can be grounded and sustained
- In 539 beg to be shown how counter-cultural the Gospel message is in today’s world, and how counter-cultural, therefore, **we** are amidst so many of our peers. Do our students, our retreatants, our parishioners, and others notice how counter-cultural we are? Is it a substantial dimension of our message to them?

### 1. Deep Personal Love for Jesus Christ

537 3. *Here it will be to ask for an intimate knowledge of our Lord, who has become human for me, that I may love him more and follow him more closely. (SpEx [104])*

538 4. In remorse, gratitude, and astonishment — but above all with passionate love — first Ignatius, and then every Jesuit after him, has turned prayerfully to “Christ our Lord hanging on the Cross before me” and has asked of himself, “What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What must I do for Christ?” (SpEx [53]) The questions well up from a heart moved with profound gratitude and love.

This is the foundational grace that binds Jesuits to Jesus and to one another. “What is it to be a Jesuit today? It is to know that one is a sinner yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius was.” (GC 32, D 2, n. 1) The mission of the reconciled sinner is the mission of reconciliation: the work of faith doing justice. A Jesuit freely gives what he has freely received: the gift of Christ’s redeeming love.

539 5. Today we bring this countercultural gift of Christ to a world beguiled by self-centered human fulfillment, extravagance, and soft living, a world that prizes prestige, power, and self-sufficiency. In such a world, to preach Christ poor and humble with fidelity and courage is to expect humiliation, persecution, and even death. We have seen this happen to our brothers in recent years. Yet we move forward resolutely out of our “desire to resemble and imitate in some manner our Creator and Lord Jesus Christ ... since he is the way which leads men to life.” (Examen [101]) Today, as always, it is deep, personal devotion to Jesus, himself the Way, that principally characterizes the Jesuit way of proceeding.

From Decree 26 of the *General Congregation 34*

*Preach the Gospel always.  
When necessary,  
use words.*

St. Francis of Assisi

## A Prayer

Lord, help us to “taste” and “feel” and “see” with interior insight  
...how primordially rooted together we are in You,  
    how we are a forest before we are trees,  
        how we are a vine before we are branches,  
            how we are a body before we can be members of the body,  
                how we are fundamentally Family of Christ and  
                    People of God.

Teach us that this “confession of faith”  
    is not personally diminishing or oppressive,  
        but is genuinely liberating,  
            not only from isolation and alienation,  
                but from my fear for myself  
                    and anxiety for my survival.

Show me how this “confession of faith”  
    is not a confession of clinging-vine-dependency,  
        making me a social “charity-case,”  
            a weak and dependent crippled-limb on the body of society.

Show me, rather, that and how and why  
    acknowledgement of body-membership  
        is the root of OUR glory and therefore MY Glory.

Give me the wisdom to see this, to work this through,  
    to find it right, and attractive, and appealing,  
        and a source of joy — so that I may walk in the light  
            and do this truth lovingly and in peace.  
                This WE ask through Christ OUR Lord. AMEN.

*Author Unknown*

## 2. The Grace We Desire

To rejoice gratefully in Christ’s gift of his Spirit, Who bonds us in love  
and guides us on our mission of reconciliation.

### Prayer Focus

#### The Original Community in Jerusalem

The original Christian community of the *Acts of the Apostles* is a PARADIGM for us, as Ignatian Companions on Mission. The Spirit is the soul and source of vitality for the first community. *Acts* has been called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit because it is always the Spirit that moves, guides, and directs the early Christian community, just as it was the Spirit that led Jesus into the desert of temptation and throughout into his public life and ministry.

Luke Timothy Johnson says, “Acts can appropriately be called the ‘Book of the Holy Spirit.’ Luke not only includes five separate accounts of the Spirit’s dramatic ‘outpouring’ on believers ... but also shows the Spirit actively intervening in the story, impelling and guiding it ... Luke obviously considers the Holy Spirit itself to be the ‘life-principle’ of the Church.”

Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 14-15

### Suggested Prayer Texts

[Acts 1:12-26](#)

Matthias is chosen to replace Judas — to round out the number 12 — the 12 “tribes” of the New Israel — the new covenanted people of God

[Acts 2:14-41](#)

The proclamation of the kerygma by Peter on the first Pentecost

[Acts 2:42-47](#)

The idealized first community, together in unity of mind and heart — breaking bread in worship — sharing all goods, and no one in need

[Acts 3:1–10](#)

Miracle by Peter, along with John, healing a crippled man

[Acts 3:11-4:22](#)

“There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved!!”

[Acts 6–7](#)

Stephen’s eloquent sermon and his martyrdom model Jesus’ mission and crucifixion — the Church’s mission throughout unfolding years

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

### 1. *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)* of Vatican Council II

Exercise: As Ignatian Partners engaged in the mission of the Church, we want to reflect on the origins of the Church and our own experience of the contemporary Church in light of the self-understanding of the Second Vatican Council. Especially do we want, in this meditation, to realize and experience the life of the Spirit by which the Church lives and serves.

Read this passage as an exercise of *“lectio divina”* as described above. Read it through once, see what strikes you — puzzles, for instance, or engages, or challenges you — and dwell on that facet of the text. Then re-locate it in the full text by re-reading it through. Pray God’s light for: “What this means to me and to us today in our work as Ignatian Partners on Mission.”

[T]his Council wishes to set forth precisely to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world the nature and encompassing mission of the Church.

(n.1) ... Already from the beginning of the world the foreshadowing of the Church took place. She was prepared for in a remarkable way throughout the history of the people of Israel and by means of the Old Covenant.

Established in the present era of time, the Church was made manifest by the outpouring of the Spirit. (n. 2)

When the work which the Father had given the Son to do on earth (John 17:4) was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that Spirit might sanctify the Church, and thus all believers would have access to the Father through Christ in the one Spirit (see Ephesians 2:18) (n. 4)

The Spirit dwells in the Church and the hearts of the faithful as in a temple (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). In them the Spirit prays and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sisters and brothers (cf. Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:15-16, 26). The Spirit guides the Church into the fullness of truth (John 16:13) and gives her a unity of companionship and service. The Spirit furnishes and directs her with various gifts, both hierarchical and charismatic, and adorns her with the fruits of grace (Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 12:4; Galatians 5:22) (n. 4)

The mystery of the Church is manifest in her very foundation, for the Lord Jesus inaugurated her by preaching the good news, that is, the coming of God’s Kingdom, which for centuries had been promised in the Scriptures: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. (Mark 1:15; Matthew 4:17) (n. 5)

### 2. The Experience and Testimony of St. Paul: The Work of Christ in Us is the work of the Holy Spirit Building Up His Body

Here are some powerful passages from Paul for prayer and meditation, again in the mode of *Lectio Divina*.

#### a. The Presence and the Work of the Spirit in Us

I pray therefore that you may not lose heart over my sufferings for you; they are your glory... For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be **strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit**, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.

I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and **to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge**, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by **the power at work within us** is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:13, 18-21)

#### b. For Building Up the Body of Christ

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort **to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for **building up the body of Christ**, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of **the full stature of Christ**. (Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13)

#### c. Speaking/Preaching not with human wisdom but the power of the Spirit

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom.

For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with **a demonstration of the Spirit and of power**, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.



Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But **we speak God's wisdom**, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" — **these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.**

For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also **no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God.** Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

And we speak of these things in words **not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit**, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Those who are spiritual discern all things,  
and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.  
"For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"  
But we have the mind of Christ.

I Corinthians 2:1-16  
*[Emphases added]*

### **3. A Theological Commentary on what Paul describes (above) as the Work of Christ and the Holy Spirit in liberating us from the power of sin and the irrational bias of "human wisdom" for the building up of the Kingdom of God**

NOTE: This passage of Lonergan is very compact and therefore will be challenging reading for those unfamiliar with his thought. But it will be enormously enlightening and rewarding — and therefore worth the struggle. His concern is to help us get in touch with our **actual experience** of grace (God's self-communication in creation and redemption), of sin, and liberation from sin. We have experience of — we know — what human and social progress is; and on reflection we know how we have contributed to this progress. It is basically by **understanding** situations accurately and **deciding** wisely how to improve them. We are conscious of ourselves understanding and deciding, and so we're in touch with the experience when we understand accurately and decide wisely. On reflection we also can come to the realization that our intelligence and freedom to choose are not only at the heart of being human, but that they are pure gift to us. We couldn't possibly have earned them. They come from God — as a form of his loving self-communication — when he created us in the "image and likeness" of our intelligent and wisely choosing God.

So also we have consciousness of the fact that we are failing to understand things are as they are — by taking them on their terms — but are "forcing them" into boxes of our own making — forcing them to be what we would like them to be. Racial prejudice is an obvious example of this. We have seen it recently in trials for old lynchings. Similarly, our choices or decisions are unwise, and hurtful, when bias or personal preference misleads objectivity and concern for the genuine good of others and ourselves.

Lonergan calls these destructive influences "biases." And he lists several kinds — which are found not only in self-deceived individuals, but also in self-deceived groups of people (for instance, the KKK in the example we gave above).

Groups and, with them, individuals can be liberated from the distorting and destructive influence of bias only by love. But bias, tragically, is exactly what blocks the attractiveness of love and genuine truth. It is a "No Exit" situation if people were left to themselves. It is God's love, the gift of the Spirit through Jesus that liberates us from the destructive power of bias and sinfulness. Just as we can experience the power of sin and our powerlessness in its captivity, so too we can experience — and rejoice in — our new-found freedom from bias to see and know what is genuinely true and to choose what is truly wise for us, for our neighbor, for the full human community, and for the earth we call home.

Lonergan's final paragraph here summarizes the **experience** we have of our potential for knowing and choosing, of captivity in sin, liberation by God's love, and the joy of living in a community of love, joy, and service to others. Knowing that we can experience ourselves in these various states, and actually getting it touch with such experience through heightened self-awareness, is absolutely central to Ignatian spirituality, as we have seen. It was in his conversion experience that Ignatius became explicitly aware of the movement of spirits within him, the evil spirit and the good Spirit. Discernment and interpretation of these spirits became central to his spirituality. General Congregations 32 and 34 commend discernment as "a constant interplay between experience, reflection, decision, and action, in line with the Jesuit ideal of being 'contemplative in action.'" As a theologian, Bernard Lonergan, S.J., was thoroughly Ignatian.

Read, reflect, ponder, pray over, speak to God about, and rejoice gratefully in the light and consolation provided by the gift of this thoughtful passage.

## The Mission of the Son and Gift of the Spirit

The divine secret, kept in silence for long ages but now disclosed (Romans 16:25), has been conceived as **the self-communication of divinity in love**. It resides in the sending of the Son, in the gift of the Spirit, in the hope of being united with the Father. **Our question** has been **how** to apprehend this economy of grace and salvation in an evolutionary perspective and, more precisely, **how** it enters into the consciousness of man.

*First*, I think, there is an awareness of a need for redemption. Human **progress** is a fact. There is a wheel that, as it turns, moves forward. Situations give rise to insights; insights to new courses of action; new courses of action to changed situations; changed situations to still further insights, further action, further change in situations. But such progress is only a first approximation to fact, for it is marred and distorted by **sin**. There is the egoism of individuals, the securer egoism of groups, the overconfident shortsightedness of common sense. **So the intelligence of progress is twisted into the objectification of irrational bias**. Worse, to simple minded sins of greed there is added the higher organization of sophistry. One must attend to the facts. One must deal with them as in fact they are and, as they are irrational, obviously the mere dictates of reason are never going to work. So rationalization enters the inner citadel. There is opened a gap between the essential freedom all men have and the effective freedom that in fact they exercise. Impotent in his situation and impotent in his soul, man needs and may seek redemption, deliverance, salvation. But when it comes, it comes as the **charity** that dissolves the hostility and the divisions of past injustice and present hatred; it comes as the **hope** that withstands psychological, economic, political, social, cultural determinisms; it comes with the **faith** that can liberate reason from the rationalizations that blinded it.

*Secondly*, the new order (2 Corinthians 5:17) comes in **the visible mission of the Son**. In him is presented: (1) the absolutely supernatural object, for he is God; (2) the object for us, for he is man; (3) for us as to be redeemed, for he dies to rise again. As visible, he is the sacrament of man's encounter with God. As dying and rising, he shows the way to the new creation. As himself God, already he is Emmanuel, God with us.

*Thirdly*, besides the visible mission of the Son there **is the invisible mission of the Spirit**. Besides *fides ex auditu* [faith from hearing], there is *fides ex infusione* [faith from infusion]. The former mounts up the successive levels of experiencing, understanding, judging, deliberating. The latter descends from the gift of God's love through religious conversion to moral, and through religious and moral to intellectual conversion.

These three are cumulative. Revulsion from the objective reign of sin and from the subject's own moral impotence heightens vertical finality. Without the visible mission of the Word, the gift of the Spirit is a being-in-love without a proper object; it remains simply an orientation to mystery that awaits its interpretation. Without the visible mis-

sion of the Spirit, the Word enters into his own, but his own receive him not.

Such Christian origins are exemplary. As the Father sent the Son, so the Son sent the disciples on a mission to continue to the end of time. As the Father and the Son sent the Spirit to the disciples, so they continue to bestow the Spirit on the ever on-coming members of Christ. So the self-communication of the Son and the Spirit proceeds through history by a communication that at once is cognitive, constitutive, and redemptive: it is cognitive, for it discloses in whom we are to believe; it is constitutive, for it crystallizes the inner gift of the love of God into overt Christian fellowship; it is redemptive, for it liberates human liberty from thralldom to sin, and it guides those it liberates to the kingdom of the Father.

**Experience of grace, then, is as large as the Christian experience of life**. It is **experience** of man's capacity for self-transcendence, of his unrestricted openness to the intelligible, the true, the good. It is **experience** of a twofold frustration of that capacity: the objective frustration of life in a world distorted by sin; the subjective frustration of one's incapacity to break with one's own evil ways. It is **experience** of a transformation one did not bring about but rather underwent, as divine providence let evil take its course and vertical finality be heightened, as it let one's circumstances shift, one's dispositions change, new encounters occur, and — so gently and quietly — one's heart be touched. It is the **experience** of a new community, in which faith and hope and charity dissolve rationalizations, break determinisms, and reconcile the estranged and the alienated, and there is reaped the harvest of the Spirit that is “ ... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22).

Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J., “*Mission and the Spirit*,” pp. 31-33.  
[Emphases added]

“At this point I hope you can see why the shared ritual meal is such a fitting sacramental activity for Christians. The shared meal is an antidote to the selfishness and violence that could be signified by eating only for oneself. The shared meal symbolizes the fact that acceptance and sharing constitute true humanity, and it reveals the fact that communal sharing in the context of faith in God is the true source of joy. And since we share the fruits of creation in the consecrated bread and wine, we also affirm the basic goodness of the material creation so essential to the Catholic view of reality. We Catholics have a wonderful sacramental realism because we affirm the Incarnation so seriously— God's self-commitment to the material world.”

John Baldovin  
*Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation: Understanding the Mass*  
page 9

The early kerygma, like Peter's proclamation at Pentecost, is the original Christian confession of faith. It tells of God *working in history*. The Preface of the Eucharistic Liturgy gives thanks and praise to God for his great deeds (*magnalia Dei*) in history on our behalf — beginning with creation and moving to Jesus' redemptive work for us. The renowned historian of liturgy, Joseph Jungmann, makes this very point in his discussion of the Preface:

“There are two ranges of ideas which here press for expression: first, the primitive consciousness that we owe God, our Creator and Lord, adoration and praise, the basic acts of all religion and worship; and second, the Christian acknowledgment that we, who have been elected and honored by the wonderful vocation which is ours through Christ, can do nothing less than thank Him again and again.”

Josef Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, p. 371

### 3. The Grace We Desire

To be open to surprise as we struggle to discern and do God's will in ambiguous circumstances.

#### Prayer Focus

##### **The Outward Movement of the Community from Jerusalem**

The early Christian community was soon moving out from Jerusalem, with persecution as its original impetus for expansion. First, Stephen the deacon was stoned to death, and then the apostle James was beheaded — both in Jerusalem. Martyrs' blood didn't destroy the community, but energized the life of the church. It provided an opportunity to encounter and reach out to those who had not been considered appropriate for “membership” in what was then called “The Way.” Astonishingly, the most “Jewish” of the converts to Christianity, Saul/Paul, became the primary Apostle to the Gentiles and brought them into full communion with Jesus and Jesus' Body.

The role of discernment and decision making underwent important development in the apostolic community, first, when it chose Matthias as the successor to Judas to round out representation of the “Twelve Tribes” of the New People of God, and, second, when, at the Council of Jerusalem, it decided to incorporate Gentiles without requiring circumcision or obedience to the Mosaic Law. The latter experience is described in Acts 10-15.

It is hard for us today to appreciate what a serious moment this second decision was in the life of the Church. Both the issue and its outcome were thoroughly unexpected, and aroused enormous controversy. In the end, those involved and those responsible for the decision were deeply peaceful that they had sought and found God's will in the matter.

Are we facing any issues of such a revolutionary nature in our own day? What is God possibly calling us to be aware of today? Is it something to do with our Ignatian mission, our current works or ministries, or the style of our Partnership in that Mission? Is it something to do with the current model or self-understanding of the Church? Is it something regarding particular instances or forms of injustice in our world — and the social arrangements that perpetuate them? Has it to do today, as in Acts 10-15, with the relation of Christians to Jews, and also to Moslems — especially when such relations might be a crucial contributor to world peace?

Of particular interest to us here, however, is the process of discernment whereby the Church reached its decision about this crucial question. We will pray through the unfolding steps in this process which exemplify, coincidentally, the “constant interplay between experience, reflection, decision and action, in line with the Jesuit ideal of being ‘contemplative in action’.” (GC 32, D 4, no. 73). What makes Acts such a valuable reference point and guide is the fact that the story is inspired and therefore normative.

## Suggested Prayer Texts

Acts 8:1-4	That day a severe persecution began ...” And the Christian diaspora begins
Acts 8:4-13	Philip in Samaria – he preaches, exorcises, cures, and baptizes – great rejoicing in the whole city
Acts 8:14-17	Sent to Samaria by the Church of Jerusalem Peter and John “laid hands” on those who had been baptized and they received the Holy Spirit
Acts 8:26-40	Philip interprets the scripture, instructs, and baptizes the Ethiopian Eunuch, a court official
Acts 8:1 and 3; 9:1-22	Saul’s persecution of the Church, his conversion, his proclamation of Jesus as Son of God
1 Thessalonians	This is the earliest extant letter by Paul. It gives thanks to God and exhorts his earliest Greek converts to a life of fidelity.
Acts 10:1-15:35	“From Cornelius to Council”

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

For a full exposition of the dynamics of this drama see Luke Timothy Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment: Decision Making in the Church*, Abington Press, Nashville, TN, 1996, pages 89-106.

**Suggestion:** As you read through this five-part story ask the Lord to help you to recognize and understand how the evil spirit and the Holy Spirit are active in their efforts to influence the various actors, how and why the views, determinations, and behavior of the actors are being changed in the course of the story, how they are moving repeatedly through the process of experience, reflection, decision, and action. List the various actions taken throughout the story and trace them back to the experience upon which reflection led to the decision to take this action.

Pray God to be shown, simultaneously, how you are moving through this same process in your daily life, and ask for the grace to do so with ever greater awareness, fidelity, and generosity.

### The Five “Acts” in the Drama:

#### 1. Acts 10:1-23

- Cornelius, a Gentile Centurion, is told in a vision to send men to summon Peter.
- Peter, before the messengers arrive, is told in a vision to eat profane food.

- When he refuses, a voice says three times, “What God has made clean, you are not to call profane!”
- When the messengers from Cornelius arrive, the Spirit tells Peter to accompany them without hesitation.
- Peter goes down to meet them; they give him Cornelius’ invitation; Peter invites them into his house as guests and shows them hospitality.

#### 2. Acts 10:23b-35

- Peter travels with some companions to Cornelius who, with his household gathered, falls to Peter’s feet and pays him homage.
- Peter lifts him up and says, “It is unlawful for a Jew to visit with a Gentile, but God has shown me I should call no one unclean, so I came. Why did you summon me?”
- Cornelius tells the story of his vision and the charge to summon Peter.
- “Now we are all here in God’s presence to listen to all you have been commanded by the Lord to say,” Cornelius tells Peter.
- “I perceive that God shows no partiality,” Peter says.

#### 3. Acts 10:36-48

- Peter tells the story of Jesus, the Lord of all, anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and power, who proclaimed peace throughout Israel and doing good, was put to death, was raised by God, and was seen by us witnesses who ate and drank with him, and were commissioned to preach to all people that whoever believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.
- As Peter spoke, the Spirit comes down on all who were listening, to the astonishment of the circumcised who had accompanied Peter.
- Peter asks, Can anyone withhold baptism from people who have received the Holy Spirit, as we did?” He orders that they be baptized in the name of Jesus.
- They invite Peter to stay with them for a few days, and he does.

#### 4. Acts 11:1-18

- When Peter returns to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers confront him critically, “You entered the house of an uncircumcised and ate with him!”
- Peter explains by telling the whole story, including the command of the Spirit.
- Peter concludes, “If God gave them the same Spirit he gave us, who was I that I should withstand God?”



- Having heard, they stopped objecting and glorified God, saying, “God has granted life-giving repentance to the Gentiles too.”

#### 5. Acts 4:26 - 15:35

- Some converted Pharisees in Jerusalem create dissension by insisting that Gentile converts must observe the whole Law and be circumcised.
- Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem to discuss the question with them.
- The apostles and presbyters gather— in (what will be called) “The Council of Jerusalem” — to see about this matter.
- Peter arises and re-tells his story and asks, “Why do you put God to the test? We, they and we, are all saved through the grace of Jesus Christ [not the Law and circumcision].”
- After silence, James quotes the prophet Amos (9:11-12) and says, “My judgment is that we ought to stop troubling these Gentiles, telling them by letter simply to avoid pollution from idols, unlawful marriage, the meat of strangled animals, and blood.”
- Messengers are chosen and sent to the Gentiles with the letter of decision.
- In Antioch the decision is greeted with joy.

Exercise: On completion of this prayer period, take some time to imagine a group of Ignatian Companions in a particular apostolic work gathering together — somewhat like the apostles and presbyters did in Jerusalem — to address, discern, and decide, under the guidance of the Spirit, a matter of some moment. Imagine how the scenario plays out in the unfolding drama. What decision(s) do they reach? Are you pleased with the outcome? — with their process?

“The key element in decision making as a theological process — that is, as an articulation of the church’s faith in the Living God — is discernment. It is an essential component at every stage. Discernment enables humans to perceive their characteristically ambiguous experience as revelatory and to articulate such experiences in a narrative of faith. Discernment enables others to hear such narratives as the articulation of faith and as having revelatory significance. Discernment enables communities to listen to such gathering narratives for the word of God that they might express. Discernment enables communities, finally, to decide for God.”

Luke Timothy Johnson  
*Scripture and Discernment: Decision Making In The Church*  
 p. 109

## 4. The Grace We Desire

That the members of the original group of Ignatian Companions give us guidance about formalizing our “Lay-Jesuit Companionship on Mission” today.

### Prayer Focus

#### The Deliberation of the First (Jesuit) Fathers.

After his convalescence from his wounded leg and about a year of prayerful reflection on what God was calling him to do and be, Ignatius decided to go back to school. He eventually enrolled at the University of Paris and there he befriended a small number of men whom he eventually directed through the retreat of the Spiritual Exercises. On graduation they stayed together, and all of them were ordained priests. At first they decided to go and work in Jerusalem, but they couldn’t get passage to do so because of a war that was raging. So, they sought an audience with the Pope in order to make themselves available to serve wherever he thought best.

The Pope was pleased and gave every indication that he would assign each of them to a different place throughout Europe and beyond— wherever there was most need. On hearing this it dawned on them that such a separation would effectively break the community they had formed, along with the support it gave them and their work. That dilemma inspired them to undertake a process of prayerful deliberation to seek God’s guidance and direction for them. The question was this. Should they form themselves, with the permission of the Pope, into a permanent and stable religious community under vowed obedience to one of their own — and make themselves, as a *community*, available to the Pope for his good disposition? Or should they try to remain good friends, staying informally in touch with one another, while being *individually* sent by the Pope to go and work where the Pope deemed best?

We know the outcome of that “Deliberation of the First Fathers.” They determined that God was calling them to form a stable union, which was eventually named, “The Society of Jesus,” but they also took a special vow of obedience to the Pope.

It is the process of their deliberation that is of interest to us, since it became the original model of the “communal discernment” that has subsequently been used by Jesuits for making decisions about the choice and renewal of the apostolic works.

Dominic Maruca, S.J., of the Maryland Province, is an authority on this First Deliberation. In the preface to his first-ever English translation of the full text of the Deliberation he has this to say:

”[In this text of the Deliberation] we can study at first hand the original method of arriving at a consensus: how each person had his opportunity to speak, each was listened to respectfully, each man’s arguments were welcomed and weighed. The striking contrasts will impress us: the freedom of spirit and docility to the Spirit, breadth of vision and allegiance to the Church, personal integrity and openness to others, astounding unity amid diversity of temperament and views. One can sense the warm *esprit de corps*: the mutual re-

spect and affection, the sense of spiritual solidarity. It becomes evident why these men called themselves companions — men who broke bread together in Christ. They were truly a community of fraternal love. They are our model and inspiration as they follow Christ in the service of the Father.”

Dominic W. Maruca, S.J., “The Deliberation of Our First Fathers,”  
*Woodstock Letters*, July 1966, page 326.

What follows is not all to be found in the First Deliberation but has grown out of it — as can be seen in the variety of authors who have written on Communal Discernment.

### Conditions for the Process of Group Deliberation or Discernment

1. Is it **the kind of question** that deserves or needs a **group decision** either because of its seriousness or its implications for the whole group? Or would the decision be better reached by one person in consultation with others?
2. Is **the question clear** and can it be expressed in terms of “This? Or That?” If not, can it be simplified into a series of sub-questions, each to be addressed successively?
3. Do participants have **sufficient self-awareness** to be in touch with their feelings?
4. Do **members of the group** have a familiarity, openness, and trust for one another sufficient for discerning together? If not, are they willing to work at it?
5. On entering into deliberation is **each member interiorly free** — not biased or prejudiced — about the variety of possible outcomes — and ready to accept the one chosen? Since we commonly start with biases, is each willing to share their “prejudices” in the group and pray God with the group to open them to freedom?
6. Is **the information required** for this decision available to the group members and do they have the time and expertise to learn it well enough for discernment?
7. **Faith that God is guiding the group** and each individual **through the feelings of** consonance or dissonance (“consolation” or “desolation”) which accompany options, proposals, and the prospect of a concrete choice. They are listening for the Lord’s leading word, not debating one another.

### Steps in the Process of Group Deliberation or Discernment

**Note:** First, the steps listed below should be used flexibly, according to the question under consideration, needs of members of the discerning community, and relevant circumstances like time frame or location. Second it often helps to have a facilitator who is not a member of the discerning group but who has experience and expertise in group discernment.

1. Group meeting to focus the question and decide what degree of unanimity will be needed for a “decision” (100% agreement, majority, all willing even though not their first choice, etc.). Will it be a proposal offered to organizational leadership or will it be a decision binding on organizational leadership (as, for instance, when a Jesuit General Congregation mandates action for Father General to take)?
2. Each takes to personal prayer: “What I believe should be done — and why.” First, prayer for light to see where God might be leading the group to go, and then prayer over one’s own motivations and feelings and reasons — so as to ferret out, if necessary, misconceptions, selfish motivations, prejudices, hasty judgments, and so on.
3. Group meeting in which each reports the outcomes and the steps in the process of their prayer. Group deliberation of “Where it seems the Lord is leading us” without trying to reach a decision.
4. Another period of personal prayer in which (a) each examines their own feelings about the direction the group seems to be going: Is it well informed? Is it well motivated? Is it feasible? And (b) each writes a list of the “advantages” and the “disadvantages” (i.e., the “pro’s” and “con’s”) of the choice toward which the group seems currently to be moving.
5. Group meeting in which each member reports the outcomes and steps in the process of their personal prayer session, in which reports the group strives to hear God’s word to them. Each in turn tries to articulate what that word is and the full group then tries to agree on the proposal that they will transpose into a decision at their next gathering.
6. Personal prayer on the forthcoming discernment for decision making.
7. Group meeting to pray for guidance and, after reports of individual prayer experiences, to reach a decision.
8. Outside of meeting times, a period (hours, days, weeks??) of reflection on the decision and consultation about it with some wise and experienced people in order to seek confirmation of the wisdom of the decision, the integrity of the process, and the freedom and peace of the group membership.
9. If confirmation is perceived and peace prevails, the decision is formally accepted and announced. If not, the process is re-opened.



## Suggested Readings and Reflections

### Prayer Exercise: Prayerful Reflection on your use of Communal Discernment

Enter into God's presence and ask to be enlightened in mind and moved in heart about your own participation, past and possibly future, in Group Deliberation or Communal Discernment.

1. If you have been a participant in a Group Deliberation or Communal Discernment, how did it go? What are your current feelings about it? Can you recall your feelings at the time — in the various phases of the deliberation process? If someone asked you, "What's this Ignatian communal discernment about," how would you answer?

2. If you have never been a participant in a Group Deliberation, imagine yourself moving through the above process. Imagine the people you are with. Imagine the conversations you are engaged in and the revelatory sharing that goes on. And then pray God to reveal how you are currently disposed to answer the same questions under #1 above: how did it go? What are your current feelings about it? Can you recall your feelings at the time — in the various phases of the deliberation process? If someone asked you, "What's this Ignatian communal discernment about," how would you answer?

3. Ask the intercession of St. Ignatius and his companions and talk to God about "where you really are right now" on communal discernment.

4. Conclude with an Our Father.

### Communal (Lay-Jesuit) Discernment as pivotal to "Lay-Jesuit Collaboration on Mission" — view of Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach

What is Lay-Jesuit partnership? Father General Hans-Peter Kolvenbach puts it very succinctly in a talk he gave to the Lay Partners of Jesuits in Venezuela a few years ago. He called the process of discernment, leading to decision for action, "the secret" — "the only secret" of Jesuit life.

He had just catalogued a series of successful initiatives in which Jesuits and many lay people had collaborated as partners: educational enterprises, social services, spirituality centers, and so on. And in light of these collaborative initiatives, he goes on to say:

All of this sharing through the years culminated in 1996 in the *Comision Jesuitas-Laicas-Laicos*. This began a process of apostolic deliberation in which all together **desire to find what God wants of the Province of Venezuela in the next years**. It is nothing less than **inviting the laity to search for what God wants of the Company of Jesus** in Venezuela in the third millennium. Doing this means choosing a long and difficult journey: that of **communitar-**

**ian discernment**, that of **the shared search for the will of God**. Indeed, this entails an invitation into the heart of the Company of Jesus, into the great secret of the Jesuits — actually, the only secret! [Emphases added.]

Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.,  
"Laymen and Laywomen in the Church of the Millennium,"  
*The Road from La Storta: On Ignatian Spirituality*,  
The Institute of Jesuit Sources, p. 284.

### Questions for prayerful reflection:

1. Did you ever think before of communal discernment as "the great secret of the Jesuits" and as "the heart of the Company of Jesus?" Think it through: how and why is what Father General says true? Or do you have reservations or qualifications about the statement? If so, what and why?

2. How do you feel about engaging in communal discernment, as a Lay Partner with Jesuits — or as a Jesuit with Lay Partners?

3. How can a ministry be genuinely "Jesuit" (like a "Jesuit" High School) if Lay Partners are sharing in the discernment regarding its mission, policies, programs, personnel, and performance?

4. What preparation or formation is needed for Lay-Jesuit communal discernment — both for Lay Partners and Jesuits, since it will be a new experience for both of them?

5. Pray over your desires, your sense of preparedness, the ministry in which you are engaged, those you serve — and ask the Lord to help you discern how and where he is calling you and what your response to that call will entail.

Close with an Our Father.

---

## 5. The Grace We Desire

To understand accurately and embrace enthusiastically the Ignatian mission statement of General Congregation 32: the “service of faith and the promotion of justice.”

### Prayer Focus

**Faith and justice:** what each means and how they relate to one another in Our Mission Today.

“Jim, I have been giving out band-aids to patch up the wounds of the poor for my entire life. And I’ll do it till I die. But you’ve got to send our young Jesuits to graduate studies in social sciences so that the day will come when we don’t need to give out band-aids — when society has been so transformed that there will be no poor with wounds to be patched.”

Father Horace McKenna, S.J., said this to Jim Connor when he was Provincial of the Maryland Province from 1968 to 1974. Horace was acknowledging that the Church had to move beyond (though certainly not omit) the “corporal works of mercy” in order to devote itself to a reconstruction of society itself. It was no longer enough to be “charitable” to people. We had to be just, and we had to promote justice. A basic reorganization of the entire social system or scheme of things was needed so that we could institutionalize opportunity for all people, and not simply give out band-aids to individuals. Social structures and systems needed “evangelization.”

In so saying, Horace recognized that economic, political, and social systems were the product of human work and choice. They didn’t fall down out of the skies ready-made and with binding necessity. They are the organization *of* human beings *by* human beings *for* the good of — some? — human beings. Their making was — and their re-making will be — *our* responsibility.

And, finally, it recognized that systems have to do with *relationships* among and between people — people in civic power and people on the margins, people who are “have’s” and those that are “have-nots,” the movers and the shakers and the moved and/or shaken. There are also relationships among and between all the “have’s” and all the “have-not’s” and those in-between. There is a bewildering series of interconnected relationships that forms the personal and interpersonal system we call “society.”

When it works well for the maximum benefit for as many as conceivably can be reached, then it is just — or at least as just as we can currently make it. When it doesn’t, it’s unjust. That’s what justice is. Social justice is healthy and beneficial relationships among and between the participants in the system called society and its sub-communities. This understanding of social justice is deeply rooted in the biblical tradition. Father John R. Donahue, S.J., biblical scholar and member of the Maryland Province made this point in an essay entitled, “Biblical Perspectives on Justice” in a Woodstock Center publication entitled, *The Faith That Does Justice: Examining the*

*Christian Sources for Social Change* (Paulist Press, NY, 1977). In a frequently cited paragraph on page 69 of that article John Donahue says,

In general terms the biblical idea of justice can be described as *fidelity to the demands of a relationship*. In contrast to modern individualism the Israelite is in a world where “to live” is to be united with others in a social context either by bonds of family or by covenant relationships. This web of relationships — king with people, judge with complainants, family with tribe and kinfolk, the community with the resident alien and suffering in their midst and all with the covenant God — constitutes the world in which life is played out. The demands of the differing relationships cannot be specified *a priori* but must be seen in the different settings of Israel’s history.

During the Season of Gratitude we prayed over Genesis 1 and 2, and saw how we human persons are constituted as persons by our relationships. We literally *become* and *are* persons insofar as we are related to parents, siblings, relatives, friends, teachers, peers, neighbors, and many others who gift us with their love and encouragement. Within and behind all these relationships is God our Ultimate Parent, the Giver of ALL good gifts. And the quality of these relationships — with God, with one another as brothers and sisters, with the natural environment which is our God-given “home,” and with ourselves is perfectly expressed in Christ’s mandate to “Love the Lord your **God** with your whole mind, heart, and soul and your **neighbor** as **yourself**.” God, neighbor, self — when we love each in a manner appropriate to the specific relationship we have with them, then we are living justly. We are fulfilling faithfully the demands of our relationships. And that’s the justice God asks and requires.

Why is faith required for living justly, doing justice, and being just ourselves?

Because justice has to do with relationships between and among persons — personal and interpersonal relationships. And you can’t really know persons — unlike inanimate objects — unless you believe in them to some extent, recognize their dignity as children of God and sisters and brother to us, and feel the call to enter into personal relationship with them that way. You can’t know persons unless you engage them personally, entrust yourself to them, and enter into their “world” with a degree of empathy. This exercise of faith, as Lonergan tells us, yields “the knowledge born of love.” Faith is the eye of love, he says.

It is impossible for us to risk ourselves to such personal exposure and vulnerability — especially to people who are dangerously hostile to us — unless we are convinced of its ultimate worth to them, to us, and to the wider society. It might mean serious injury to body and/or reputation, even loss of life. One who takes that risk is *ipso facto* expressing belief in an Ultimate — one whom religious people call God. It takes faith to be just.

## Suggested Prayer Texts

*Explanation:* Rather than meditate on passages of scripture, let’s meditate on our own personal experience, on our contemporary world, on key passages of *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican Council II, and General Congregation 32. This will, of course, involve reflecting on ourselves and our faith, the faith from which we do justice.

Do a “Lectio Divina” meditation on the following:

**1. Justice, like charity, “begins at home.”** Look first at your personal relationships: family, neighbors, circle of friends, religious community (as in “Jesuit!”), work place associates, church members, recreational partners, or civic associations.

Are there relationships you are comfortable with, grateful for, and happy to nurture? Are there ones that are problematic, disturb you, or cause you anxiety?

Choose one relationship in each of these two categories, and ask yourself questions like these. If justice is “fidelity to the demands of a relationship,” what “demands” or legitimate expectations are built into each of these relationships? Why is one relationship comfortable and the other uncomfortable? Is it strictly personal (personality mesh or not) or is it (also) structural? Is there a history here? Does each fit into a larger social context that influences it positively or negatively? Do you think you are mostly responsible for the quality of each relationship, comfortable or uncomfortable? Are you content to let it continue as is, or are you minded to do something to improve it? What does justice “demand” or suggest?

### **2. Contemplation on Our Contemporary World**

Repeat the Contemplation to Attain Love in the context of the promotion of justice. In company with the Trinity as the three persons look down upon our world today. It might be valuable to spend several prayer periods with this contemplation. Use as texts a newspaper (like your own daily newspaper, your diocesan newspaper, the *National Catholic Reporter*, the *National Catholic Register*), or a news magazine (*Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, the *Economist*, *America*, or others), and the television news you usually watch. What do you “see” with the eyes of the Trinity? What consoles and rejoices you? What saddens and deeply disturbs you? Which are the just societies living in healthy relationships, peace and harmony, internally and externally with others. Why is that so? And which societies are torn with dissension, and in ruptured or dysfunctional relationships? Why is that so? What are the reasons or the roots for disintegration? Is the presence or absence of either love or selfishness a useful “diagnostic tool” in your social analysis? With the heart of the Trinity what do you feel drawn to do about the world situation you have seen and evaluated? What do you think we — Ignatian Partners on Mission — ought to be thinking of doing about it?

### **3. Contemplation of Texts from Gaudium et Spes and GC 32**

Explanation: Read thoughtfully the text(s) you choose for prayer. Then, re-read it a second time. Notice where your attention was particularly drawn — a particular phrase, word, idea, or sentiment. Jot down that word or idea or whatever in your journal and ponder what God is saying to you here. Sit quietly with it and allow it to set the direction of your reflection and prayer. Hear God speaking this phrase or sentiment to you — and be drawn to respond in word and/or action. Where is “faith doing justice” here — or at least offering the invitation?

#### **Gaudium et Spes # 26**

Every day human interdependence grows more tightly drawn and spreads by degrees over the whole world. As a result the common good, that is, the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment, today takes on an increasingly universal complexion and consequently involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race. Every social group must take account of the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups, and even of the general welfare of the entire human family.

At the same time, however, there is a growing awareness of the exalted dignity proper to the human person, since he stands above all things, and his rights and duties are universal and inviolable. Therefore, there must be made available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one’s own conscience, to protection of privacy and to rightful freedom, even in matters religious.

Hence, the social order and its development must invariably work to the benefit of the human person if the disposition of affairs is to be subordinate to the personal realm and not contrariwise, as the Lord indicated when He said that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

This social order requires constant improvement. It must be founded on truth, built on justice and animated by love; in freedom it should grow every day toward a more humane balance. An improvement in attitudes and abundant changes in society will have to take place if these objectives are to be gained.

#### **Gaudium et Spes #24**

24. God, Who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood. For having been created in the image of God, Who “from one man has created the whole human race and made them live all over the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26), all men are called to one and the same goal, namely God Himself.

For this reason, love for God and neighbor is the first and greatest commandment. Sacred Scripture, however, teaches us that the love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbor: “If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. ... Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law” (Rom.13:9-10; cf. 1 John 4:20). To men growing daily more dependent on one another, and to a world becoming more unified every day, this truth proves to be of paramount importance.

Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, “that all may be one... as we are one” (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.

#### **General Congregation 32**

##### **Decree 4, “Our Mission Today”**

20. There are millions of men and women in our world, specific people with names and faces, who are suffering from poverty and hunger, from the unjust distribution of wealth and resources and from the consequences of racial, social, and political discrimination. Not only the quality of life but human life itself is under constant threat. It is becoming more and more clear that despite the opportunities offered by an ever more serviceable technology, we are simply not willing to pay the price of a more just and more humane society.

21. At the same time, people today are somehow aware that their problems are not just social and technological, but personal and spiritual. They have a feeling that what is at stake here is the very meaning of man: his future and his destiny. People are hungry: hungry not just for bread, but for the Word of God. (Deut. 8.3; Mt. 4.4).

##### **Decree 2, “Jesuits Today”**

1. What is it to be a Jesuit? It is to know that one is a sinner, yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius was....
2. What is it to be a companion of Jesus today? It is to engage, under the standard of the Cross, in the crucial struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes....
9. Moreover, the service of faith and the promotion of justice cannot be for us simply one ministry among others. It must be the integrating factor of all our ministries; and not only of our ministries but of our inner life as individuals, as communities, and as a world-wide brotherhood. This is what our Congregation means by a decisive choice. It is the choice that underlies and determines all the other choices embodied in its declarations and directives.



#### **Decree 4, “Our Mission Today”**

78. The injustice that wracks our world in so many forms is, in fact, a denial of God in practice, for it denies the dignity of the human person, the image of God, the brother or sister of Christ.

81. Injustice must be attacked at its roots, which are in the human heart, by transforming those attitudes and habits which beget injustice and foster the structures of oppression.

76. It is now quite apparent that [the inequalities and injustices of our world] are the result of what man himself, man in his selfishness, has done. Hence there can be no promotion of justice in the full and Christian sense unless we also preach Jesus Christ and the mystery of reconciliation He brings.

38. The wellspring of our apostolate. We are also led back again to our experience of the Spiritual Exercises. In them we are able continually to renew our faith and apostolic hope by experiencing again the love of God in Christ Jesus. We strengthen our commitment to be companions of Jesus in His mission, to labor like Him in solidarity with the poor and with Him for the establishment of the Kingdom. This same spiritual experience will teach us how to maintain the objectivity needed for a continuing review of our commitments. Thereby we gradually make our own that apostolic pedagogy of St. Ignatius which should characterize our every action.

#### **4. Contemplation on ourselves and our faith**

This is an extended Ignatian Examen on yourself in relationship to the needs for justice and your response to them in your life. Imagine and walk mentally through your ordinary routine on any particular day, from the time of rising till retiring hour by hour. What do you do? Who do you see as you move from here to there? With whom do you generally interact? What neighborhoods do you travel through and what are they like? What’s your workplace? What does “it” do, and what do you do? To whom is your work contributing? What is it contributing? How does it contribute to an improvement in the social situation, to the welfare of the lives of people? What social disruptions or even injustices do you see? Is it a pattern or an unusual incident? Is it something that affects you and your own integrity? As you re-live in memory a day like this, what, if anything, is there that you would like to have done better? Is there need for a change of routine? A major change of life style? What else?

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

### **Sobering Statistics**

- The richest 20% of the world’s population earn 86% of the world’s income, consume 80% of the world’s resources, and create 83% of the world’s waste. The poorest 20% of the world’s population earn less than 2% of the world’s income.
- Globally, about a billion people are malnourished. Every day an average of 20,000 children die from hunger-related causes — about one child every six seconds. A child in the poorest countries is ten to fifteen times more likely to die before the age of five than a child in the United States.
- Each U.S. inhabitant consumes each day his/her weight in “stuff” (minerals, wood products, food, energy, etc.) – just over 100 kilograms per person.
- Per capita water use in the United States: 1,300 gallons per day — 100 gallons of this in households, the remainder in agriculture and industry (it takes eight gallons of water to grow one tomato in an irrigated field). Around the world, 1.2 billion people do not have easy access to clean water.
- The United States consumes 25% of all fossil fuels consumed in the world. Two billion people around the world do not have access to electricity.
- The United States and other developed countries, with a small percentage of the world’s people, consume 84% of the paper. The average U.S. inhabitant consumes about 730 pounds of paper products a year; the world average is 125 pounds. Seventy or more pounds per person is considered the minimum needed to ensure basic literacy and communication.

From: Walter J. Burghardt, S.J., *Justice: A Global Adventure*, pp. 82-83.

---

## 6. The Grace We Desire

To understand accurately and embrace enthusiastically the vital role of culture in the “service of faith and the promotion of justice,” according to General Congregation 34.

### Prayer Focus

#### **Culture as the doorway between faith and a just society.**

GC 32 lifted and expanded our Ignatian worldview or “horizon,” enabling us to see the complex and dynamic social networks of interactive relationships, which constitute specific communities and society at large. When we recognize and trace this web of interrelationships, we can diagnose instances of justice or injustice more accurately and respond to them more effectively.

GC 34 moves us a step beyond this social perspective by devoting a separate document to the cultural dimension of life in society. It is Decree 4, “Our Mission and Culture.” If General Congregation 32 owes a major debt to sociology for its insights into “Our Mission Today,” GC 34 owes a special debt of gratitude to cultural anthropology.

Thirty or forty years ago mention of “culture” put most people in mind of visiting an art gallery or going to the opera. The notion is much broader today. For instance, the media frequently attributes the recent rash of corporate scandals to dysfunctional corporate cultures. We see, daily and often violently, the clash of cultures between the democratic capitalism of the west and the various forms of Islamic society in the Middle East. Given the influence that his first book had, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, it is not surprising that Samuel Huntington co-edited with Lawrence Harrison a follow-up book, entitled *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. It deals with the cultures of economies, governments, minorities, genders, and nations, among others.

Decree 4 of GC 34 describes culture this way: “‘Culture’ means the way in which a group of people live, think, feel, organize themselves, celebrate, and share life. In every culture there are underlying systems of values, meanings, and views of the world, which are expressed, visibly, in language, gestures, symbols, rituals, and styles.” (p. 49, 1)



## Suggested Prayer Texts

In an Appendix to his excellent book, *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith & Culture*, Michael Gallagher, S.J., lists several descriptions or definitions of culture. Among them are the following:

1. From **the Willowbank Report**, *Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization*, 1978

[Culture] means simply the patterned way in which people do things together... Culture holds people together over a span of time. It is received from the past, but not by any process of natural inheritance. It has to be learned afresh by each generation... Culture covers everything in human life. At its centre is a world-view, that is, a general understanding of the nature of the universe and of one's place in it... From this basic world-view flow both standards of judgment or values and standards of conduct... Cultures are never static; there is a continuous process of change...

Culture is an integrated system of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.) and of institutions which express those beliefs, values and customs... which bind a society together and give it a sense of identity, dignity, security, and continuity.

2. From **Bernard Lonergan**, *Method in Theology*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1972, p. xi

[Culture] is the set of meanings and values that informs a way of life. It may remain unchanged for ages. It may be in process of slow development or rapid dissolution. [Later, on page 301 of *Method*, Lonergan says, "A culture is a set of meanings and values informing a common way of life, and there are as many cultures as there are distinct sets of such meanings and values."]

3. From **Konrad Raiser**, *Secretary General, World Council of Churches*, 1994

Culture is the expression of the identity of a human community. Culture refers to the delicate fabric of habits, symbols, artistic representations, tools, rules of behaviour, moral values and institutions through which the human community orders its relationships to nature, to other communities and to reality as a whole. Through processes of socialisation and through tradition, a culture is being transmitted to the following generations. In this sense, culture is specifically human; it is the second 'nature' of human beings in their social relationships. Any understanding of culture includes the language, history, family patterns, etc., of a given community.

Every social unit, every community of people, every organization — a family, a church congregation, a business, a university, a political party, a nation, a religious community like the Jesuits, a labor union, the KKK, or a bowling league — has a culture. We all belong to a number of communities, whose cultures influence us to some degree. They circle us concentrically, and the ones closest to us are the ones whose values we cherish most. They form and influence us more profoundly than the others.

As Christians we believe that Jesus revealed and shared through his teaching, example, and love unto death the ultimate meaning and value of human life: self-giving love of God and love a neighbor as oneself. This is also the gift of justice, because it is Jesus' fidelity to the demands of his — and our — human relationships to God, to others, and to self. It is Jesus' formula for transforming our human community and all its many sub-communities into God's kingdom on earth — a kingdom characterized by justice, peace, and truth.

Christians promote justice in the communities in which they live and work the same way; we do it in imitation of and empowered by Jesus. It is by our own faith, our own justice (our fidelity to the demands of our relationships), our own readiness to forgive and to work for reconciliation, and, finally, our willingness to suffer and die, if necessary, to share these gifts with others. And it is always as the Christian community — as Body of Christ — that we do so, and not simply as individual Christians. It is a "community to community gift," because justice is "a community thing."

Christian faith "does justice," in other words, by enriching and transforming the meanings and values of a given society with the meanings and values of Christ. And it does so by "in-culturating" (or "in-carnating") itself in the given society. Jesus in-culturated his values into the society of first century Palestine under Roman occupation. The early church in-culturated the values and meanings of Jesus, the Wisdom and the Love of Jesus' Spirit, in the many different countries and cultures to which they traveled and in which they lived. And as their Christian faith enriched the cultures of these societies, so their faith was enriched by the riches of the culture of that country. There was, in other words, and there always is, a mutual benefit and growth for faith and the society in which it is inculturated.

Listen to Lonergan on this two-way process:

By its word, religion enters the world [already] mediated by meaning and regulated by value. It endows that world with its deepest meaning and its highest value. It sets itself in a context of other meanings and other values. Within that context it comes to understand itself, to relate itself to the object of ultimate concern, to draw on the power of ultimate concern to pursue the objectives of proximate concern all the more fairly and all the more efficaciously.

Bernard Lonergan, *Method*, p. 112

The basic point here, once again, is that faith promotes justice by enriching and transforming cultures in human societies with the ultimate love and compassionate concern of God himself. This is important to recognize because it can clarify our basic strategy of promoting justice as a service of faith.

One important activity in this strategy is interreligious dialogue. Once we recognize the indispensable role of faith in culture and of culture in society, it is clear why interreligious dialogue is essential for the promotion of justice in society. How religious communities relate to one another is pivotal for the growth of justice, peace, and harmony within society. If they engage in constructive dialogue, develop appreciative and respectful relationships, and strive to work collaboratively for the benefit of the whole society, their contribution will be enormously beneficial. Religious communities are, without any doubt, the most positive and powerful influence for good in any society. If, on the other hand, they are pitted antagonistically, and even violently, against one another, the results will be disastrous for society. They can be the most powerfully destructive forces on earth, because religion can be used to provide any and every warped ideology with “divine” justification.

Given our current world situation it is no surprise, then, that GC 34 has a special decree on “Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue.” No. 6 of that Decree 5 has this to say:

Our service of faith takes place today in a world that is becoming increasingly conscious of the plurality of spiritual experiences in diverse religions. Dialogue helps us to recognize that these religions are graced with an authentic experience of the self-communication of the divine Word and of the saving presence of the divine Spirit.... With love and conviction we share this experience with our sisters and brothers of other religions, for “we are all pilgrims setting out to find God in human hearts.” (Quote from Pope Paul VI)

Decree 5 of GC 34 has separate reflections on the dialogue Christians should engage in with Jews (# 12), Muslims (#13), Hindus (#14), Buddhists (#15), and fundamentalists of the various religions (#16). The Decree concludes with the recommendation that Father General set up an international secretariat for interreligious dialogue to promote and coordinate initiatives in this area.

## Suggested Readings and Reflections

1. Pray God to guide your memory to recall when you first had the experience of “They’re not like us!” (Or, “We’re not like them!”) Why did you think or feel that way — what specifically did you see or notice? Describe the differences you saw between “them” and “us” — concrete viewpoints or values. How did you deal with it? What did you think of them? Did you try to understand them better? Did you try close the gap or let it be?

Pray God to guide you along this path of understanding and appreciation. What was God saying to you in this experience? What is God saying to you now as you recall and reflect on it? What might this have to do with “serving the faith by promoting justice?”

2. Pray God to help you recognize and name the various communities of which you are a member and therefore whose cultures are influential in your life. After listing them, identify which ones are the most important to you. Describe why these are the most important ones — by identifying those meanings and values that are dearest to you. Are you surprised by your choice of the communities and cultures you most admire, desire, and live within? On examination, how explicitly consistent are the values and meanings that motivate your decisions with those of the “mind and heart of Christ?”

3. Presumably you are member of a Jesuit or Ignatian organization — as, for instance, an educational institution, a parish, province offices, a retreat house, a research center, or a Christian Life Community chapter. How would you describe its culture? What “meanings (viewpoint, outlooks, worldviews or horizons) and values (ideals, life goals, loves and desires) are actually influential in your institution’s culture? How would you rank order the principal ones? How do they mesh with your own principal viewpoints and values? How do they mesh with those of Jesus? How do they mesh with what you know of Ignatius’ views and values? List agreements and discrepancies.

4. As you look out on the variety of communities or organizations that are having a major influence on people’s lives today — materially, mentally, emotionally, morally, socially, or religiously — which ones, in your view, most need cultural purification, renewal, and improvement, because of what they are doing to people? Chose the one you think is in most need of reform, and ask God to guide you in imagining what might be done — by you or others -- to affect that reform or renewal? If you are in a small prayer group during the Year of Prayer perhaps different members might choose different organizations in need of renovation – and exchange their experiences of social analysis and action proposals.

5. Ask God to help and guide you to expand your imagination to conceive ways in which Ignatian companions might cooperate Province-wide to analyze organizations and cultures and to plan together ways in which to improve their influence within society at large. How could parishes cooperate with universities, retreat centers with research centers, high schools with social action agencies, and so forth — throughout the various regions of the province?

6. Ponder prayerfully over the following citation:

A study of the prophets of Israel must try to take into account both the evidence of the Old Testament and the contemporary situation of the church. What we understand about the Old Testament must be somehow connected with the realities of the church today. So I shall begin with a statement of how I see our present situation and the task facing us in ministry. I will not elaborate but only provide a clue to the perspective from which I am presenting the subject.

The contemporary American church is so largely inculturated to the American ethos of consumerism that it has little power to believe or to act. This enculturation is in some way true across the spectrum of church life, both liberal and conservative. It may not be a new situation, but it is one that seems es-

## 7. The Grace We Desire

To be guided by God to understand and embrace the Ignatian  
“Way of Proceeding” which is Jesus’ way of proceeding.

pecially urgent and pressing at the present time. That enculturation is true not only of the institution of the church but also of us as persons. Our consciousness has been claimed by false fields of perception and idolatrous systems of language and rhetoric.

The internal cause of such enculturation is our loss of identity through the abandonment of the faith tradition. Our consumer culture is organized against history. There is a depreciation of memory and a ridicule of hope, which means everything must be held in the now, either an urgent now or an eternal now. Either way, a community rooted in energizing memories and summoned by radical hopes is a curiosity and a threat in such a culture.

When we suffer from amnesia every form of serious authority for faith is in question, and we live unauthorized lives of faith and practice unauthorized ministries.

The church will not have power to act or believe until it recovers its tradition of faith and permits that tradition to be the primal way out of enculturation. This is not a cry for traditionalism but rather a judgment that the church has no business more pressing than the reappropriation of its memory in its full power and authenticity. And that is true among liberals who are too chic to remember and conservatives who have overlaid the faith memory with all kinds of hedges that smack of scientism and Enlightenment.

It is the task of prophetic ministry to bring the claims of the tradition and the situation of enculturation into an effective interface. That is, the prophet is called to be a child of the tradition, one who has taken it seriously in the shaping of his or her own field of perception and system of language, who is so at home in that memory that the points of contact and incongruity with the situation of the church in culture can be discerned and articulated with proper urgency. ...

The hypothesis I will explore here is this: *The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.*

Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, pp. 11-13

### Prayer Focus

#### **Decree 26 of General Congregation 34, “Our Way of Proceeding”**

We opened the Year of Prayer by proposing that Bartimaeus, the blind beggar beside the road out of Jericho, be a patron saint for us this year. We saw that in response to his persistent faith in Jesus, “*Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.*” Jesus himself is the Way, the Way to life through loving service of others.

As our Year of Prayer comes to its end, let’s call on Bartimaeus again, asking him to intercede for us as we pray over the final document of General Congregation 34, “Our Way of Proceeding” which is Jesus’ Way. Just as this Decree is a summary of and conclusion to General Congregation, so is this final period of prayer on Decree 26 a fitting summary of and conclusion to our Year of Prayer.

What follows is a schematic overview — not the full text — of Decree 26 of GC 34, the characteristics of Our Way of Proceeding on “Our Mission Today.” Pray successfully on each characteristic, striving to hear in each one the voice of God today talking to us Lay and Jesuit Partners. Beg God to help us understand its meaning for us and to deepen in our hearts the spirit it is meant to engender. It closes with a prayer of Father Pedro Arrupe. The entire text of Decree 26 is to be found in the Resource Book of the Year of Prayer.

#### **Introduction**

Certain attitudes, values, and patterns of behavior join together to become what has been called the Jesuit way of proceeding. The characteristics of our way of proceeding were born in the life of St. Ignatius and shared by his first companions... General Congregation 34 considered which of these characteristics we need especially to draw upon today and the form they must take in the new situations and changing ministries in which we labor. ...

#### **Our Motivation: profound gratitude and love of Christ**

In remorse, gratitude, and astonishment — but above all with passionate love — first Ignatius, and then every Jesuit after him, has turned prayerfully to “Christ our Lord hanging on the Cross before me” and has asked of himself, ‘What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What must I do for Christ?’” The questions well up from a heart moved with profound gratitude and love. This is the foundational grace that binds Jesuits to Jesus and to one another.

#### ***Pondering and Prayer***

### **Our Mission: reconciliation: the work of faith doing justice**

“What is it to be a Jesuit today? It is to know that one is a sinner yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius was.” The mission of the reconciled sinner is the mission of reconciliation: the work of faith doing justice. A Jesuit freely gives what he has freely received: the gift of Christ’s redeeming love.

#### ***Pondering and Prayer***

### **Our Method: contemplative in action**

The God of Ignatius is the God who is at work in all things: laboring for the salvation of all ...For a Jesuit, therefore, not just any response to the needs of men and women of today will do. The initiative must come from the Lord laboring in events and people here and now...To discover and join the Lord, laboring to bring everything to its fullness, is central to the Jesuit way of proceeding. It is the Ignatian method of prayerful discernment, which can be described as a constant interplay between experience, reflection, decision, and action, in line with the Jesuit ideal of being “contemplative in action.”... Such discernment reaches out, at the same time, to embrace the larger community of all those with whom we labor in mission.

#### ***Pondering and Prayer***

### **An Apostolic Body in the Church: Jesuits united in community**

Jesuits today join together because each of us has heard the call of Christ the King. From this union with Christ flows, of necessity, a love for one another. We are not merely fellow workers; we are friends in the Lord. The community to which we belong is the entire body of the Society itself, however dispersed over the face of the earth. ...In shared prayer, in conversation, and in the celebration of the Eucharist, each of us finds the spiritual resources needed for an apostolic community. ...[W]e are especially united to the Roman Pontiff in order to be sent on the missions he may entrust to us.

#### ***Pondering and Prayer***

### **In Solidarity with Those Most in Need**

Today, whatever our ministry, we Jesuits enter into solidarity with the poor, the marginalized, and the voiceless, in order to enable their participation in the processes that shape the society in which we all live and work. They, in their turn, teach us about our own poverty as no document can. They help us to understand the meaning of the gratuity of our ministries, giving freely what we have freely received, giving our very lives. They show us the way to inculturate gospel values in situations where God is forgotten. Through such solidarity we become “agents of enculturation.”

#### ***Pondering and Prayer***

### **Partnership with Others**

Partnership and cooperation with others in ministry is not a pragmatic strategy resulting from diminished manpower; it is an essential dimension of the contemporary Jesuit way of proceeding, rooted in the realization that to prepare our complex and divided world for the coming of the Kingdom requires a plurality of gifts, perspectives, and experiences, both international and multicultural. [See the Resource Book of the Year of Prayer for the full text of Decree 13, “Cooperation with the Laity in Mission.”]

#### ***Pondering and Prayer***

### **Called to Learned Ministry**

Ignatius very quickly saw the need for learning in the service of the faith and the ministry of the Word.... Therefore it is characteristic of a Jesuit that he embodies in creative tension this Ignatian requirement to use all human means, science, art, learning, natural virtue, with a total reliance on divine grace.... [T]his ministry requires all the learning and intelligence, imagination and ingenuity, solid studies and rigorous analysis that we can muster. To overcome ignorance and prejudice through learning and teaching, to make the Gospel truly “Good News” in a confused and troubled world through theological reflection, is a characteristic of our Jesuit way of proceeding.

#### ***Pondering and Prayer***

### **Men Sent, Always Available for New Missions**

A Jesuit is essentially a man on a mission, a mission he receives from the Holy Father and from his own religious superior, but ultimately from Jesus Christ himself, the one sent by the Father. Jesuits remain ready at any hour to go to some or other parts of the world where they may be sent by the Sovereign Pontiff or their own superiors. Therefore, it is characteristic of our way of proceeding that we live with an operative freedom: open, adaptable, even eager for any mission that may be given us... free of any worldly interest, and free to serve all men and women. Our mission extends to the creation of this same spirit of mission in others.

#### ***Pondering and Prayer***

### **Ever Searching for the Magis**

The entire life of Ignatius was a pilgrim search for the magis, the ever greater glory of God, the ever fuller service of our neighbor, the more universal good, the more effective apostolic means... Jesuits are never content with the status quo, the known, the tried, the already existing... For us, frontiers and boundaries are not obstacles or ends, but new challenges to be faced, new opportunities to be welcomed. Indeed, ours is a holy boldness, a certain apostolic aggressivity.

#### ***Pondering and Prayer***



**Conclusion:** Our way of proceeding is a way of challenge. May we ever live more faithfully this way of Christ modeled for us by St. Ignatius. For this we pray in a prayer of Father Pedro Arrupe:

Lord, meditating on “our way of proceeding,” I have discovered that the ideal of our way of acting is your way of acting.

Give me that *sensus Christi* that I may feel with your feelings, with the sentiments of your heart, which basically are love for your Father and love for all men and women.

Teach me how to be compassionate to the suffering, to the poor, the blind, the lame, and the lepers.

Teach us your way so that it becomes our way today, so that we may come closer to the great ideal of St. Ignatius: to be companions of Jesus, collaborators in the work of redemption.

Amen.

## 8. The Grace We Desire

That God help us to gather up the gifts and graces we have received in the course of this Year of Prayer, so that we may see therein how God is calling us to respond IN DEED during the year ahead on mission together as Lay and Jesuit Partners with Jesus.

### Prayer Focus

“**Gathering our Gifts.**” Our focus can be the grace for which we prayed in the Contemplation to Attain Love. “It will be here to ask for interior knowledge of the great gifts I have received, in order that being entirely grateful, I may be able in all to love and serve His Divine Majesty.”

### Suggested Prayer Texts

Go back over the Year of Prayer in order to recall and record in your journal the principal gifts we have received from God: insights, inspirations, new motivation, a change of perspective on some things and an awakening of heart in others, newfound companionship, the consolation of acknowledging my sinfulness and delight in the experience of forgiveness, a clearer vision of my mission and purpose, and deeper compassion for those suffering — including those who ridicule us.

Go back to see how the Seasons of Grace are related to one another: Gratitude, Healing, Call, and Co-Laboring — how they “double back” on one another in multiple ways — and, therefore, to recognize the fundamental unity in God’s love for us.

See how it is that “Ignatian mysticism is service marked by gratitude” (George Aschenbrenner) and that service follows “naturally” from gratitude for gifts.

Reflect again on the marvel and mystery of God’s “real presence” here and now in me, in all my operations of knowing and loving, in the community of people with whom I am engaged, in the physical universe — for its very being and beauty — and in the unfolding history day by day of the human world in which I live. God HERE and NOW!

---

And remember that our best response is not words but deeds — DOING with and for and in the Lord laboring — and doing so as Lay and Jesuit Partners with the Lord on Mission. The prayer that Ignatius commends to us Partners says it challengingly:

***Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,  
my memory, my intellect, and my will —  
all that I have or possess.  
Thou gavest it to me: to Thee, Lord,  
I return it!  
All is thine,  
dispose of it according to thy will.  
For this is enough for me!***

***This is a tab page  
APPENDIX***



---

## A Selection of Prayers

### *Morning Offering*

My God, I offer Thee this day  
all I shall think or do or say,  
uniting it with what is being done on earth  
by Jesus Christ, Thy Son.  
Amen.

### *Our Father*

Our Father, who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

### *Hail Mary*

Hail Mary,  
full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou amongst women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now, and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

## *The Angelus*

The angel spoke God's message to Mary,  
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee! Blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

"I am the lowly servant of the Lord,  
Let it be done to me according to your word."  
Hail Mary...

And the Word became flesh  
And lived among us.  
Hail Mary...

Pray for us, holy Mother of God.  
That we may become worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:  
Lord, fill our hearts with your grace: once, through the message of an angel you  
revealed to us the incarnation of your Son; now, through his suffering and death,  
lead us to the glory of his resurrection. We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## *Ignatius' Prayer for Generosity*

Dear Lord, teach me to be generous,  
teach me to serve thee as Thou deserveth:  
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 any reward,  
save that of knowing that I do Thy will. Amen.

## *Ignatius' Prayer of Self-Offering*

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,  
my memory, my intellect, and my will –  
all that I have or possess.  
Thou gavest it to me: to Thee, Lord,  
I return it!  
All is thine,  
dispose of it according to thy will.  
For this is enough for me!

## *Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi*

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.  
Where there is injury, pardon.  
Where there is doubt, faith.  
Where there is despair, hope.  
Where there is darkness, light.  
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not  
so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood, as to understand;  
to be loved as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and  
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.

## *Zechariah's Prayer*

Grant us, O Lord, that free from fear  
and saved from the hands of our enemies  
we may serve you in holiness and justice  
all the days of our life in your presence.

Luke 1:73 75

## *A Worker's Prayer*

Direct, O Lord, we beseech Thee  
all our actions by thy holy inspiration  
and carry them on by thy gracious assistance  
that every word and work of ours  
may always begin from Thee and  
through Thee be successfully completed.  
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.

## *Prayer to the Holy Spirit*

Come, Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of thy faithful  
and enkindle within us the fire of thy divine love.

Send forth thy Spirit and they shall be created,  
and thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray:  
O God, who didst create the hearts of thy faithful  
and fill them with the fire of thy divine love,  
fill us with that same Holy Spirit,  
that we may truly relish what is right and just  
and always rejoice in his consolation,  
through Christ our Lord, Amen.

## *Prayer of 10th Week of the Year*

God of wisdom and love,  
Source of all good,  
Send your Spirit to teach us your truth  
And guide our actions  
In your way of peace.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## *Prayer Before Meditation Period*

My God, I believe I am really and truly within your presence, as truly as this immortal soul is within this corruptible body of mine.

I believe you know my most secret thoughts, words and actions.

Without you, Lord, I can do nothing; with you I can do all things.

My God, I offer you my whole self: my body with all its senses, my soul with all its faculties, my heart with all its affections.

I offer Thee this meditation of mine.

Give me the grace that every intention, action and operation of my soul may be wholly and purely directed to serve and praise Thy divine majesty.

Enlighten my mind that I may know Thee more intimately that I may understand and feel vividly this matter I am about to consider. Inflammé my heart that I may love Thee more and more ardently. And strengthen my will that I may the better regulate my whole life according to Thy most holy will. Amen.

## *Memorare*

Remember O most gracious Virgin Mary  
that never was it known that anyone  
who fled to your protection,  
implored your help  
or sought your intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I  
fly unto you O virgin of virgins, my Mother.  
To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word Incarnate,  
despise not my petitions  
but in thy mercy hear and answer me.  
Amen.

## *Prayer of Solomon for Wisdom*

God of my fathers, Lord of mercy,  
you who have made all things by your word  
and in your wisdom have established man  
to rule the creatures produced by you,  
to govern the world in holiness and justice,  
and to render judgment in integrity of heart.

Give me Wisdom, the attendant at your throne,  
and reject me not from among your children;  
for I am your servant, the son of your handmaid,  
a man weak and short-lived  
and lacking in comprehension of judgment and of laws.

Indeed, though one be perfect among the sons of men,  
if Wisdom, who comes from you, be not with him,  
he shall be held in no esteem.

Now with you is Wisdom, who knows your works  
and was present when you made the world;  
who understands what is pleasing in your eyes  
and what is conformable with your commands.

Send her forth from your holy heavens  
And from your glorious throne dispatch her  
That she may be with me and work with me,  
That I may know what is your pleasure.

For she knows and understands all things,  
And will guide me discreetly in my affairs  
And safeguard me by her glory.

Wisdom 9: 1-6, 9-11

## *Prayer for Wisdom and Courage*

Blessed be God, our Father, who protects his children and never spurns their  
prayers. Let us humbly implore him:  
Enlighten us, Lord.

We thank you, Lord, for enlightening us through your Son,  
—fill us with his light throughout the day.  
Enlighten us, Lord.

Let your wisdom lead us today, Lord,  
—that we may walk in the newness of life.  
Enlighten us, Lord.

May we bear hardships with courage for your name's sake,  
—and be generous in serving you.  
Enlighten us, Lord.

Direct our thoughts, feelings and actions this day,  
—help us to follow your providential guidance.  
Enlighten us, Lord.

Our Father ...

## *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 Thy wounds hide me  
Suffer me not to be separated from Thee  
From the malicious enemy defend me  
In the hour of my death call me  
And bidst me come to Thee  
That with Thy saints I may praise Thee  
Forever and ever. Amen.

---

## Bibliography of Texts Used in The Guide Book

Alison, James. *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin Through Easter Eyes*. New York, NY: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998.

Aschenbrenner, George A. *Stretched for Greater Glory: What To Expect from the Spiritual Exercises*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2004.

Baldovin, John, S.J. *Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation: Understanding the Mass*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.

Bellah, Robert, et al. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1985, 1996.

Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. New York: Anchor, 1990.

Boadt, Lawrence. *Reading the Old Testament*. Mahweh, NJ: Paulist Press, 1984.

Bradley, H. Cornell, S.J. *THE 19TH ANNOTATION IN 24 WEEKS, FOR THE 21ST CENTURY*. Philadelphia, PA: St. Joseph's University Press, 2002.

Brown, Raymond E., Fitzmeyer, Joseph A., Murphy, Roland Edmund, Editors. *Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, reissued 1989.

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978.

Burghardt, Walter J., S.J. *Justice: A Global Adventure*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004.

Callahan, John J., S.J. "Discovering a Sacred World: Ignatius Loyola's Spiritual Exercises And Its Influence on Education" <http://www.marquette.edu/library/collections/archives/Conversations/>

*Catechism of the Catholic Church: Catechesis on Creation # 339-341*, Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1997.

Donahue, John R., S.J. "Biblical Perspectives on Justice" *The Faith That Does Justice: Examining the Christian Sources for Social Change*. NY: Paulist Press, 1977.

*Documents of the Thirty-Fourth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus*. The Institute of Jesuit Sources: Saint Louis, MO: 1995.

Downey, Michael (Editor.) *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993.

Duffey, Michael K. "Called to Be Holy: The Reconvergence of Christian Morality and Spirituality," SPIRITUALITY TODAY, Winter 1986, Vol. 38.

Gallagher, Michael, S.J. *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith & Culture*. Manweh, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003.

Gilleman, Gérard. *The Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology*. Newman Press, 1959.

Girard, Rene. *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987.

Giussani, Luigi. *Why the Church?* Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001.

Hall, Jerome M., S.J. *We Have the Mind of Christ*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2001.

Haughey, John C., S.J. *Housing Heaven's Fire: The Challenge to Holiness*. Loyola Press, Chicago: 2002.

Haughton, Rosemary. *The Tower That Fell*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1997.

Haughton, Rosemary. *The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community*. Springfield, IL: Templegate Publishers, 1980.

Huntington, Samuel and Harrison, Lawrence, Editors. *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*. NY, NY: Basic Books: 2001.

John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*. <http://www.vatican.va>

John Paul II, *Theology of the Body, Human Love in the Divine Plan*. Boston, MA: Pauline Books and Media, 1997.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Collegeville, MN: Sacra Pagina, The Liturgical Press, 1992.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Scripture and Discernment: Decision Making In The Church*. Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1983.

Jungmann, Josef. *The Mass of the Roman Rite*. IN, USA: Better World Books, 1987.

Kolvenbach, Father General Peter-Hans, S.J. "Laymen and Laywomen in the Church of the Millennium," *The Road from La Storta: On Ignatian Spirituality*, St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2000.

Leckey, Dolores R. and Minaert, Paula. *Spiritual Exercises for Church Leaders*. New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2003.

Leon-Dufour, Xavier. *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Word Among Us Press, 1995.

Leon-Dufour, Xavier. *Resurrection and the Message of Easter*. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.

Lonergan, Bernard, S.J. *Method in Theology*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Lonergan, Bernard J.F., S.J. "Mission and the Spirit," *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., NY, NY: Paulist Press, 1985.

Lonsdale, David, S.J. *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear*. Chicago, IL: Loyola University Press, 1991.

Lowney, Chris *Heroic Leadership: Best Practices of a 450-Year Old Company That Changed the World*. Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2003.

Maruca, Dominic W., S.J. "The Deliberation of Our First Fathers," *Woodstock Letters*, July 1966.

McDermott, Brian O., S.J. *What are they Saying about the Grace of Christ?* New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1984.

McKenzie, John L. *Dictionary of the Bible*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1965.

Miles, Jack. *Christ: A Crisis in the Life of God*. New York: Vintage Books, 2001.

O'Connor, Jerome Murphy, O.P. *Becoming Human Together: The Pastoral Anthropology of St. Paul*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier Inc., 1982.

Radliffe, Timothy, O.P. *Seven Last Words*. New York, NY: Burns & Oates, 2004.

Rahner, Karl, S.J. "Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ" *Theological Investigations*. Volume V, Helicon Press, Inc., 1961.

Karl Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," *Theological Investigations I*. Helicon Press, Inc., 1961.

Ratzinger, Joseph. *God is Near Us*. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2003.

Ratzinger, Joseph. *Called to Communion*. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1991.



Rolheiser, Ron, OMI. *The Jesus Code — Unraveling The Secret*.  
<http://www.ronrolheiser.com/currentcolumn.shtml>

Scheler, Max. *Man's Place in Nature*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1961.

Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Thibodeux, Mark, S.J. *Armchair Mystic: Easing into Contemplative Prayer*. Cincinnati, OH: Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 2001.

Vatican II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes*.  
<http://www.vatican.va>

Veltri, John, S.J. *Orientations for Spiritual Growth*.  
<http://www.sentex.net/~jveltri/topics.html>

Wright, G. Ernest and Fuller, Reginald H. *The Book of the Acts of God*. New York, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1960.

Wright, N.T. *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1999.

Young, William J., S.J. *St. Ignatius' Own Story as told to Luis Gonzalez de Camara*. Chicago, IL: Loyola University Press, 1980.

Young, William, S.J., Editor. "Movements of the Spirit," *Christus*, No. 4, October 1954, and English translation in *Finding God in All Things*, Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Company, 1958.

### Websites you may find interesting:

Creighton University, <http://www2.creighton.edu>

Georgetown University, <http://explore.georgetown.edu>

Institute of Jesuit Sources: [www.jesuitsources.com](http://www.jesuitsources.com)

Jesuit Volunteers, <http://www.jesuitvolunteers.org>

Loyola College, <http://loyola.edu>

Maryland Province Society of Jesus, <http://www.marprovjesuits.org>

National Jesuit Conference, <http://www.jesuit.org>

Orientations for Spiritual Growth <http://www.sentex.net/~jveltri/topics.html>

Powers of Ten – wonderful websites to help appreciate the magnitude and magnificence of the universe:

<http://micro.magnet.fsu.edu/primer/java/scienceopticsu/powersof10/>

<http://microcosm.web.cern.ch/microcosm/P10/english/P-6.html>

Sacred Space, Jesuit Communication Centre, Ireland, [www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie)

St. Joseph's University, <http://www.sju.edu>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is an excellent resource for the Catechism, daily scripture readings, and official Church documents, as well as information on and links to each Catholic diocese in the United States. The USCCB Website provides links to the Vatican website for all papal documents as well: <http://www.usccb.org>

Vatican Website – for the original texts of papal documents (apostolic letters, encyclicals, audiences, etc.) and archived information: <http://www.vatican.va>

Woodstock Theological Center, <http://www.georgetown.edu/centers/woodstock>





**Maryland Province Society of Jesus**

5704 Roland Avenue

Baltimore, MD 21210

410.532.1410

[www.mdsj.org](http://www.mdsj.org)