



## RETREAT IN DAILY LIFE

### Second Week – Supplement I

#### **On Using the Colloquy During a Period of Prayer**

In every prayer period, it is helpful to have a dialogue with God. Sometimes the word ‘colloquy’ is used as a fancy name for this dialogue. It is a term that describes the intimate conversation between God and me, Jesus and me, and so on. This conversation happens on the occasion of my putting myself as totally as I can into the setting of the prayer; I will find that I speak or listen as God’s spirit moves me – sometimes as sinner, sometimes as a child, at other times as lover or friend, and so on.

As with all conversations, the colloquy goes both ways. I say something to Jesus and then I give Jesus time to say something back to me. Sometimes it even may be helpful to imagine Jesus responding as if he were sitting beside me. At times, this little technique really helps establish the two-way flow of conversation.

In order to be open to this experience it is often important to ‘prime the pump’ as it were. You can do this by placing a chair in front of you and imagining the person sitting there while you role play in conversation. Say something out loud to the person and repeat out loud what you imagine the person is saying back to you. No doubt you might understand this as pretending, as a child pretends in play with a doll. It is, at the start! However, very soon pretending turns into role playing; and this turns into projecting; and this turns into opening your heart and deeper self; and this turns into God communicating with you personally.

A colloquy takes place at any time during the period of prayers. If it doesn’t take place earlier in the prayer exercise, it may be helpful to make a colloquy before taking one’s leave.

John Veltri, SJ [cf. Exx. #54]

## RETREAT IN DAILY LIFE

### Second Week – Supplement II

#### **Discernment of Spirits**

What Ignatius means by *discernment of spirits*, how we can use that term:

It has to do with determining the cause(s) ('spirits') of 'movements,' which are spontaneously arising desires, thoughts, imaginings, attractions resistances, and affective states. Are the movements from the good spirit, our graced selves, the Spirit of God, or from our false selves, the sinful world as sinful, and Satan, the enemy of human nature. The focus is on thoughts and affections of depth, ones likely to influence our decisions and choices.

It is important to distinguish thoughts (planning, reasoning, etc.), affective acts (e.g., love and hate and fear – of which I recognize that I am the agent) and affective states (sadness, joy, anxiety – which arise spontaneously, and so I can ask from where do they arise).

Discernment is needed for decision-making when we are “moved by various spirits, consoling and desolating,” and need to use the affections given us as help in determining whether the decision we are spontaneously drawn to is of the Holy Spirit or the enemy of human nature.

Brian McDermott, SJ

**Spiritual Consolation** is an experience of being so on fire with God's love that we feel impelled to praise, love, and serve God and help others as best we can. Spiritual consolation encourages and facilitates a deep sense of gratitude for God's faithfulness, mercy, and companionship. In consolation, we feel more alive and connected to others. Ignatius concludes, “Finally, under the word [spiritual] consolation, I include every increase in hope, faith, and charity, and every interior joy which calls and attracts one toward heavenly things and to the salvation of one's soul, by bringing it tranquility and peace in its Creator and Lord” [Sp. Exx. #316].

**Spiritual Desolation**, in contrast, is an experience of the soul in heavy darkness or turmoil. We are assaulted by all sorts of doubts. We feel bombarded by temptations and mired in self-preoccupations. We are excessively restless and anxious and feel cut off from others. Such feelings, in Ignatius's words, “move one toward lack of faith and leave one without hope and without love. One is completely listless, tepid, and unhappy, and feels separated from our Creator and Lord” [Sp. Exx. #317].

Kevin O'Brien, SJ, in *The Ignatian Adventure*