

Retreat in Daily Life ~ Week 2, #5-8

Week of January 14th — #5

THEME:

Contemplation of Jesus, whose choices and actions reveal the heart of God.

GRACE:

I ask for the grace to know Jesus intimately, to love him more intensely, and so to follow him more closely.

SCRIPTURE:

Matt. 4:1-11	Mk. 2:1-12
Luke 4:14-30	John 4:5-42
Mk. 1:29-39	1 Cor.1: 4-9

Repetition of a text you have prayed.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

“Quite often I find that I want to return to a particular aspect of a gospel mystery... In making such a repetition, it is always important not just to repeat the gospel incident but to return to those parts or points of focus where I have experienced understanding, insight, confusion, consolation, or desolation. Since entering into the setting of such a repetition is frequently easily done, the emphasis more and more is placed on my own affective response, which is expressed in the colloquy.” David Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, #118



Jesus cures the paralytic, Jesusmafa.com

JM TRADITION:

“The mission of the Church always begins with a response to the urgent needs that are the consequence of history and the circumstances of human life. It is therefore necessary to look at the world, in order to see there the expectations and the signs of hope. If we are close to him who calls us to

follow him and if we adopt his attitudes, then he will lead us to see the world through the loving eyes of the triune God and to commit ourselves”

Evangelii Nuntiandi of Jesus and Mary, #3

CONTEMPORARY:

“What we have most in common is not religion but humanity. I learned this from my religion, which also teaches me that encountering another human being is as close to God as I may ever get — in the eye-to-eye thing, the person-to-person thing — which is where God’s Beloved has promised to show up. Paradoxically, the point is not to see him. The point is to see the person standing right in front of me, who has no substitute, who can never be replaced, whose heart holds things for which there is no language, whose life is an unsolved mystery.” Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar in the World*, 102



One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting their bad advice –
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
“Mend my life!”
each voice cried.

But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
Though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.

It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,

and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do –
determined to save
the only life you could save.

Mary Oliver, *The Journey*

Retreat in Daily Life ~ Week 2

Week of January 21st— #6



THEME:

The ways in which God's light and the darkness of evil can both attract me and influence my choices.

GRACE:

I ask for a deep knowledge of the deceits of the "enemy of human nature," and help to avoid them; a graced knowledge of true human living exemplified in Jesus Christ and the grace to live my life in his way.

SCRIPTURE:

Matt. 4:23-5:12

Luke 18: 35-43

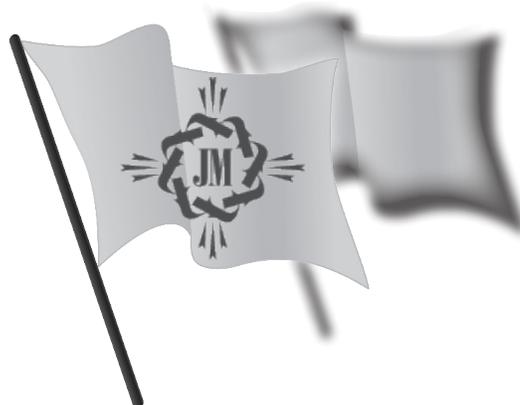
Matt: 11: 28-30

Galatians 5: 16-16

John 10: 1-18

Ephesians 4:14-24

Repetition of a text you have prayed.



SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

"Recall the ever-ancient, ever-new call of Christ to labor under his standard; the ancient luring to the standard of Satan. The tactics of both are rooted in their personalities: the bright, humble, joyous, clear personality of Christ; the dark, nebulous, shadowy, confused personality of the Prince of Darkness.

Consider first the insidious ways of the spirit of darkness, insinuating itself into every thought, word, work of humankind, and into mine. Snares, traps, fallacious arguments, subtleties. The ancient plan usually follows the same way:



—Rehearsing my good deeds and the faults of others —
a sense of spiritual wealth;

—Welcoming praise, relishing it

—Pride leading to judging, etc. (like the elder brother in
Luke 15).

Consider the ways of the spirit of light, Christ. He
openly chooses apostles and disciples and gives them the
secrets of his Kingdom, with the commission to go and
to teach the whole world. He urges his disciples to be
the servants of all as he was, to love all as he did, to deal
openly and simply with all. He urges simple detachment
from riches. He urges poverty:

—Forgetting my good deeds and the faults of others—
spiritual poverty;

—Welcoming the disesteem of others;

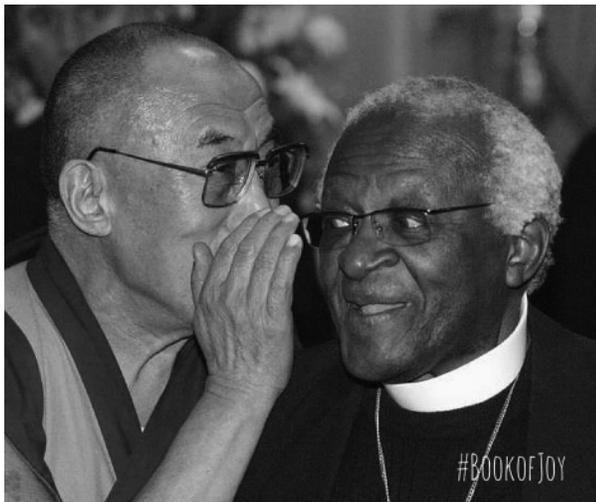
—Humility, leading to the inability to judge, spiritual childhood.”
parts of Two Standards Meditation, Sp. Exx., #s 136-146



William Sampson, re-formulation of

JM TRADITION:

Dalai Lama, Tibet & Desmond Tutu, S. Africa



“Our daily rhythm includes an hour of personal prayer
and the examen. The contemplation of Jesus leads us to
know Him interiorly and to permeate ourselves with
His attitudes.”

AC 51

“As a prayer, the
Examen helps
us to recognize
God’s presence
and working in
the happenings
of each day. It is

likewise a way of finding God in all things, because it helps us
notice the movement of spirits and whether we are being faithful in
our responses to God’s Spirit. Ignatius knew the power that desires
can have on a person. He considered ‘great desires’ as a grace to be
sought and appreciated, a vital way of discovering God’s desires for
us.”

Charism and Spirituality Commission, Document 4, *Rediscovering our Spirituality*



Dorothy Day, Founder of the Catholic Worker, USA

Refugees are welcomed in Germany



CONTEMPORARY:

“An old Cherokee (tribal) chief was teaching his grandson about life. ‘A fight is going on inside me,’ he said to the boy. ‘It is a terrible fight, and it is between two wolves. One is evil — he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, self-doubt and ego. The other is good — he is joy, peace, love, hope, sereni-

ty, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. This same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.’

The grandson thought about this for a minute and then asked his grandfather, ‘Which wolf will win?’

The old chief simply replied, ‘The one you feed.’ A Cherokee Parable, cited in *The Journey Makes Us One*, RJM Region of the Americas, 45



Malala Yousafzai in Kenya

Mother Teresa of Calcutta



Green Belt Movement, Kenya



Pope Francis blesses a prisoner, Rome



Retreat in Daily Life ~ Week 2

Week of January 28th — #7

THEME:

The call and the cost of discipleship.

GRACE:

I ask to grow in interior freedom from any attachments that hinder my ability to respond wholeheartedly to Christ's invitation in my life.

SCRIPTURE:

Matt. 9: 9-13

Mk. 12: 41-44

Matt. 20: 20-28

Mk. 10:17-31

Matt. 16:24-2

Romans 12: 1-2

Repetition



People of today, courtesy of Unsplash.com

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

“In this meditation, we reflect on choices that three different types of persons may make as they try to live according to their calling in life. The three persons are people who are trying to serve God and grow in faith. They sincerely want nothing to get in the way of their relationship with God.

Imagine that each acquires something that is very attractive to him or her. Not something evil, but each of the three persons is excessively attached to the possession in some way, an attachment that risks getting in the way of a more generous response to God's call.

The first person is concerned that her dependence on her possession may interfere with giving her life wholeheartedly to God. She wants to let go of the attachment, but she never gets around to it.

The second person sincerely desires to be free of what she perceives is an excessive preoccupation, and does many good things, but never **the one thing needed**: to free herself from her disordered attachment.

The third person prays for the grace to be free to do what God wants. She is open to how God directs her through her prayer, her experience, her reasoning through different options, her discernment of consolation and desolation, the counsel of others.” Adapted from commentary on Sp. Exx., #s 149-157, in Kevin O'Brien, *The Ignatian Adventure*, 177-179.



Details from icons

JM TRADITION:

“In addition to the Salesian Rule of Augustine and the Summary of the Jesuit Constitutions, a skeleton Rule was drawn up sometime in 1821—

Perhaps the most unique and striking characteristic of this ‘First Rule’ for Claudine’s young community is contained in the vow of ‘stability,’ which expresses in precise terms her cherished aspirations for the fulfillment of her own inspiration and gift for mission: total openness to the call of the Lord through the need of the neighbor, and total availability for service to that need. What ‘stability’ meant was to be deeply rooted in Christ, totally assimilated to him as the One sent by the Father, a union and communion in liberty of heart:

Those who are called to the vow of stability should be especially characterized by this spirit (of indifference), since they are a kind of vanguard in the congregation, ever ready to leave all behind and to go at a moment’s notice wherever the will of God and God’s glory calls them.”

(Rule of 1821, No. 12); St. Claudine Thévenet, *A Spiritual Profile*, 42-43.



Icon, Jesus & Mary

CONTEMPORARY:

**Every year everything I have ever learned
In my lifetime leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side is salvation, whose meaning none of us will
ever know. To live in this world**

**You must be able to do three things: to love what is mortal; to hold
it**

**against your bones knowing your own life depends on it; and,
when the time comes to let it go,**

to let it go.

Mary Oliver, *In Blackwater Woods*

Retreat in Daily Life — Week 2

Week of February 4th — #8

THEME:

Following more closely; loving more fully.

GRACE:

To know Jesus more intimately, to love him more intensely, and to follow him more closely.



Auschwitz survivor (L) forgives Nazi captor



Namaste — I bow to you

SCRIPTURE:

Luke 6:27-38
Matt. 13:44-45
Luke 19:1-10

Luke 10: 25-37
Matt. 15:21-28
Psalm 40

Repetition.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

“Ignatius invites us to consider three kinds of humility, which lie on a spectrum of varying degrees of loving God:

In the first kind, we express our love for God by doing our duty and following God’s law. We love God ... but this love may be hindered by fear and excessive caution in acting.

In the second, we love God by honoring God’s law and avoiding sin. But we also strive for indifference; ... We exercise good judgment and monitor our motivations carefully ... We are zealous, but our response, though sincere, is not yet wholehearted.

In the third kind, we experience a heartfelt desire to imitate Christ more closely. We simply want to be where Jesus is, no matter the cost.” Adapted from Kevin O’Brien, commentary on Sp. Exx. #s 165-168, in *An Ignatian Adventure*



Zaccheus, Satheesan AK, Kerala, India

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, You seem always to ask, 'What do you want?'
 Lord, let me find it in my own spirit to want to know you as friends know,
 to know you knowing me and loving me.
 Let me wish to be healed of all sin,
 match your great wish to heal me as you healed the Gerasene.
 Lord, let me find it in my spirit to want to climb trees to see you,
 too short as I am to make it through the crowd.

Oh, Lord, I say with my whole heart:
 Seeing or not, limping or leaping, I will come where you are,
 If only you will call me.

Joseph Tetlow, SJ, in *Choosing Christ in the World*, 65

JM TRADITION:

“The Religious of Jesus and Mary is a consecrated woman open to the action of the Spirit. He who is the revelation of the immense goodness of God makes us aware of the miseries of our times and invites us to life in faith, hope, and love, as a witness of God’s goodness and mercy.

Having come to bring fire to the earth, he arouses in us a zeal which is nourished and renewed through the contemplation of Christ’s heart and that of Mary, urging us to apostolic activity, with the sole desire of pleasing God; ready to die, like the grain of wheat, so that others may have life in abundance.” Adapted from *Book of Formation*, 5-6.



Good Samaritan, Kendall

CONTEMPORARY:

“The final secret, I think, is this: that the words you shall love the Lord your God become in the end less a command than a promise. And the promise is that, yes, on the weary feet of faith and the fragile wings of hope, we will come to love him at last as from the first he has loved us — loved us even in the wilderness, especially in the wilderness, because he has been in the wilderness with us. He has been in the wilderness for us. He has been acquainted with our grief. And, loving him, we will come at last to love each other, too”

Frederick Buechner, *Listening to Your Life*.



Retreat in Daily Life ~ Week 2

Week of February 11th — #9

THEME:

The place of forgiveness in the gospel message.

GRACE:

A deep, interior knowledge of Jesus, that we might love and follow him in his readiness to forgive.

SCRIPTURE:

Luke 15:1-32 Matt. 18:21-35
Matt. 5:43-48 John 8:1-11
Matt. 6:7-15 Eph. 4:25-5:2

Repetition



Mary embraces the mother of Judas, Mynheer

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

**Jesus, may all that is you flow in to me.
May your body and blood be my food and drink.**

**May your passion and death be my strength and life.
Jesus, with you by my side enough has been given.**

**May the shelter I seek be the shadow of your cross.
Let me not run from the love which you offer,
But hold me safe from the forces of evil.**

**On each of my dyings shed your light and your love.
Keep calling to me until that day comes, when, with your saints,
I may praise you forever. Amen.**

David Fleming, SJ, contemporary rephrasing of the Anima Christi

“I so much want the truth of Jesus’ life to be fully the truth of my own that I find myself, moved by grace ... [asking] to follow Jesus Christ in the most intimate union possible, that his experiences are reflected in my own. In that, I find my delight.” David Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, #167

JM TRADITION:

“She made one last effort to approach [her brothers]. When she moved in closer, at great risk to her own safety, Louis whispered to the faithful servant who was with Mlle. Thévenet, ‘Bend down as if

to pick up something and take a letter from my shoe for our mother’.... Turning to his sister, eyes fixed on the letter that the weeping servant had given her, [Louis] said: ‘Forgive, Glady, as we forgive.’” *Petit Manuscrit, 43*



“Indeed, the ‘forgiveness story’ might well be the most universally known account of Claudine as it has been passed on through generations in our communities, schools, and pastoral centers. Yet, only recently has forgiveness been presented to our understanding as central to the charismatic gift of Claudine and as a mandate for us, her Congregation. [This invites us] to remember and reflect on how our ‘charismatic imagination’ has been at work in succeeding generations of RJM. This is a dangerous memory, because it may well challenge us to a transformation in

the way we understand our mission, our relationships, our apostolic service, and our community living in the 21st century.” International Commission on Charism and Spirituality, *Claudine, her Pilgrimage of Forgiveness*, 2012

*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done . . . Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors*

CONTEMPORARY:

“I was ... the second speaker at a gala dinner. The woman before me began, ‘First, I have to thank Jesus Christ, because, after all, without him I am nothing.’ I already knew that in my speech I wouldn’t be thanking Jesus. This is not because he is less important to me or my life. But I know, with all the certainty of my being, that Jesus has no interest in my doing this is the authentic following of a disciple. Jesus wants us to be in the world who he is.”

Gregory Boyle, SJ, adapted from *Barking to the Choir*



Greg Boyle, SJ (R), prays with tattooed gang member, USA

“It may be infinitely less evil to murder a [person] than to refuse to forgive [that person]. The former may be a moment of passion: the latter is the heart’s choice. It is spiritual murder, the worst, to hate, to brood over the feeling that excludes. . . .” George Mac Donald



“The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.” Mahatma Gandhi

“As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn’t leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I’d still be in prison.” Nelson Mandela

“So to be forgiven is only half the gift. The other half is that we also can forgive, restore, and liberate, and therefore we can feel the will of God enacted through us, which is the great restoration of ourselves to ourselves.” Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead*



Retreat in Daily Life — Week 2

Week of February 18th — #10

Women at Prayer Exhibition, Amada, ECVA.org



THEME:

The central place of faith in a life of discipleship

GRACE:

An ever-deepening faith, to better know, love and follow Jesus — *Increase our faith!* (Luke 17:5)

SCRIPTURE:

Luke 11:5-13

Mark 9:14-29

Matt. 8: 5-13

Luke 18:1-8

Matt. 6:25-34

Habakkuk 3:17-19

Repetition

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

“Oftentimes in desolation, we feel that God has left us to fend for ourselves. By faith, we know that God is always with us in the strength and power of grace, but at the time of apparent abandonment we are little aware of God’s continuing care and concern. We experience neither the support nor the sweetness of divine love, and our own response lacks fervor and intensity. It is as if we are living a skeletal life of the bare bones of faith.” David Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, #320

“God comes to you as a promise. God holds out to you a life far happier than the one you live. God made you for this kind of living. The joy that comes from a deep and steady assurance of God’s love enables you to open your heart to others and gives you the energy to be sensitive to them. This rocklike confidence in God’s love comes to us only as a GIFT. It is the gift of faith. It is ours for the asking. Enter the Lord’s presence, and ASK FOR IT. *Choose* to believe in God’s deep desire to give you this gift.” Adapted from Wm. Sampson, SJ, Unpublished Retreat Notes



Peter is sinking, Mynheer

JM TRADITION:

“As we read the story of Claudine’s life, we find her time and again standing in the midst of conflict while holding fast to the inner certainty of God’s goodness. This understanding of God gradually became her deep faith-response. Not only did it dominate her spiritual responses, but it grew stronger as she encountered new situations of pain and suffering

Contemplating Christ crucified and discovering how that experience had sustained and inspired her brothers in their last hours, she received the inner grace of knowing that God’s mercy is complete, committed, dynamic, active goodness. This goodness was shown to her as unconditional self-giving love; compassionate love that does not condemn, that resists violence, that brings out the best in others; love that overcomes death because it does not fear losing life (Rev. 12:11)

To look at our reality through the eyes of Christ Crucified was what transformed Claudine and made her into a messenger of the Resurrection Our challenge today is to rekindle that flame and pass it on to the next generations. We need to proclaim that the real tragedy is not the reality of a crucified world. It is, above all, the absence of witnesses who proclaim with their

lives — as Jesus, Mary and Claudine did — that love is stronger than death.” International Commission on Charism & Spirituality, *Amidst Conflict and Violence: The Mystery of the Cross in the Life of Claudine Thevenet*, 2012



Women at Prayer Exhibition, Joy, ECVA.org

CONTEMPORARY:



“Faith is not some hard, unchanging thing you cling to through the vicissitudes of life. Those who try to make it into this are destined to become brittle, shatterable creatures. Faith never grows harder, never so deviates from its nature and becomes actually destructive, than in the person who refuses to admit that faith is change. I don’t mean simply that faith changes (though there is that). I mean that just as any sense of divinity that we have comes from the natural order of things — so too faith is folded into change, is the mutable and messy process of our lives rather than any fixed mental product.” Christian Wiman, *My Bright Abyss*

Praying at the Wailing Wall, Jerusalem



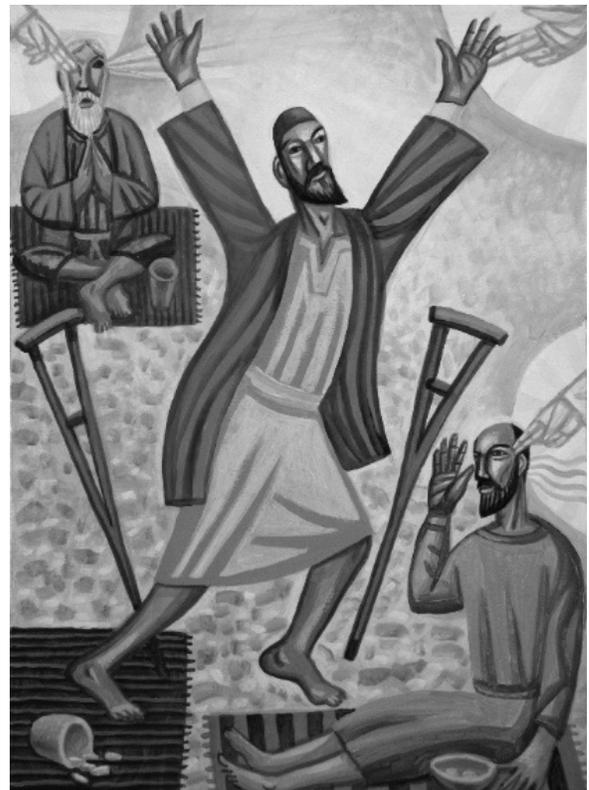
Photo by Dev Benjamin on Unsplash.com

“We find comfort and assurance in Ps. 23 because it affirms the truth about God. The psalm, moreover, is more than comfort and assurance. It is a summons to us to find freedom and hope beyond the closed world given us by conventional reasoning.”

Walter Brueggemann, *Gift and Task*

**It’s a long way off but inside it
There are quite different things going on:
Festivals at which the poor man
Is king and the consumptive is
Healed; mirrors in which the blind look
At themselves and love looks at them
Back; and industry is for mending
The bent bones and the minds fractured
By life. It’s a long way off, but to get
There takes no time and admission
Is free, if you purge yourself
Of desire, and present yourself with
Your need only and the simple offering
Of your faith, green as a leaf.**

R.S. Thomas, *The Kingdom*



Healing, Janknegt

*Though the fig tree does not blossom and no fruit is on the vine
God the Lord is my strength: he makes my feet like the feet of a deer:
he makes me tread on the heights.* Habakkuk 3:17, 19