

WEEK NINE/DAY THREE

Weekly Theme: *Imagination in Prayer*

Daily Theme: Noticing our Shadow in Prayer

Today's focus is on deepening the ways in which we are drawn to prayer and the ways our personality may sabotage our effort. The Enneagram is a helpful tool in noticing these patterns. In terms of the DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION, notice the difference when you spend more time 1) just reading a passage at the literal level and then 2) re-visiting the same passage for its hidden meaning. This attention is a good way to prepare for the third level of COLLOQUY that will be tomorrow's focus.

MORNING EXERCISES

(About 30 minutes)

1. WISDOM FROM THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Take a few moments to quiet your mind and welcome the following teaching.

When we go hiking in the wilderness of desolation all of our thoughts and reasonings are lies. This is not a time for changing directions; keep acting and deciding according to what you have been doing. There will be a way out.

Spiritual Exercises

2. QUESTIONS FOR DISCERNMENT

Consider journaling for today by noting 'what arises in you' as you consider any of these questions for discernment:

-Consider a time when you were forced 'to go hiking' in the wilderness of desolation. How did you get through?

-If you are currently in a state of desolation (dark night of the soul) how does the advice in the Spiritual Exercises speak to you?

-If you are in a period of consolation, give thanks for this time... and the times that you survived previous desolations. Savor the experience.

3. ENNEAGRAM INSIGHT

Simply observe how the following Enneagram insight complements today's teachings.

Though each one of us travels a unique path, we share a common human pursuit to develop our character. At some point in life, most people become less interested in "polishing their mask" and more interested in the quality of their character. This is a marker of spiritual growth. One way we do this is by investigating who we are beyond the three lies that Nouwen names as 1) I am what I do, 2) I am what I have and 3) I am what other people say or think about me.

4. ENNEAGRAM AWARENESS

Spend a few minutes with today's Enneagram insights; consider making a journal entry which you could return to at the end of the day.

Return once again to the Enneagram of Lies (Document #4 on the Thirty Day Retreat website.) Re-reading the statement associated with your Enneastyle, imagine (and experience) what it would be like for your prayer to flow from a deeper place—beneath these personality forces.

5. DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION:

Choose one of the following passages and one of its points for reflection as a way to enter into a period of prayerful intention. This is not so much a time for analysis but for reflection. Choose whatever form of devotional prayer or meditation you like to complement the passages. Always end your reflection time with a moment of gratitude and 'savoring.'

SCRIPTURE OPTION A

From the Gospel Tradition: They went to a place called Gethsemane; and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter and James and John. Then he began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even unto death; remain here, and keep awake." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; please remove this cup from me..."

Mark 14:32-36

POINTS FOR A COLLOQUY REFLECTION

- Place yourself in this story. Use your imagination to enter into the scene. Consider each of the persons involved (Jesus, Peter, James, John or yourself) as an observer. Notice if/how this dark night experience from long ago may impact you.
- Imagine bringing an experience of desolation (your own or of another) into this scene. Identify the feelings/thoughts/reactions you encounter through your active imagination.
- What kind of witness and support could be a small but meaningful consolation at such times? Savor the experience.

LITERARY OPTION B

Poet, Maya Angelou

We need language to tell us who we are,
How we feel and what we are capable of.
To explain the pains and glory of our existence.

How we lose and stand up
And go on from darkness into darkness.
I'm trying for that
But I'm also trying for the language
I'm trying to see how it can really sound.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION:

- Allow your imagination to be inspired by Maya Angelou's poetry.
- Accept her invitation to 'try for language' and 'to see how it can really sound.' Express in words (many or few) what it has been like to lose and stand up and to go from darkness into darkness.
- How do your words sound when spoken out loud? Let them be your prayer. Savor the experience.

6. INTENTION FOR THE DAY

- Make an intention today to continue noticing the 'highs' and 'lows' in your daily experience. They might manifest in dramatic or subtle ways.
- What is it like to welcome both the highs and lows instead of taking them for granted or pushing them away? Try to just notice and not judge.

MID DAY EXERCISES

(5-10 minutes)

1. MINI-EXAMEN: HOLY NOTICING

Take a few quiet moments to remember your intention for the day

- Is there an observation from the morning worth noting?
- Renew your intention for the remainder of the day:
- Continue just noticing (and welcoming, when possible) the whispers that show up about your deep desires and dark voices that might oppose them.

2. GRATITUDE

Identify at least one experience so far today for which you are grateful

Ignatius encourages us remember and savor times of loving consolation. Welcome a special moment of light from the morning.

- Breathe a prayer of gratitude for a few minutes. Inhale the consoling light that is always available to us. Exhale whatever desolation you might sense around you. Try this for about one minute.

END-OF-THE-DAY EXERCISES

(About 20 minutes)

1. THE EXAMEN

The daily Examen is the heart of the Spiritual Exercises. This is an opportunity to take a long, loving look back over your day where, 'We recognize the Beloved in the nitty gritty of life and we bring the nitty gritty back to the Beloved.' This exercise is an examination of consciousness (clear awareness) NOT an examination of conscience focused on faults and failings. By being faithful to this practice and journaling your insights, patterns will emerge over thirty days including awareness from your unconscious that would normally have been missed in everyday activity.

-The EXAMEN should take about fifteen minutes. During this reflection time, you can use the following five R's to help guide your time:

REQUEST the presence of Spirit (however you imagine it) to lead you through the review of the day.

RELISH the moments that went well and gifts received today

REVIEW (walk back through your day) using the suggested focus questions of today as your guide; these are expressed in the Intention of the Day of your Morning Exercises. What would it be like to 'talk to God about this'? Or you might choose the memory of a beloved friend.

FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR TODAY'S EXAMEN:

- Looking over the day (with God or someone beloved by my side) I return in my imagination to a moment in my day that may have been worrisome or uncertain. I let myself feel any emotions and notice whether I handled it gracefully or poorly.
- Looking over my day for a second time, I identify the most life-giving moment of the day. Again, I relive the experience and notice how it impacted my emotions.
- I give thanks for both experiences trusting that I was not alone and that their lessons may be of benefit now and in the future.

REPENT for any mistakes or failures by simply acknowledging them without drama or self-loathing. If you feel called to *at-one-ment* with another, the Beloved or yourself, note that desire for whenever an appropriate time arises.

RESOLVE with a concrete intention to live tomorrow consciously and freely.

2. DISCERNMENT JOURNAL

Without a daily journal it would not be possible to track the sometimes subtle spiritual movements in every day experiences. Spend a few minutes making entries that reflect today's experiences and learnings. Here everything belongs, both the gifts and the challenges.

3. POINTS FOR TOMORROW

The Spiritual Exercises recommend that, before retiring, we consider the spiritual geography for the next day. As we settle into deeper rest we prepare our unconscious for the next day's exercises. This is not a time for study and analysis but a gentle pointer towards our next movement and direction.

ENNEAGRAM TEACHING:

Knowing one's Enneatype is the opposite of being boxed in or leaning on "this is just how I am." Learning to see with greater clarity how our egos operate empowers us to surrender and move beyond their confines.