

MONTH FOUR/WEEK FOUR
Weekly Theme: *The Fruits of Discernment*

MORNING EXERCISES
(About 30 minutes)

1. WISDOM FROM THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Take a few moments to quiet your mind and welcome either of the following teachings.

EXERCISE A: FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE DISCERNING A SPECIFIC DISCERNMENT LIFE QUESTION

The Spiritual Exercises offer important considerations when we need to pray in relation to a specific life decision. We can expect counter-movements to arise that question our experiences.

1. Strategy #4: At the end of your life how will you see this?

Pretend you are nearing the end of your life; St. Ignatius actually suggested that people imagine being on their own deathbeds. Consider the whole of your life— what you did and why, what you are grateful for, what you regret. In light of this long view, how do you see the current discernment you are trying to make?

EXERCISE B: FOR ALL

During the fourth movement of The Spiritual Exercises, it is important to revisit and make a commitment to our 'rules' for discernment

In a time of desolation never to make a change; but be firm and constant in the resolutions and determination in which one was the day preceding such desolation, or in which one was in the preceding time of consolation. Because, as in consolation it is the good spirit who guides and counsels us, so in desolation it is the voice of the predator that speaks, whose counsels we cannot trust to decide rightly.

2. QUESTIONS FOR DISCERNMENT

Regardless of which Exercise you are following, consider journaling today by noting 'what arises in you' as you consider any of these questions for discernment:

-Consider your response to the wisdom described above; how/where does this teaching or experience fall in you? How are you feeling/thinking/reacting at this point about how you might deal with counter movements that are arising in your life at present?

-How/do you relate to Ignatius' warnings that decisions made during a time of desolation must never to be trusted.

3. ENNEAGRAM INSIGHT

Observe how the following Enneagram insights complements today's teachings.

Remember, our Essence, is our "true nature," that which underlies all external manifestations and is permanent and unchanging (Webster's Dictionary). Within our Enneagram community's definition of "essence," the term suggests more nuance than Webster has to offer us. My simple understanding of what "essence" means, in Enneagram speak, is more so that the HOLY IDEA is the higher mental quality and that our inherent virtue is our higher emotional quality. These qualities are both a definitive part of our true nature. They belong to us. And what's important is to integrate both the higher mental and higher emotional qualities of HOLY IDEA, into our daily lives.

Based on the teachings of Dr. David Daniels

4. ENNEAGRAM AWARENESS

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

In the language of the Enneagram, when we experience times of integration our essential qualities, meaning our virtues, and Holy ideas, infuse our personality structure and liberate us from the confines of our originally formed, core beliefs and addictive habits of mind. One good way to do that is by recalling and re-experiencing one of our peak life experiences. A peak experience would be a time in our lives when we had experienced ourselves as fully present, imbued with our inherent virtues, and utterly awake to ourselves and others. At

such times some form of grace was filling the moment. During times of deep contemplation such a state is recreated which opens us up again to soulful integration. What follows is the spontaneous infusion of our highest self into our day-to-day personality structure. Accept the invitation to know, name and take your HOLY IDEA into contemplative practice today. Notice how affirming and life-giving this exercise can be.

Based on the teachings of The Enneagram Institute

5. DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION:

Choose one of the following passages 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

Another way of creatively engaging with the reflection passages this week is to enter into a dialogue journal exercise (as per directions on track page).

SCRIPTURE OPTION A

From the Gospel Tradition:

Jesus later appeared to his disciples along the shore of Lake Tiberias. Simon Peter, Thomas the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, and the brothers James and John, were there, together with two other disciples. Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing!" The others said, "We will go with you." They went out in their boat, but they didn't catch a thing that night. Early the next morning Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize who he was. Jesus shouted, "Friends, have you caught anything?" "No!" they answered. So he told them, "Let your net down on the right side of your boat, and you will catch some fish." They did, and the net was so full of fish that they could not drag it up into the boat. Jesus' favorite disciple told Peter, "It's the master!" When Simon heard it was the rabbi, he put on the clothes he had taken off while he was working. Then he jumped into the water. The boat was only about one hundred meters from shore. So the other disciples stayed in the boat and dragged in the net full of fish. When the disciples got out of the boat, they saw some bread and a charcoal fire with fish on it. Jesus told his friends, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." So Simon Peter got back into the boat and dragged the net to shore. In it were 153 large fish, but still the net did not rip. Jesus said, "Come here and eat

with me!" None of the disciples dared ask who he was. They knew he was the teacher. And so Jesus took some bread in his hands and gave some of it to his friends and did the same with the fish. This was the third time Jesus appeared to his followers. *John 21:1-16*

POINTS FOR COLLOQUY REFLECTION

- First read the words of the account without analysis.
- Then read the account a second time noticing what arises in you... how/do you relate to Peter and the other disciples in this scene? How/do you relate to the fact that, after the dramatic events of Jesus' death, their instincts were to return to their 'normal occupations and lives'? But what would be changed forever?
- Read the account a third time and engage in a dialogue journal process with characters of the story or with a good soul friend? How/do we not recognize the presence of God in our ordinary lives? How have your profound moments of spiritual encounter changed you? Savor the experience.

LITERARY OPTION B

Love is Like This, *Rumi, Ode 134*

Those who don't feel this Love
pulling them like a river
those who don't drink dawn
like a cup of spring water
or take in sunset like a supper,
those who don't want to change

Let them sleep.

This Love is beyond the study of theology
or what any priest commands of you.
It is an old trickery and hypocrisy.
If you want to improve your mind that way,

Sleep on.

I've given up on my brain
I've torn my clothes to shreds
and thrown them away.

If you're not completely naked
Wrap your beautiful robe of words
Around you.

And stay asleep.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

- Slowly read this poem on the nature of love. Note which lines or words especially speak to you.
- Then, invite a loved one to engage with you in an imaginary conversation about what you have noted. You could also engage with them through a dialogue journal process.
- How/does your conversation offer fresh insight into your own experience of what matters most for your soul? What kind of beliefs do you feel called to divest yourself from? Savor the experience.

6. INTENTION FOR THE DAY

- Make an intention each day to be aware of how the sacred shows up in your ordinary life experiences. Be aware of the times that this retreat may be influencing your everyday activities.
- Try to just notice and not judge the situation.

The word, sacred, comes from the Latin, *sacrum facere*, or, to make what is ordinary divine. Be attuned to how simple tasks are also divine today.

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 that you will want to remember at the end of the day?
- Renew your intention for the remainder of the day:
- Continue to notice how the ordinary things of life are the places where God speaks.

2. GRATITUDE

Identify at least one experience so each day for which you are grateful

Ignatius alerts us to find God in the particulars of life. Give thanks for a new awareness to recognize and honor your daily activities.

- Breathe a prayer of gratitude for a few minutes. Inhale the gratitude of awareness for the simple things of life. Exhale a breath of blessing to the ordinary things in your world that you care about. 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 that would focus on your 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 as your guide (expressed in the Intention of the Day at the end 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.

For the fourth movement of the retreat, you are offered two different exercises for evening reflection times that support your morning exercises.

Journal A is focused for those working with a particular life issue for discernment. Journal B is a general recommendation for any retreatant.

JOURNAL A: STRATEGIES FOR DISCERNMENT

Return to the first strategy for discernment you considered this morning. See if you may discover new or additional insights based on today's awarenesses and experiences. Make sure to write them down!

Remember Strategy #4: At the end of your life how will you see this?

Pretend you are nearing the end of your life; St. Ignatius actually suggested that people imagine being on their own deathbeds. Consider the whole of your life—what you did and why, what you are grateful for, what you regret. In light of this long view, how do you see the current discernment you are trying to make?

JOURNAL B: DISCERNING SPIRITS

Consider the awarenesses you may have had today from the two different kind of voices Ignatius alerted us to—either from the spirit of whole-iness that lead you to moments of authentic trust and love or from the spirit of the 'Enemy of our human nature' that created negativity or self-doubt. If you worked with the Enneagram concepts of the TRAPS and HOLY IDEAS, how/did those concepts show up in your awareness?

