

**MONTH THREE/WEEK TWO**  
**Weekly Theme: *Suffering and the Cost of Loving***

**MORNING EXERCISES**  
**(About 30 minutes)**

**1. WISDOM FROM THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES**

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

Sometimes our desires can run amuck. Desire in itself is not wrong but it is often ruined by expectation. The Exercises can offer insight into what I need to say YES to and NO to—even when I want to say YES!

Jack Kennedy

**2. QUESTIONS FOR DISCERNMENT**

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

- Consider times when you had fallen prey to the ‘temptation of the next good idea.’
- Name a number of competing significant desires in your life right now.
- Of the desires you have identified, which one do you sense might have to be surrendered in order for another more urgent desire to manifest?

**3. ENNEAGRAM INSIGHT**

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

Our personality-based beliefs are lenses that predispose us to interpret things in a certain way. These beliefs keep us from seeing the complex and deeper nature of life and what it’s inviting us into.

**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.*

Having discerned some competing desires in your life right now, use the Enneagram of Lies to look at the characteristic ways that each type forsakes its own truth.

Identify and write down a phrase or word that strongly impacts you as you read the summary statement. Reflect on how this term may be a habitual lens that could distort your decision making.

## 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: Prayers of the Cosmos by Neil Douglas-Klotz*

The richness of expression in the native Aramaic language of Jesus is a treasure that has been lost for too long. To discover this treasure, we must challenge ourselves to participate in the prophetic and mystical tradition that Jesus represented. It is a far cry from our ordinary way of hearing and thinking. A tradition of both native Middle Eastern and Hebraic mysticism says that each statement of sacred teaching must be examined from at least three points of view: the intellectual, the metaphorical, and the universal (or mystical). For most Westerners, we consider only the face value of the words in question—what so-called modern people call the “literal” meaning. But the original teachings open up a truly esoteric\* way of hearing these same powerful words.

\*Esoteric = a focus on how a teaching addresses the inner life of the listener’s soul

Revisiting familiar passages through the lens of Jesus’ original language can free us up to discover previously unseen hidden treasures. The Beatitudes in the Aramaic language reveal a language that is close to the earth, rich in the images of the physical of planting and harvesting and full of views that include the natural wonder of the cosmos. For example, “Heaven” in Aramaic ceases to be a metaphysical concept and presents the image of “light and sound shining through all creation in the here and now.” The following are the first four beatitudes in a traditional English translation (in italics). What follows is the same text but freed from our preconceptions through the mystical language of their Middle Eastern Mystical Teacher.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

**Happy and aligned with the One are those who find their home in the breathing; they shall find their ruling principles and ideals guided by God’s light.**

*Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.*

**Tuned to the Source are those feeling deeply confused by life; they shall be returned from their wandering.**

*Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.*

**Aligned with the One are the humble, those submitted to God’s will; they shall be open to receive the splendor of earth’s fruits.**

*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.*  
**Healed are those who persistently feel inside: "If only I could find new strength and a clear purpose on which to base my life"; they shall be embraced by birthing power.**  
*Matthew 5:3-9*

#### **POINTS FOR A COLLOQUY REFLECTION**

- **Read each of the traditional English and Aramaic translations of the Beatitudes. Choose one that is especially speaking to you today.**
- **Close your eyes and allow this new interpretation to penetrate beneath your mind and into your heart.**
- **How might this 'esoteric invitation' offer insight into the competing desires in your life? Savor this experience.**

#### **LITERARY OPTION B**

**The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost**

**Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;**

**Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,**

**And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.**

**I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.**

#### **POINTS FOR REFLECTION:**

- **In your imagination, allow this poem to invite you into an imaginary walk in nature. You may wish to invite another to accompany you.**
- **Allow the metaphor of two diverging roads to lead you deeper into considering a time of competing desires in your life.**
- **Give thanks for a time when you either chose a road less traveled or one not taken. How might this poetic invitation be inspiring you now? Savor the experience.**

## 6. INTENTION FOR THE WEEK

-Make an intention to become aware each day of how your 'competing desires' show up in subtle or not-so-subtle ways.

-What is it like to welcome this observation? Notice if you sense a direction—or even a gentle nudge around your desires. 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) any self-doubts that may arise this afternoon.

### 2. GRATITUDE

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

Ignatius encourages us to trust all of the particulars in life. Welcome them all as your potential teachers.

-Recall the first Beatitude in Aramaic: "Happy and aligned with the One are those who find their home in their breath." Breathe for a few minutes with this awareness.

## 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 found 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.*

### **SPIRITUAL GEOGRAPHYING**

*A strong recommendation for your end-of-the-day journaling this week is to continue working with the Spiritual Geographying Exercise. This week, revisit the significant LO episodes or periods of your life and make a note about any deep desires that you*

*can identify which were threatened or lost at those times. Identify how those thwarted desires contributed to your experiences of desolation.*

**ENNEAGRAM TEACHING:**

The Dutch spiritual writer Henri Nouwen identified “three human lies” we believe about our identity—what he referred to as our *False Self*:

- I am what I do.
- I am what I have.
- I am what other people say or think about me.