

MONTH TWO / WEEK FOUR

Weekly Theme: *Imagination, Discernment and Prayer*

Daily Theme: Dissonance vs. Consonance

MORNING EXERCISES

(About 30 minutes)

1. WISDOM FROM THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

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

You will discern between what is dissonant from what is consonant by checking into your body, your affect and your mind.

Kevin O'Brien, The Ignatian Adventure

2. QUESTIONS FOR DISCERNMENT

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

-What *is done to you* when you consider today's Wisdom from the Spiritual Exercises?

-In your experience, when things are 'out of sorts' how/does it tend to manifest more in your body, mind or emotional life?

-In your experience, how do you distinguish between what is true and what is untrue?

3. ENNEAGRAM INSIGHT

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

Our Enneastyle reveals our blind spots of hardness and confusion which get in the way of a sincere and intimate life of prayer. The ego tends to identify with one of the three Centers of Intelligence (body, mind or heart)

Eileen Heaton

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.

Notice how your life of prayer may tend to be influenced by your dominant 'center.' How might you bring awareness to your two other 'centers' in your devotional time this morning.

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: One day Jesus asked his disciples ‘Who are the people saying that I am?’ ‘Well,’ they replied, ‘some are saying you are John the Baptist, some say Elijah or Jeremiah, others say one of the prophets.’ Then He asked them, ‘But you, who do you think that I am?’ Simon Peter spoke up and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Messiah and the Son of the Living God.’ And Jesus replied, ‘You are blessed, Simon, son of John, for my Father in heaven has revealed this to you and not just any human source. You are Peter (which means, rock) and on this rock I will establish my church...’ from then on Jesus began to speak more plainly to his disciples about going to Jerusalem and what would happen to him there... that he would suffer at the hands of the leaders and be killed and that three days later he would be raised to life again. But Peter took him aside and began to remonstrate with him, ‘Heaven forbid, sir; this will never happen to you.’ Jesus then turned to Peter and said, ‘Get away from me you Satan. You are a dangerous trap for me. You are thinking from a mere human point of view and not as the Holy One understands.’ ***Matthew 16:13-18; 21-23***

POINTS FOR A COLLOQUY REFLECTION

- **Tap into your imagination to place yourself in this story. Consider each of the persons involved (Jesus, Peter, the other disciples, you as an onlooker). Which character do you feel especially drawn to and why?**
- **Identify where inside yourself the story is impacting you... is it primarily in your feelings, thoughts or reactions? Try to name the sensation and where it is located in your physical or emotional body.**
- **How do you react to Peter’s contradictory experiences of being praised and blessed by Jesus one moment and then called a ‘satan’ the next minute?**

LITERARY OPTION B

***The Art of Suffering* by David H Rosen, MD**

I bow my head in shame

for all the killings of self and other.

I bow my head in sorrow

for inner and outer wars.

I bow my head in suffering

for all the tragedies that exist.

I bow my head in synchronicity

for we are all the same.

I bow my head in surrender

as it leads to acceptance.

I bow my head in prayer

since it is all we have.

I bow my head in love

as that is all we need.
I bow my head in ecstasy
to balance all the agony.
I bow my head in peace
and everlasting gratitude.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION:

- In your imagination, re-read this poem in the presence of a loved one's memory... however you imagine that. Take a few moments of quiet afterwards. Which lines are speaking to you? What do you hear in your virtual conversation about the art of suffering?
- How can you hold together in prayer the apparent contradictions (dissonance and consonance) of personal and global suffering?
- How do you feel called to pray now with this poem? Savor the experience.

6. INTENTION FOR THE WEEK

- Make an intention to become aware of where you sense dissonance or where you sense consonance in your daily life and encounters today.
- See if you can locate where each energy is impacting you (in your body, mind or heart). 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 to discern the voices that lead us to our deepest values. Welcome them all as your potential teachers.

-Breathe a prayer of gratitude for a few minutes. Inhale with the encouraging consolation that is always available to us. Exhale whatever desolation that might cause you to be discouraged. 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 TO REMEMBER

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.

WEEKFOUR THEME:

Falling into Mystery

WISDOM FROM IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY:

It is possible for us to know and discern *what is of God* and what is not.

AN ENNEAGRAM REFLECTION :

Day ends and before sleep when the sky dies down, consider your altered state. Has this day changed you? Are the corners sharper or rounded off? Did you live with death? Make decisions that quieted... Did you let the flow carry you downstream? -Jeanne Lohmann