

**THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES
MONTH EIGHT
GENERAL OUTLINE**

The month ahead offers the completion of Ignatian Themes in The Exercises. The final aspect of the Fourth Movement: The Fruits of Discernment offer practices of thanksgiving and gratitude. While many of the Rules from The Exercises address the challenge of our experiences in times of suffering and desolation (the Passion times of life), Ignatius was committed to a spirituality that deeply affirmed the ultimate power of Joy, Peace and Consolation (the Resurrection movements in life).

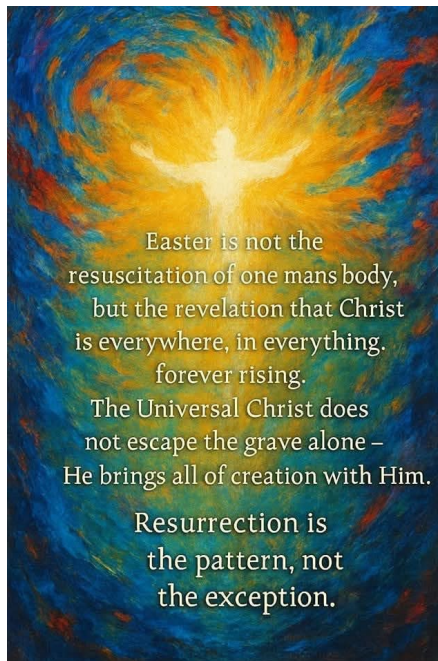
No matter where an individual's life experiences are at the moment, The Exercises emphasize the importance of naming and savoring our blessings. The term, **SAVORING** is the particular term Ignatius proposes for revisiting times of consolation as a way to avoid the depression due to life's challenges and desolations. In this spirit we propose the following suggestions for the five weeks of Month Eight:

WEEK ONE: APRIL 6-10 (EASTER WEEK/SPRING BREAK TIME)

Allow yourself a time to savor the blessings of this season. Draw from the powerful energy of Easter, Passover and Spring and walk in greater awareness of what has been and is right in your life and the world. Gently set aside the challenging, negative voices that would try to diminish the joy of this season.

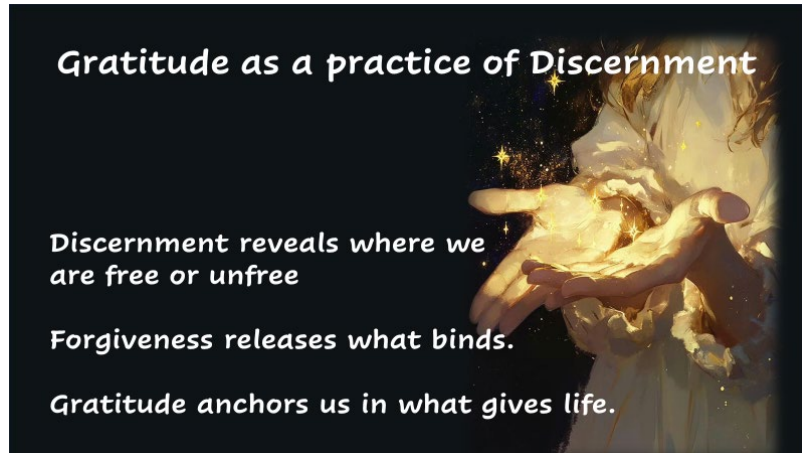
WEEK TWO: APRIL 13-17 (OUR RESURRECTION STORIES)

This is a week to revisit the ancient Easter stories with new eyes. Ignatius invites us into a special time of colloquy during the Easter Season where we read a familiar story but engage with its deeper, personal meaning through a process called **SPIRITUAL INQUIRY**. You will be invited to journal on the few questions that follow the scripture as well as any other insights that arise in you. Simply put, the spiritual inquiry process can lead us into any area or question when mystery belies simply answers. Trust that the very act of asking these questions can reveal grace-filled insights into your life at this moment. The following quote from Richard Rohr about resurrection can be a helpful framework for our exercises this week...



WEEK THREE: APRIL 21-24 (TIME FOR GRATITUDE)

This week offers a variety of creative approaches to GRATITUDE, which is the ultimate exercise to engage with during life's times of consolation and resurrection. The lessons from Ignatian Exercises on gratitude offer a new way of dealing with the times and places we may still find ourselves unfree.



WEEK FOUR: APRIL 27-MAY 1 (CHOICES FOR THE GREATER "MAGIS" OF THE WORLD)

Once we have begun to live in greater awareness of making regular choices that honor the MAGIS (the greater) among life's many possibilities, we become aware that even our ordinary, daily choices can benefit others and the larger world around us. The Exercises also offer useful ways to continue practicing the art of discernment with others in a number of community settings.



WEEK FIVE: MAY 4-8 (HOW WILL THE EXERCISES CONTINUE?)

Towards the end of the formal Exercises, Ignatius invites us to consider what will follow. Hopefully, new patterns of approaching life's ups and down offer a lifetime of new perspectives. This week is an opportunity to consider our options while still in the energy of our community of fellow seekers. The wisdom of the Exercises reminds us that "Resurrection takes time" and is part of a never ending process of rising after dying.

