

Week Eight

After the Exercises

*Loving the Neighbor and
Finding God in Others*

How to use this booklet:

These passages have been chosen to underscore a theme that is very important in Ignatian Spirituality and in our walk with Jesus. The general direction of prayer that is envisioned by this booklet is one of Lectio Divina. In this method, the passage one reads is meant to help one to reflect, then to move into prayer with God and then to move into a silent and deep communion with God. This trajectory has been described as a ladder: reading—thinking—praying—contemplating. As one finds oneself distracted at any time in the prayer, one simply goes back to reading the passage, letting the words open us to thinking and praying and contemplating. One might end up reading the passage many times or one might not be able to get through the passage because one stops to think, pray and/contemplate so frequently.

You might want to use one passage all week long, rotate through them or repeat one or another of them. There should be enough material to help someone pray for one week.

You probably want to give yourself at least 30 minutes for this.

Preparatory Prayer:

Ask the Lord to help you to find Him more fully in all the aspects of your life.

Lectio Divina:

Read the passage that you choose, stopping as soon as you feel drawn to reflect on the passage or you feel moved to pray. Let go of your sense of wanting to learn or to finish the passage, but instead desire to be open to God and, if you feel a call to just sit quietly in the presence of God, indulge in that. As you get distracted, return gently to the passage and read some more or read parts of it again. Distractions are natural.

Conclusion:

Thank God for your time and be specific about a time or two that you felt the grace of God or felt touched by God's wisdom.

From the *Constitutions* written by St. Ignatius, section on the Novices:

In everything they should try and desire to give advantage to others, esteeming them all in their hearts as better than themselves and showing exteriorly, in an unassuming and simple religious manner, the respect and reverence befitting each one's state, in such a manner that by observing one another they grow in devotion and praise God our Lord, whom each one should endeavor to recognize in his neighbor as in his image.

Philippians 2:3-7

³ Do nothing out of self-seeking or vain pride. Rather, in humility consider others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.⁵ In your relationships with one another, put on same mind as Christ Jesus:⁶ Who, although he was in

the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped;⁷ rather, he emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being made in human likeness.

de Caussade, Abandonment to Divine Providence, Letter XX

But one sometimes loses patience . . .By humbling yourself quietly you will gain more than you have lost. .

.1) Often pray for the person who is the cause of your trouble. 2) Keep perfectly silent, do not speak about it to anyone to relieve your pain. 3) Do not voluntarily think about it but turn your thoughts to other subjects more holy and useful. 4) Watch over your heart that you may not give way in the very least bit to bitterness, spite, complaints, or voluntary rebellion. 5) Try to speak well of the person, cost what it may, to regard her favorably, to act about her as if nothing had happened. I realize, however, that you will find it difficult in future to treat her with the same confidence without being a saint, which you are not yet. 6) But at least do not fail to render

her service when occasion arises and to wish her all possible good.

John 15:12-17

¹² This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love no one has than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because servants do not know their master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will endure—that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love one another.