

Week Five

After the Exercises

*The Gift of Life*

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.

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Quotation of St. Ignatius:

*From one of his letters:* It seems to me in the light of the Divine Goodness, although others may think differently, that ingratitude is the most abominable of sins and that it should be detested in the sight of our Creator and Lord by all of His creatures who are capable of enjoying His divine and everlasting glory. For it is a forgetting of the gracious benefits and blessings received.

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Genesis 1:29-31

<sup>29</sup> Then God said, “To you I give every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the all the earth and all the trees that have fruit with seeds in them. They will be yours for food. <sup>30</sup> And for food every green plant I give to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that breathes.” And it was so.

<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And evening fell and morning came -- the sixth day.

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From Carlo Carretto, *Letters from the Desert*

What is our life on earth, if not discovering, becoming conscious of, penetrating, contemplating, accepting, loving this mystery of Gods, the unique reality which surrounds us, and in which we are immersed like meteorites in space? "In God we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). There aren't many mysteries, but there is one upon which everything depends, and it is so immense that it fills the whole space. Human discoveries do not help us to penetrate this mystery. Future millennia will illuminate no further what Isaiah said and what God himself declared to Moses before the burning bush, "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14)."

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## John 10:7-10

<sup>7</sup> Therefore Jesus said again, “Amen I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the gate; all who enter through me will be saved. They will come in and they will go out, and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to rob, kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.