

Week Nine

After the Exercises

Perseverance

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 an essay on St. Ignatius' Personality

Ignatius was . . . a man of an extremely determined and unbending will. He could say of himself: "For thirty years I have never neglected to perform at the appointed time anything I have undertaken in the service of our Lord, nether because of water nor wind nor any other sort of bad weather." Once he waited fourteen hours in the anteroom of a cardinal until the prelate finally received him. It is obvious that such perseverance and inflexibility could be irksome and unpleasant. These qualities had their basis in his natural disposition, but they grew even stronger because of reverence for the Divine Majesty. This reverence was so great that he could say that to do something superficially for worldly purposes does no harm, but to do anything superficially for God was completely intolerable.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-5

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. 4 Therefore, among the churches of God we

boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring, 5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.

Thomas Merton, from *The Sign of Jonas*

All day I have been waiting for You with my faculties bleeding the poison of unsuppressed activity. I have waited for Your silence and Your peace to staunch and cleanse them, O my Lord.

You will heal my soul when it pleases You, because I have trusted in You.

I will no longer wound myself with the thoughts and questions that have surrounded me like thorns: that is a penance You do not ask of me.

You have made my soul for Your peace and Your silence, but it is lacerated by the noise of my activity and my desires. My mind is crucified all day by its own hunger for experience, for ideas, for satisfaction. And I do not possess my house in silence.

But I was created for Your peace and You will not despise my longing for the holiness of Your deep silence. O my Lord, You will not leave me forever in this sorrow, because I have trusted in You and I will wait upon Your good pleasure in peace and without complaining any more. This, for Your glory.

Luke 18: 1-8

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’

4 “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’”

6 And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his

chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"