

# Ignatian Spiritual Exercises During Lent

- A Mini Retreat -

A Yoga With Spirit Class  
Presented by The Hive



T H E  H I V E

# The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises: A Lenten 6-Class Mini-Retreat

## Class 1: God Loves You (Disposition Days)

February 21, 2021 (The Sunday After Ash Wednesday)

### Introduction:

Through the resurrection of Jesus, God is present to us always (Matthew 28:20). In the resurrection, God reveals God's self as one who cares and is concerned about us (John 20:11-18; John 21:9-14). The quality of the presence is gentleness and patience. Ignatius suggests that every time we begin a prayer exercise, we should pause for a few moments as we recollect ourselves and consider "how God beholds me." We go to prayer with an attitude of listening. In prayer, we let God's word speak God's nearness and care; we let the Spirit give us that deeper trust and confidence that we need.

*Prayer begins with the realization that I am loved by God as I am. God's love is based on nothing and, therefore, is the most basic and secure fact in my life. I simply let myself be loved by God. This is not so much an activity of mine but a passivity in which I let God's love soak in and permeate my whole being.* – adapted from "As Bread That is Broken" by Peter van Breemen

(Borrowed from Orientations: Volume 2 Part A by John A. Veltri, SJ)

### Theme:

God, who is mother and father to us and so much more than we can imagine, loves us and cares for us personally.

### Grace:

To ask for what I desire – a deep confidence and trust in God's care and nearness.

### Prayer Text:

Isaiah 43:1-4;

Isaiah 49:14-16

*If you go through fire, I will be with you ... you are precious in my eyes ...  
I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands.*

"And now, thus says Yahweh, he who created you, Jacob, who formed you, Israel: Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine. 2.Should you pass through the waters, I shall be with you; or through rivers, they will not swallow you up. Should you walk through fire, you will not suffer, and the flame will not burn you. 3.For I am Yahweh, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I have given Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. 4.Since I regard you as precious, since you are honoured and I love you, I therefore give people in exchange for you, and nations in return for your life."

...

"Zion was saying, 'Yahweh has abandoned me, the Lord has forgotten me.' 15. Can a woman forget her baby at the breast, feel no pity for the child she has borne? Even if these were to forget, I shall not forget you. 16. Look, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands, your ramparts are ever before me."

### **Colloquy and Closing Prayer**

#### **Make Your Review:**

1. How do you feel about your prayer time? What kind of experience was it for you?
2. Were any sentences, phrases or words especially meaningful for you? Why?
3. Did any insights come to you?
4. Did you feel gifted in any way?
5. What feelings did you experience during prayer?

For example:

- a. Love, peace, strength, hope, comfort
  - b. Frustration, unworthiness, doubt, sorrow
6. Did you feel any call that may affect your relationship with the Lord in the future?
  7. Is there something you should return to in your next prayer period?

(Borrowed from Rita Purcel, Spiritual Director, Hellertown, PA)

### **Reflection and Sharing**

## Class 2: God Desires to Forgive You (Disposition Days)

February 28, 2021

### Introduction:

We live our lives within the context of struggle between good and evil. The sin situation is so mysterious that God, out of love, must reveal its presence because we are blind to the subtle ways it penetrates human life. So blind are we to its presence that we continually attempt to do battle with the evil ourselves ... without God's help. Often we try to "fix ourselves" before we allow God to accept us with a forgiving love. Such an attempt always fails because:

"... without me you can do nothing!" (John 15:5)

"Love consists in this: not that we have loved God, but that God has loved us." (1 John 4:10)

(Borrowed from Orientations: Volume 2 Part A by John A. Veltri, SJ)

### Theme:

God desires to forgive me.

### Grace:

To ask for what I desire – a deep awareness of God's eagerness to forgive.

### Prayer Text:

Luke 5:12-14

*Jesus' eagerness to heal the leper is the sign of his Abba's eagerness to heal and forgive ... "Of course, I want to!"*

"Now it happened that Jesus was in one of the towns when suddenly a man appeared, covered with a skin-disease. Seeing Jesus he fell on his face and implored him saying, 'Sir, if you are willing you can cleanse me.' 13. He stretched out his hand, and touched him saying, 'I am willing. Be cleansed.' At once the skin-disease left him. 14. He ordered him to tell no one, 'But go and show yourself to the priest and make the offering for your cleansing just as Moses prescribed, as evidence to them.' 15. But the news of him kept spreading, and large crowds would gather to hear him and to have their illnesses cured, 16. but he would go off to some deserted place and pray."

### Colloquy and Closing Prayer

#### Make Your Review:

1. How do you feel about your prayer time? What kind of experience was it for you?
2. Were any sentences, phrases or words especially meaningful for you? Why?
3. Did any insights come to you?
4. Did you feel gifted in any way?
5. What feelings did you experience during prayer?

For example:

- a. Love, peace, strength, hope, comfort
  - b. Frustration, unworthiness, doubt, sorrow
6. Did you feel any call that may affect your relationship with the Lord in the future?
  7. Is there something you should return to in your next prayer period?

### Reflection and Sharing

## Class 3: I Am Part of the Sin Situation (First Week)

March 7, 2021

### Theme:

I am part of, and a contributor to, the sin condition of the human family. Yet God continues to love me; Jesus desires to free me from the effects of this sin situation; and the Spirit helps to dispose me for this freeing action of Jesus.

### Grace:

To ask for what I desire – shame and confusion before God’s goodness which continually protects me from the full effects of the sin situation in which I find myself.

### Prayer Text:

First Exercise                      With its Composition [47], Grace [48], Colloquy [53] & [54] and First Point [50].

### PREPARATION:

[46]

I always take a moment to call to mind the attitude of reverence with which I approach this privileged time with God. I recollect everything up to this moment of my day – my thoughts and words, what I have done and what has happened to me – and ask that God may take and receive all of this as praise and service.

### GRACE:

[47-48]

There is an importance in my speaking out my desire for God’s grace according to the subject matter and my own dispositions during the retreat. Perhaps expressing what I truly want from God may also act as a preparation of my inner being for an openness to God’s entrance into a particular area of my life.

In this First Exercise, the grace I desire is the gift of feeling shame and confusion before God as I consider the effects of even one sin as compared with my own sinful life. Taking a cue from my feelings, I may find it helpful to imagine myself as bound, helpless, alienated as I enter into these exercises dealing with sin.

*Note:* Whereas the grace I want and desire changes in accord with the gifts already                      [49]

offered, God’s own incitings, and the subject matter of the prayer, the preparatory prayer never changes. This prayer which marks the beginning of each formal prayer period not only reinforces the continuing petition for God’s gift of reverence in me, but also calls to mind how I must continue to beg that my total day is by grace more and more integrated and centered in God alone.

### THE SETTING: (1)

The angels who rebelled against God.

[50]

It remains a deep part of our Christian heritage to understand that the first rejection of God’s love in creation is found among God’s special messengers, the angels. Theologically and spiritually, the sin of the angels exemplified the radical choice of self before God, which is the essence of sin, and the terrifying but necessary consequence of rejecting the very source of all life and love. Pure spirits of decisive knowledge and totalizing love, the angels somehow were presented with the choice which God continues to give to each person so lovingly made – whether we freely choose to respond to the life and love forever which God offers us. Some angels chose to reject God’s free offering of love and a sharing in divine life forever. Immediately by closing themselves off from God, they changed from a life of grace to a death-hatred of God and found themselves in their own choice of hell.

I mull over this sin in my mind, letting its decisiveness strike deep into my heart, and then I look to my many rejections of God's love.

**Colloquy and Closing Prayer:**

[53]

I put myself before Jesus Christ our Lord, present before me on the cross. I talk to him about how he creates because he loves and then he is born like one of us out of love, so emptying himself as to pass from eternal life to death here in time, even death on a cross. By his response of love for God his Father, he dies for my sins.

I look to myself and ask – just letting the question penetrate my being:

In the past, what response have I made to Christ?

How do I respond to Christ now?

What response should I make to Christ?

As I look upon Jesus as he hangs on the cross, I ponder whatever God may bring to my attention. I close with an Our Father or the following:

*Soul of Christ, sanctify me*  
*Body of Christ, save me*  
*Blood of Christ, inebriate me*  
*Water from the side of Christ, wash me*  
*O good Jesus, hear me*  
*Within your wounds, hide me*  
*Permit me not to be separated from you*  
*From the wicked enemy, defend me*  
*At the hour of my death, call me*  
*And bid me come to you*  
*That with your saints I may praise you*  
*For ever and ever.*  
*Amen*

(Borrowed from Orientations: Volume 2 Part A by John A. Veltri, SJ)

**Make Your Review:**

1. How do you feel about your prayer time? What kind of experience was it for you?
2. Were any sentences, phrases or words especially meaningful for you? Why?
3. Did any insights come to you?
4. Did you feel gifted in any way?
5. What feelings did you experience during prayer?  
For example:
  - a. Love, peace, strength, hope, comfort
  - b. Frustration, unworthiness, doubt, sorrow
6. Did you feel any call that may affect your relationship with the Lord in the future?
7. Is there something you should return to in your next prayer period?

**Reflection and Sharing**

## Class 4: Standing Close as Jesus Performs a Miracle (Second Week)

March 14, 2021

### Theme:

Jesus' public ministry.

### Grace:

To ask for what I desire – a deep-felt knowledge of God become human for me so that I might love Jesus more and follow his Spirit more closely.

### Prayer Text:

Mark 5:25-34                    *Healing of the woman with a hemorrhage.*

"Now there was a woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years; 26.after long and painful treatment under various doctors, she had spent all she had without being any the better for it; in fact, she was getting worse. 27.She had heard about Jesus, and she came up through the crowd and touched his cloak from behind, thinking, 28.'If I can just touch his clothes, I shall be saved.' 29.And at once the source of the bleeding dried up, and she felt in herself that she was cured of her complaint. 30.And at once aware of the power that had gone out from him, Jesus turned round in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' 31.His disciples said to him, 'You see how the crowd is pressing round you; how can you ask, "Who touched me?" ' 32.But he continued to look all round to see who had done it. 33.Then the woman came forward, frightened and trembling because she knew what had happened to her, and she fell at his feet and told him the whole truth. 34.'My daughter,' he said, 'your faith has restored you to health; go in peace and be free of your complaint.'"

### Colloquy and Closing Prayer:

#### Make Your Review:

1. How do you feel about your prayer time? What kind of experience was it for you?
2. Were any sentences, phrases or words especially meaningful for you? Why?
3. Did any insights come to you?
4. Did you feel gifted in any way?
5. What feelings did you experience during prayer?

For example:

- a. Love, peace, strength, hope, comfort
  - b. Frustration, unworthiness, doubt, sorrow
6. Did you feel any call that may affect your relationship with the Lord in the future?
  7. Is there something you should return to in your next prayer period?

(Borrowed from Rita Purcel, Spiritual Director, Hellertown, PA)

### Reflection and Sharing

## Class 5: Standing Close as Jesus Lives His Last Hours (Third Week)

March 21, 2021

### Introduction:

Holy Week, in Ignatius's eyes, is a time for us to switch roles with Jesus. He has been consoling us through these Exercises. Now we are being invited to console him through his passion and death.

*How can we be present to the sufferings of Jesus in our prayer? It may be compared to the way we read a letter recounting the last moments of a loved one. It may also be compared to the silence we maintain in the room of one who is dying. We stay silent. The one who is about to die has secrets about which we have no inkling. At the bedside of the dying, we cannot be present or sustain a presence with a heart filled with self-concern. – adapted from "Direction of Conscience" by Jean Laplace*

"We put on the heart of Jesus, not just the mind of Jesus." – Rita Pursel

### Theme:

The suffering and death of Jesus – his last hours.

### Grace:

To ask for what I desire - sorrow with Jesus in sorrow, tears and deep grief because of the great affliction that Jesus endures for me.

### Prayer Texts:

Mark 14:12-15:47

Pray the passion of Jesus.

"12.On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, his disciples said to him, 'Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' 13.So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the city and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, 14.and say to the owner of the house which he enters, "The Master says: Where is the room for me to eat the Passover with my disciples?" 15.He will show you a large upper room furnished with couches, all prepared. Make the preparations for us there.' 16.The disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover. 17.When evening came he arrived with the Twelve. 18.And while they were at table eating, Jesus said, 'In truth I tell you, one of you is about to betray me, one of you eating with me.' 19.They were distressed and said to him, one after another, 'Not me, surely?' 20.He said to them, 'It is one of the Twelve, one who is dipping into the same dish with me. 21.Yes, the Son of man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born.' 22.And as they were eating he took bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to them. 'Take it,' he said, 'this is my body.' 23.Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he handed it to them, and all drank from it, 24.and he said to them, 'This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, poured out for many. 25.In truth I tell you, I shall never drink wine any more until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.' 26.After the psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. 27.And Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away, for the scripture says: I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered; 28.however, after my resurrection I shall go before you into Galilee.' 29.Peter said, 'Even if all fall away, I will not.' 30.And Jesus said to him, 'In truth I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will have disowned me three times.' 31.But he repeated still more earnestly, 'If I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And they all said the same. 32.They came to

a plot of land called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, 'Stay here while I pray.' 33. Then he took Peter and James and John with him. 34. And he began to feel terror and anguish. And he said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here, and stay awake.' 35. And going on a little further he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this hour might pass him by. 36. 'Abba, Father!' he said, 'For you everything is possible. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it.' 37. He came back and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Had you not the strength to stay awake one hour? 38. Stay awake and pray not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing enough, but human nature is weak.' 39. Again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. 40. And once more he came back and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy; and they could find no answer for him. 41. He came back a third time and said to them, 'You can sleep on now and have your rest. It is all over. The hour has come. Now the Son of man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42. Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is not far away.' 43. And at once, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came up and with him a number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44. Now the traitor had arranged a signal with them saying, 'The one I kiss, he is the man. Arrest him, and see he is well guarded when you lead him away.' 45. So when the traitor came, he went up to Jesus at once and said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. 46. The others seized him and arrested him. 47. Then one of the bystanders drew his sword and struck out at the high priest's servant and cut off his ear. 48. Then Jesus spoke. 'Am I a bandit,' he said, 'that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? 49. I was among you teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid a hand on me. But this is to fulfil the scriptures.' 50. And they all deserted him and ran away. 51. A young man followed with nothing on but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, 52. but he left the cloth in their hands and ran away naked. 53. They led Jesus off to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes assembled there. 54. Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the high priest's palace, and was sitting with the attendants warming himself at the fire. 55. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus in order to have him executed. But they could not find any. 56. Several, indeed, brought false witness against him, but their evidence was conflicting. 57. Some stood up and submitted this false evidence against him, 58. 'We heard him say, "I am going to destroy this Temple made by human hands, and in three days build another, not made by human hands." ' 59. But even on this point their evidence was conflicting. 60. The high priest then rose before the whole assembly and put this question to Jesus, 'Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?' 61. But he was silent and made no answer at all. The high priest put a second question to him saying, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?' 62. 'I am,' said Jesus, 'and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.' 63. The high priest tore his robes and said, 'What need of witnesses have we now? 64. You heard the blasphemy. What is your finding?' Their verdict was unanimous: he deserved to die. 65. Some of them started spitting at his face, hitting him and saying, 'Play the prophet!' And the attendants struck him too. 66. While Peter was down below in the courtyard, one of the high priest's servant-girls came up. 67. She saw Peter warming himself there, looked closely at him and said, 'You too were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.' 68. But he denied it. 'I do not know, I do not understand what you are talking about,' he said. And he went out into the forecourt, and a cock crowed. 69. The servant-girl saw him and again started telling the bystanders, 'This man is one of them.' 70. But again he denied it. A little later the bystanders themselves said to Peter, 'You are certainly one of them! Why, you are a Galilean.' 71. But he started cursing and swearing, 'I do not know the man you

17. speak of.' 18. And at once the cock crowed for the second time, and Peter recalled what Jesus had said to him, 'Before the cock crows twice, you will have disowned me three times.' And he burst into tears."

"First thing in the morning, the chief priests, together with the elders and scribes and the rest of the Sanhedrin, had their plan ready. They had Jesus bound and took him away and handed him over to Pilate. 2. Pilate put to him this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' He replied, 'It is you who say it.' 3. And the chief priests brought many accusations against him. 4. Pilate questioned him again, 'Have you no reply at all? See how many accusations they are bringing against you!' 5. But, to Pilate's surprise, Jesus made no further reply. 6. At festival time Pilate used to release a prisoner for them, any one they asked for. 7. Now a man called Barabbas was then in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the uprising. 8. When the crowd went up and began to ask Pilate the customary favour, 9. Pilate answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews?' 10. For he realised it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over. 11. The chief priests, however, had incited the crowd to demand that he should release Barabbas for them instead. 12. Then Pilate spoke again, 'But in that case, what am I to do with the man you call king of the Jews?' 13. They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' 14. Pilate asked them, 'What harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify him!' 15. So Pilate, anxious to placate the crowd, released Barabbas for them and, after having Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified. 16. The soldiers led him away to the inner part of the palace, that is, the Praetorium, and called the whole cohort together. 17. They dressed him up in purple, twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on him. 18. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' 19. They struck his head with a reed and spat on him; and they went down on their knees to do him homage. 20. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the purple and dressed him in his own clothes. They led him out to crucify him. 21. They enlisted a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross. 22. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull. 23. They offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he refused it. 24. Then they crucified him, and shared out his clothing, casting lots to decide what each should get. 25. It was the third hour when they crucified him. 26. The inscription giving the charge against him read, 'The King of the Jews'. 27. And they crucified two bandits with him, one on his right and one on his left. 28. 29. The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said, 'Aha! So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! 30. Then save yourself; come down from the cross!' 31. The chief priests and the scribes mocked him among themselves in the same way with the words, 'He saved others, he cannot save himself. 32. Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now, for us to see it and believe.' Even those who were crucified with him taunted him. 33. When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' 35. When some of those who stood by heard this, they said, 'Listen, he is calling on Elijah.' 36. Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink saying, 'Wait! And see if Elijah will come to take him down.' 37. But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. 38. And the veil of the Sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. 39. The centurion, who was standing in front of him, had seen how he had died, and he said, 'In truth this man was Son of God.' 40. There were some women watching from a distance. Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary who was the mother of James the younger and Joset, and Salome. 41. These used to follow him and look after him when he was in Galilee. And many other women were there who had come up to Jerusalem with him. 42. It was now evening, and since it was Preparation Day -- that is, the day before the Sabbath- 43. there came Joseph of Arimathaea, a prominent member of the Council, who

himself lived in the hope of seeing the kingdom of God, and he boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44. Pilate, astonished that he should have died so soon, summoned the centurion and enquired if he had been dead for some time. 45. Having been assured of this by the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph 46. who bought a shroud, took Jesus down from the cross, wrapped him in the shroud and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. 47. Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of Jesus took note of where he was laid."

### **Colloquy and Closing Prayer**

#### **Make Your Review:**

1. How do you feel about your prayer time? What kind of experience was it for you?
2. Were any sentences, phrases or words especially meaningful for you? Why?
3. Did any insights come to you?
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5. What feelings did you experience during prayer?

For example:

- a. Love, peace, strength, hope, comfort
  - b. Frustration, unworthiness, doubt, sorrow
6. Did you feel any call that may affect your relationship with the Lord in the future?
  7. Is there something you should return to in your next prayer period?

(Borrowed from Rita Purcel, Spiritual Director, Hellertown, PA)

### **Reflection and Sharing**

## Class 6: How Can I Make a Response to God's Gift of Love to Me? (Fourth Week: Contemplation to Gain Love)

**March 28, 2021 (Palm Sunday)**

### **Introduction:**

How is Jesus present in our daily living? First of all, Jesus gives us a spirit of wisdom and enlightens our eyes to see the hope to which we are called (Ephesians 1:25-23). He is present when two or three are gathered in his name (Matthew 18:19-20). Jesus strengthens us inwardly by the power of his Spirit and does more in us than we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:14-21). With his Abba and the Spirit, he makes his home with us (John 14:23) and nourishes us as the vine nourishes the branches so that he helps us to bear fruit more abundantly (John 15:1-17).

Our response to this presence is to live a life of faith (Luke 17:5-6) like our ancestors did (Hebrews 11) and to live a life of good deeds which is characterized by the experience of the beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). Our daily living should manifest Jesus' attitude towards others (Philippians 2:1-11). Our activities are the sign of his presence and love within us (James 2:14-26).

(From Orientations: Volume 2 Part A by John A. Veltri, SJ)

### **Theme:**

Jesus in his risen life.

### **Grace:**

To ask for what I desire – a deep, interior joy because Jesus, now Lord, is filled with glory and joy, and a deeper appreciation of how Jesus is present to me in my daily living.

### **Prayer Text:**

Contemplation to Gain Love [230]-[237]. Before you do this contemplation, read the whole exercise of St. Ignatius.

### **[230] CONTEMPLATION ON THE LOVE OF GOD**

Preliminary Note: Before this exercise is presented, two observations should be made:

- (1) The first is that love ought to show itself in deeds over and above words;
- (2) [231] the second is that love consists in a mutual sharing of goods. For example, a lover gives and shares with the beloved something of his personal gifts or some possession which he has or is able to give; so, too, the beloved shared with the lover. In this way, one who has knowledge shares it with one who does not, and this is true for honors, riches, and so on. In love, one always wants to give to the other.

PREPARATION: I take the usual time to place myself reverently in the presence of the Lord and my God, and beg that God will direct everything in my day more and more to his praise and service.

[232] At this time, I may find it especially helpful to imagine myself standing before God and all his saints who are praying for me.

[233] GRACE: I beg for the gift of an intimate knowledge of all the sharing of goods which God does in his love for me. Filled with gratitude, I want to be empowered to respond just as totally in my love and service of him.

THE SETTING: There are four different focal points which present the subject matter for my prayer:

(1) [234] God's gifts to me.

God creates me out of love which desires nothing more than a return of love on my part. So much does he love me that even though I take myself away from him, he continues to be my Savior and Redeemer.

All my natural abilities and gifts, along with the gifts of Baptism and the Eucharist and the special graces lavished upon me, are only so many signs of how much God our Lord shared his life with me. My consolation: who I am by the grace of God!

If I were to respond as a reasonable person, what could I give in return to such a Lover? Moved by love, I may want to express my own love-response in the following words:

**TAKE AND RECEIVE**

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will – all that I have and call my own. You have given it all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me.

(2) [235] God's gift of himself to me.

God not only gives gifts to me, but he literally gives himself to me. His is not only the Word in whom all things are created, but also the Word who becomes flesh and dwells with us. He gives himself to me so that his Body and Blood become the food and drink of my life. He pours out his Spirit so that I can cry out "Abba." God loves me so much that I literally become a dwelling place or a temple of God – growing in an ever deepening realization of the image and likeness of God which remains the glory of the creation of man and woman.

If I were to make only a reasonable response, what could I do? Moved by love, I may find that I can respond best in words like the TAKE AND RECEIVE.

(3) [236] God's labors for me.

God loves me so much that he enters into the very struggle of life. Like a potter with clay, like a mother in childbirth, or like a mighty force blowing life into dead bones, God labors to share his life and love. His labors take him even to death on a cross in order to bring forth the life of the Resurrection.

Once more I question myself how I can make a response. Let me look again to the expression of the TAKE AND RECEIVE.

[237] God as Giver and Gift.

God's love shines down upon me like the light rays from the sun, or his love is poured forth lavishly like a fountain spilling forth its waters into an unending stream. Just as I see the sun in its rays and the fountain in its waters, so God pours forth himself in all the gifts which he showers upon me. His delight and his joy is to be with the sons of men – to be with me. He cannot do enough to speak out his love for me – ever calling me to a fuller and better life.

What can I respond to such a generous Giver? Let me consider once again the expression of the TAKE AND RECEIVE.

### **Colloquy and Closing Prayer:**

I close the prayer with an Our Father.

### **Make Your Review:**

1. How do you feel about your prayer time? What kind of experience was it for you?
2. Were any sentences, phrases or words especially meaningful for you? Why?
3. Did any insights come to you?
4. Did you feel gifted in any way?
5. What feelings did you experience during prayer?  
For example:
  - a. Love, peace, strength, hope, comfort
  - b. Frustration, unworthiness, doubt, sorrow
6. Did you feel any call that may affect your relationship with the Lord in the future?
7. Is there something you should return to in your next prayer period?

(Borrowed from Rita Purcel, Spiritual Director, Hellertown, PA)

### **Reflection and Sharing**