

Rudy Pöhl

*On the Way
with Jesus
the Divine Word*



RETREAT IN EVERYDAY LIFE

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On the Way with Jesus, environment of Rome, Photo by Sr. M. Lourdes, SSps

FOREWORD

"O Lord, your Word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path". These words of the psalmist (Ps 119: 105) could be the subtitle to this book. Usually we turn for guidance to the Word of God as proclaimed in the liturgy. But if we truly want to live a genuinely spiritual life we are directed by the documents of the Church as well as by our Constitutions to make the Word of God our light and inspiration well beyond the liturgical celebrations.

This is the main concern of this *Everyday Life Retreat*. Ignatius of Loyola called his guide *Spiritual Exercises*. They are given as exercises for 30, 10, 8 or 3 days, but they are meant to be a help for the everyday life of those who follow them. In order to help the Arnoldus Family in this our call to live our vocation in everyday life, Fr. Rudy Pöhl has prepared a retreat in this form, inviting us to be *On the way with Jesus, the Divine Word*. Based on Sacred Scripture but also on texts from the Constitutions and from outstanding representatives of our three Congregations, he offers us a guide to our pilgrim road as we follow Jesus, the Divine Word.

H. Nouwen describes the spiritual journey as a pilgrimage "*from loneliness to solitude, from hostility to hospitality, from illusion to prayer*". I am sure that many who use this guide will experience these effects. However, the author has a further intention: he invites the three congregations of the Arnoldus Family to grow together and re-discover the common heritage of the spiritual and missionary vision of our common Founder.

Considering the echo already received from the German, Indonesian, Italian and Polish editions, we have every reason to believe that many of our sisters and brothers will make use of this English edition to journey with the Lord. This is most fitting at a time when the whole Church is on the way to the Great Jubilee year of 2000. It would be nice if many members of the three Congregations of the Arnoldus Family, as well as our friends, would make use of the author's invitation.

Our Founder once wrote that he considered the Feast of the Sacred Heart in June of 1875 as the 'foundation day' for his entire missionary initiative. Bl. Arnold Janssen and his first companions consecrated themselves to the Lord on this day for the cause of the missions. Because of this historical fact, all three of our Congregations — SVD, SSPS, and SSPSAP — could prepare in a special way for our jubilee of 125 years by considering the Feast of the Sacred Heart in June of 2000 as a common feast for the whole Arnoldus Family.

The words of Scripture — our guide and our lamp — accompany us in our everyday life. But the Scriptures also reveal to us the *Creative Word* — through whom everything was made. More than that, they lead us to the *Incarnate Word* — who calls us to be his followers and disciples. Our journey with the *Divine Word* will make us realize that the Word of God is not merely light and guide, but is truly *active*. In us and through us it becomes sacrament, sign in the world of today. With sincere gratitude to Fr. Pöhl, I recommend *On the way with Jesus the Divine Word* to all our sisters and brothers of the Arnoldus Family.

Henry Barlage, SVD
Superior General

Walk before Me and be whole "

Genesis 17:1

Dear Sister, dear Brother,

This instruction is an informative first step in providing a common guide to everyday living for the members of the congregations of our common Arnoldus Family. We hope to accomplish this by helping to renew ourselves personally through the written word of God and prayer. Our simultaneous other goal is to build spiritual bridges linking our congregations. In everyday language we describe the renewal process as "building bridges", "passing over", or "grafting the twig on the vine". This invitation, therefore, bears the title *"Walking with Jesus, the Divine Word"*.

In recent years, great numbers of our brothers and sisters from all over the world have been sending the fruits of their reflections to our spiritual centers in Nemi and Steyl. There have been predominantly these two questions:

- "How can I make a spiritual renewal or retreat different from the kind I used to make?"
- "How can the priests, brothers and sisters of Steyl find the spiritual way back to the spirit of our Founder, the power of the Word of God and the Eucharist, and our common membership in Arnold Janssen's large family?"

It seems a fair conclusion, therefore, that we wish to deepen our appreciation of our missionary calling as servants of the Word and the Spirit. Our desire is: more communion in one Lord, one Spirit, one mission.

The SVD generalate has taken these questions very seriously and consulted with the generalates of the Holy Spirit Sisters and of the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Together they seek to find new ways to achieve this communion. This is why this Common Retreat has found such wide acceptance as one way to heighten our communion.

I gratefully acknowledge that in developing the ideas of the Common Retreat, I had the proposals of the German speaking Jesuit publications (GIS - Frankfurt, listed in our bibliography), the encouragement of the Sisters of Providence (of Westphalia, Germany), and the Sisters of Caritas Socialis. The outline, the structure and the spiritual footsteps follow the exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. The detailed content, however, aside from the quotations from Scripture, derives from the specific spirituality of Father Janssen and his three congregations.

This book is meant to be primarily a manual of spiritual assistance for the brothers and sisters of all these congregations. But if lay people who have an interest in spiritual matters come to use this book too, so much the better. We are all invited to share the way with Jesus Christ, that *all races and nations become one people of God* which is to progress through all times and places and pursues *the same goal: searching out the Kingdom of God and our common Father*.

Right from the beginning, our presentation has a definite time (consult the following pages). It begins on 29 September 1996 and concludes on 7 June 1997. This position in the calendar accommodates itself easily to the liturgical year. Jubilees, general chapters and similar significant events in a person's life can offer inspiration to see this renewal process as a help in their preparation and celebration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have to thank, above all, Father Superior General, Henry Barlage, and Father Henry Heekeren for their support and encouragement in this project.

Actually this English version should have come out before all the other translations; thus it was planned. In the meantime, however, the Polish, Indonesian and Italian versions have already been finished and, at least partly, been published. The reason for the delay of the English text is that the person originally ready for this work was prevented from doing it. Then Fr. Bernard Fisher, SVD, East Troy (USA), volunteered to undertake the translation from German into English. For his fast work and cooperation I would like to thank him most heartily. I am also grateful to Fathers Pete McHugh, SVD, and Wim Wijten, SVD, and to the SSPS Sisters, Sr. Carol Welp and Sr. Gregoria Kreutz, for their proofreading, and to Sr. Nihita Maria Derecho, SSPSAP who, in a second edition, will also insert texts of her contemplative Congregation so that this Retreat in Everyday Life will finally be representative of the whole Arnoldus Family.

I would be happy if this kind of retreat will be of help to many sisters and brothers in Europe and elsewhere.

I wish to thank all the Holy Spirit Sisters as well as my Divine Word confreres who, whether alone or in community, are walking their way with Jesus so that HIS LIGHT may illumine our world, which is so much in need of healing and salvation.

Peace and joy in the LORD!

Fr. Rudy Pöhl
Nemi (Rome), October 1996

ON THE WAY WITH JESUS THE DIVINE WORD

His life is our life,
His mission our mission.
Guided by the Holy Spirit, we follow Him,
glorifying the Father
and bringing the fullness of life to others.

Prologue to the SVD Constitutions



As Servants of the Holy Spirit,
we love and honor the Holy Spirit in a special way.
He fills our hearts with God's love,
transforms our being and pervades our prayer and activity.
He makes our self-surrender possible
and gives our communities their distinctive character...
Our love urges us to commit ourselves
that others may come to a deeper awareness
of his dynamic action in God's saving plan,
that they may love him and yield their lives to his guidance.

Prologue to the SSps Constitutions

EVERYDAY LIFE RETREAT
commentary and text 1997/1998

Overview of the phases and weeks

10 weeks (Weeks 1 - 10)

In the first phase

I call to mind the merciful love of God, put my life in order and respond to his love for me.

11 weeks (Weeks 11 - 21)

In the second phase

I look for practical ways to respond to the call and invitation of Jesus, to walk the steps of my life along His path and under the guidance of His Spirit. I wish to live in His friendship, totally committed to the Kingdom of God.

2 weeks (Weeks 22 and 23)

In the third phase

I accept the invitation of Jesus to enter Jerusalem and stand at His side. I embrace the sufferings and death of Jesus and thus also the sufferings and death of many people who bear unspeakable pain, but are prepared to die with Jesus because they love Him.

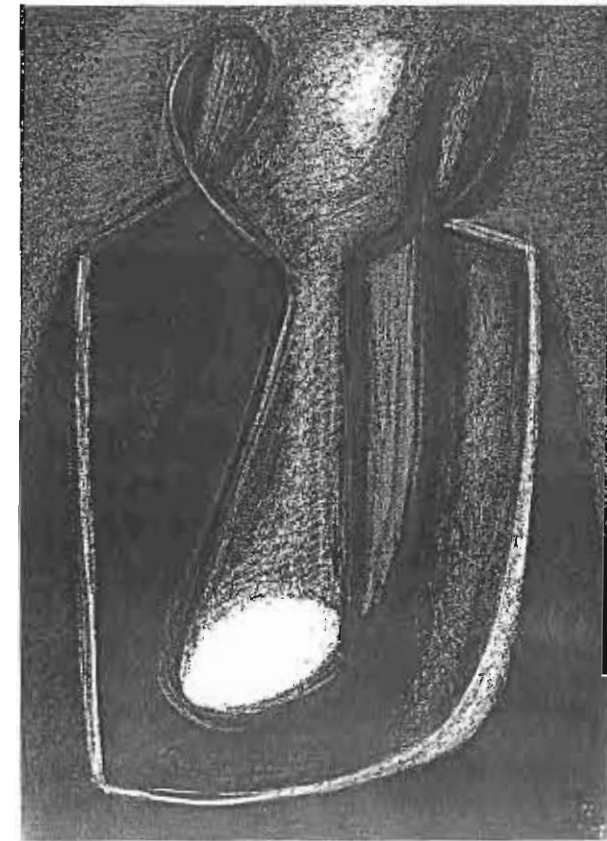
4 weeks (Weeks 24 - 27)

In the fourth phase

I try to achieve oneness with Christ in His death and resurrection. This so transforms my life that I can submit to the power of the Holy Spirit and cooperate when He sends me whatever He wishes. My function is to proclaim the message of the Kingdom of God and give a living witness of it to others.

*In the beginning was the Word,
the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.*

John 1:1



John 1: 14: We saw his glory, by Iris Hahs.Hoffstetter

Introduction

Helps and difficulties

in the renewal process of our day-to-day living

Our desire to walk with Jesus along His way, to follow the Divine Word in every detail of our living, is a forceful basic motive to prepare together the following general chapters which will give space and time to renew our personal lives. This approach harks back to St. Ignatius and so has been effective for several centuries.

What are the helps and advantages of this method of renewal process?

- Regular daily prayer will be required.
- In the course of each day, we will be strengthened to seek God in all our encounters and experiences, to read our personal history with the eyes of faith and to understand how to see God in all the happenings of the day.
- This method of walking in faith with Jesus, the Divine Word, is an exercise in the discernment of spirits in both our personal and community lives.

What are the difficulties or disadvantages of this way?

- I am invited and challenged to reserve a definite time for this every day, and this has priority over other invitations.
- The demands and pressures of my daily work will try to usurp my commitment to renewal.
- There are, in fact, concrete obstacles in my way of life

that will try to deflect me from my goal of renewal, lure me away, discourage me and compel me to abandon my commitment to tackle my long neglected problems and questions in the light of God and Scripture.

It is certain that we can follow this course only if we and the members of our group agree to change our lives radically for the time of this renewal.

Structuring the day

Most of us have little extra time. However, I manage to find a good deal of time for things I fancy. So I realize that I am prepared to find time for things that attract me. The quantity and quality of time are significantly better when I feel at home. This renewal process of everyday life, therefore, could adopt this spirit to help initiate the experience of love in small steps. A certain quantity of time is needed not only for an enduring friendship, but also for daily mutual love and friendship with God.

In the 19th Annotation of his "Exercises", Ignatius speaks of about an hour and a half. This time comprises a period of preparation, about one hour of prayer and meditation with a concluding review and the examination (prayer of loving attention).

The quality of the prayer time depends on what in this time we consider good, holy and worthwhile for the totality of our living and hoping. The timing of the exercises is very important, so that wakefulness and attention can be assured. This will vary with individuals.

The place chosen for meditation will also have consequences. Meditation and prayer do not universally succeed in the same surroundings, for instance, at home or on a journey, waiting for a bus or boat, or even in a noisy place. One's own rhythm, range of interests and of prayer times must be in harmony when walking with Jesus.

Milestones, Rest and "the Breaking of Bread" along the Way

Retreats in everyday life have a structure and inner dynamic similar to those of the great Ignatian exercises. The four weeks comprise the setting of goals and the allotting of times as a schedule with rest, quiet times and spiritual food so arranged and distributed that God increasingly becomes the decisive Experience in our daily life.

Milestones along the way are, for example, the beginning and end of each week. These are given a principal theme to help me in my day-to-day living. A rest or quiet period on this way is a recollection exercise in which I recall the theme of the past day or week and quietly review my results. From time to time, also at the end of the day, it is appropriate that this moment of quiet and rest take the form of a prayer of loving attention. (a sample of such prayer is given below). I must so harmonize the rhythms and interior currents of my life and the things at my disposal according to my personal preferences or those of my spiritual companions on the way, that the whole brings me or us closer to God, not away from Him. Thus I should feel free to decide whether and when to skip or substitute a text, make a pause or slow down.

The day to day renewal process - way and duration

Our renewal process in daily life has been composed for the SSps and SSpsAP Sisters and the Fathers and Brothers of the SVD in the provinces, communities and small groups. These provide the opportunity to spend a longer time on the spiritual way together. We are invited to take the risk of sharing even in groups of two or three. Lay people who work in our three congregations may attend so that they may understand our spirituality better. Precisely these people, through their wit-

ness, can animate, strengthen and encourage us as Christians to walk our way.

They times presented here are based on a period of nine months, following roughly the structure of the Ignatian exercises. Ignatius suggested 4 weeks or 30 days. In the day-to-day renewal process, these four weeks stretch over 28 weeks of the year. They follow the rhythm of the cycle of feasts of the liturgical year, from September to June, with two greater intervals. Each person must set a private calendar for the day-to-day renewal process and accommodate it to the liturgical year.

Spiritual Accompaniment

The most important person in my spiritual renewal is the Holy Spirit, who guides, supports and accompanies me. This Spirit acts today (as in the early Church) also through other persons. For this reason, it is good to have a spiritual companion, Brother, Sister or a group on the journey. Here are some suggestions for each one's consideration:

1) I choose a companion whom I will meet weekly, fortnightly or every third or fourth week, to whom I will confide my experiences and in whose conversation I will get advice and help. If I already have a spiritual companion like this, I should think of encouraging her/him to make the renewal with me.

2) If I have a person who is able and prepared to make the spiritual journey with me, it would be prudent to find an occasion to discuss the matter with her/him.

3) A further possibility is that I meet regularly with a sister/confrere making this renewal and exchange with her/him whatever the Lord has told me in this renewal and how I believe the Lord is leading us both. Here each helps the other along the way with attention, conversation, encouragement and making new beginnings.

4) A group of four to six develop in a week or fortnight a rhythm for exchanging experiences along the spiritual way. This brings about an outgoing sensitivity, a prudence in trusting, an openness that results in an awareness of the presence of God, and a reverence for the ways

other people are developing. A celebration of the Eucharist in common can also bring this about. Here the picture of the disciples of Emmaus can be fruitful. Another form is the Koinonia-Group in which the members are apostles to each other.

5) Another form of companionship is this: when I cannot find a suitable companion, I turn more to myself and to God. Once each week, for example, on Sunday, I spend extra time reviewing my experiences of the past week. I trace the pattern, turning my love back from my repeated distractions and so return myself to true companionship with the Lord. The shuttle in the weaving of the tapestry of the renewal is certainly the evening review of the day, the prayer for loving attention, lest the thread giving the renewal coherence be quickly lost.

Practical Helps along the Way

1) Suggested procedure

Every week of the renewal follows *the same sequence*:

- The situation - the thematic orientation
- What I ask for - advice on what I want
- What I meditate on - a definite series of Bible quotations for each day of the week
- What I pay attention to in daily life - questions as I go back over the day, what I did and what I omitted
- Recommended reading.

I should by all means read the following:

- Holy Scripture
- The Constitutions of my congregation
- The documents of the last general chapter
- The biographies of Fathers A. Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz and of Mothers Maria Helena, Josepha and Mary Michael

- The Book of Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius (EB)
- The story of the pilgrimage of St. Ignatius

In a notebook I write my inner desires and movements inspired by this reading.

I can do this recording, of course, in other forms than sentences. I can use songs or stories or drawings. My companions can keep me aware of the things I should read and understand.

2) The spiritual imprint on the daily order

Our times and practices of prayer have their own power to direct and inspire the way we go through the day. They have the goal of helping us live always more in and because of God. Our life should be one long all-embracing prayer. Prayer and work, faith and accomplishing love must more and more permeate one another. Meetings and occurrences, sorrows and joys will then become encounters with God. During the day there are opportunities to pause for a few moments with the Lord. These may win us new appreciation of stretches along our way, necessary ardor and a clearer vision of God-with-us. These can be:

- empty moments along the way,
- a few minutes before retiring (how and with what preparations do I go to sleep?)
- the first conscious moments after awaking (How do I begin the day? Do I discuss my dreams with my spiritual companions?)
- the moments before a duty or a meeting begins, and thereafter.
- Use the present moment.
- What does my mind drift to when there is a free moment in the daily order?

As sons and daughters of the Societies of Bl. Arnold, we perceive these moments in the "Light of the Word and the Spirit of Grace". And as KAI-ROI these are moments of grace in our lives.

3) A desert day, a recollection day

Every 3 or 4 weeks, a whole day (or, if this is not possible, two half days) is spent in a quiet place, reflecting on the details of the way I have trod, evaluating my spiritual priorities. I thank the Trinity, revise my petitions and articulate what I wish and what I understand.

Ordinary day-to-day living is mostly like desert days. I must not try to change this. A desert day is really a time freely surrendered to being alone with the Lord, to learn more about Him, for whom I so hunger and thirst.

Perhaps this way of experiencing is still strange as I go through the desert with Jesus, to endure, to fast, to watch and pray, to contemplate my life with its lights and shadows, my temptations against faith, in my relationships with people (love, hatred), my temptations to resignation, bitterness, pessimism, superficiality (against the virtue of hope). Then I come back to my fellow human beings and set out with Jesus on the road to Jerusalem. On a desert day I can end with the sacrament of penance (confession).

4) The daily schedule of prayer and meditation

1. The preparations and personal approach

The daily meditation requires a certain time for readying the mind and heart. I need this to retain the glow of the renewal process in the ashes of everyday existence. To do this, heartfelt prayers we all know can be used. One is this one by Arnold Janssen:

"May the darkness of sin and the night of unbelief vanish before the Light of the Word and the Spirit of Grace. And may the Heart of Jesus live in my heart and in the hearts of all people. Amen."

It is strongly recommended that the prayer of preparation never be changed or discarded.

2. Extended personal prayer every day

Prayer is a dialogue which arises out of daily events. But prayer is also lingering in simple silence before God and holding myself open to Him. It is a relationship between God and the human person, between the human person and God. So there are two movements. One is what I do, the other is what happens to me. One is what I try to do; the other is something beyond my power.

When I contemplate a mystery in a biblical occurrence, the following 3 steps are a preparatory exercise in contemplative (Ignatian) prayer.

1) *bringing to mind the Biblical occurrence*, with a glance at the matrix in which the Bible puts it, the context.

2) *establishing a personal relationship with the happening*, e.g., where it took place, the room or the landscape, the people, individually and in their groupings, the main person. This is done by our imagination, our inner vision, an ability to create in fantasy the environment, the details, the succession of events. This internal tracking of the process, what is there, and what happens, helps my concentration.

3) *Now I beseech from the Lord* what I want to come out of this, for example, the listed goals of each week, or that I achieve a spiritual attitude and embrace the mystery of each portion of Christ's "good news", that I may learn to love God more and be able to follow Him.



Isaiah 50, 5: *The Lord has opened my ear*, by Sr. Irmgard

For the meditation itself:

see

I can engage my attention and look at the pictures and scenes that attract me, for instance the celebration at Cana (John 2, 1 - 11), identifying with the persons or groups because I will recognize myself in them.

hear

I listen to the noises, tones, words, calls, shouts, the conversation between Jesus and His disciples, the acrimonious exchanges with the pharisees, all that interests me. Let them continue to affect me.

observe

I observe what the people do, how they conduct themselves. For instance, when someone comes up to Jesus, how do those around Him react, the disciples, the women, the children? What fills their minds: doubts, anxieties, sorrows, joys, hope, yearnings, trust?

deliberate

I reflect on myself "in the Light of the Word" and ask myself: What meaning, what message has what I have seen, heard and perceived, for me in this hour, on this day?

spiritual colloquy

At the end of a longer period of prayer I do not simply round off the prayer, but rather enjoy a period of quiet during which I reflect on the progress of the prayer. This colloquy that I enjoy with Mary, her son, Jesus and the Father, or even a *tete-a-tete* between the Father and myself is the supreme moment of a longer prayer, an approach to "a friend conversing with a friend".

This colloquy happens "in the Light of the Word and the Spirit of Grace" as I prayed when I began. Later it will become clear that this

dialoguing is the goal toward which my prayer is oriented and from which it draws strength.

3. The reflection after prayer

Since I recognize and come to accept the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as my God (Ex. 3), since I listen to God (Deut. 6,4) and since I wish to deepen my relationship with the person of Christ, I make use of these periods of prayer, of this school of relationships, and this newly gained freedom, this patient growth and movement to bring my faith into my everyday living.

In the reflection, that is, after prayer, it is important that I look back to see what happened to me during this prayer. I am not searching for brilliant ideas but to see whether I am making inner progress. So I pay attention to my inner movements, such as feelings of consolation (trust, hope, joy) or desolation (loneliness, anxieties, fears, emptiness, boredom), even my distractions, especially when these are profound and unsettling. I can ask myself:

- What happened during the time of prayer ?
- What struck me?
- What were my feelings?
- How have I been perceiving my attitude?
- How has my attitude been changed?
- What did the Lord wish to tell me during this experience?
- Did something become clear to me about my community living and apostolic spirituality?
- Do I experience an inner disquiet disturbing me?
- What do I feel drawn to now?

It can happen that while I reflect on what has happened, I feel drawn to repeat the exercise. This can be a hint from God that He wants to enter deeper into me in order to keep me from getting stuck in shallowness and complacency.

We are advised to keep written notes of this reflection. These can serve as source material for the weekly review of the steps we have already taken on the way of renewal.

4. The prayer of loving attention (examen)

On the pilgrim way, regular communication with God calls for a review at the end of each day. This needs a prayerful preparation lasting about a quarter of an hour, in which God shows me my life as part of salvation history. In this way a deeper appreciation of salvation, positive and negative (sin), can be gained. The purpose of this is not self-analysis nor self-condemnation, but to bring myself back before God and again accept myself. This can be done in five steps:

1) *To be grateful*

To present myself to Jesus Christ who has come here for me.
To be before him body and soul with all my impulses. To thank the Lord for the gift of the day and everything he created in it.
To be still!

2) *To ask of God:*

the courage and humility to view the day in His light and to be able to evaluate my life through His eyes of love.

3) *To review the day:*

What happened today in me, around me, for me?
Prescinding from evaluations and blame, I gather my encounters and inspirations of the day and review them candidly: What inner opinions arise in my mind? I can review the path hour by hour or place by place, or deed by deed, in slow motion. I can linger over any detail that attracts my interest.
Perceptions arise in the mind, persist a little and vanish. Whether these are coming or going when I notice them, I gradually learn to discern the traces of the spirits in and around me.

4) *To behold God beholding me with love:*

What is in me: joy, grief, dismay, unrest. To confide myself to

God's love, to praise Him, thank Him, to ask His pardon. God's love is greater than my heart.

5) "to look forward to the next day"

Which happenings, meetings, hopes, challenges, apprehensions can I expect tomorrow? I entrust all of this to God. I pray for the strength to trust and to take the resolution I shall need for whatever is important.

These steps help me to look back repeatedly on recurring concerns as the days unfold. The strength of love can continue to help, heal, liberate, encourage and stabilize me to remain on the way with Jesus, my friend and Lord.

6. Community - fountain of apostolic life

The renewal process for every day is something very personal, individual. It is MY WAY to walk with Jesus. Its living power flows from the dynamic of the community of the Triune God into the community of our missionary congregations which partakes of the overflowing Love of God I can draw freshness and strength from this living water of the Spirit (John 4: 14).

There are different ways to develop this:

- through mutual encouragement and prayerful accompanying.
- through the awareness of having so many brothers and sisters in our spiritual, extended family. They venture to take the path with me and entrust themselves totally to God and to people - in various provinces on 6 continents. The Holy Spirit is our common Helper and Companion.
- through sharing in twos or in a small group, at the Eucharistic liturgy and so on.

"Call to me and I will answer you; I will tell you great mysteries of which you know nothing." (Jeremias 33: 3)

May these *instructions on the adventure of Faith*, which spring from the depth of my love for the Divine Word and the Holy Spirit, and the texts that are offered benefit many in our communities through those who listen to the Word of God treasure it in their hearts together with the vision that Jesus had of the Kingdom of God, (the Father) and who being themselves afire with the Holy Spirit, bring this fire, by the way they live, to the poor, the weak, to prisoners and the blind.

Arnold Janssen, Joseph Freinademetz, Bl. Maria Helena and Mothers Josepha and Mary Michael shared in the dream of God. They and we have the assurance that God is with us as we implement these plans:

"I know the plans I have in mind for you - it is Yahweh who speaks - plans for peace, not disaster, reserving a future full of hope for you. Then when you call to me, and come to plead with me, I will listen to you. When you seek me you shall find me, when you seek me with all your heart; I will let you find me - it is Yahweh who speaks. I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have dispersed you - it is Yahweh who speaks. I will bring you back to the place from which I exiled you."

(Jeremiah 29: 11-14)

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(Portions of these are listed under "Recommended reading".)

The Foundation: Fact and Practice

God freely created us so that we might know, love, and serve him in this life and be happy with him forever. God's purpose in creating us is to draw forth from us a response of love and service here on earth, so that we may attain our goal of everlasting happiness with him in heaven.

All the things in this world are gifts of God, created for us, to be the means by which we can come to know him better, love him more surely, and serve him more faithfully.

As a result, we ought to appreciate and use these gifts of God insofar as they help us toward our goal of loving service and union with God. But insofar as any created things hinder our progress toward our goal, we ought to let them go.

In everyday life, then, we should keep ourselves indifferent or undecided in the face of all created gifts when we have an option and we do not have the clarity of what would be a better choice. We ought not to be led on by our natural likes and dislikes even in matters such as health or sickness, wealth or poverty, between living in the east or in the west, becoming an accountant or a lawyer.

Rather, our only desire and our one choice should be that option which better leads us to the goal for which God created us.

David L. Fleming, S.J., A contemporary reading of the Spiritual Exercises. A Companion to St. Ignatius Text. St. Louis, Missouri 1987, 2nd edition, p. 8

ANNEX

Alternative Forms of Prayer

Form A :
based on *Johannes Bours*

Concrete Steps for the personal reading of Scripture

1. **Short contemplation:** "Lord, I am listening to your word."
2. **Reading the WORD** (out loud is best)
3. **What is the MESSAGE of the passage?** (also in connection with other passages)
4. **How does this passage give ENCOURAGEMENT?**
5. **What DEMANDS does this passage make?**
6. **How do I recognize CHRIST in this passage?**
7. **What is my RESPONSE?**

In order to stimulate spiritual growth, it can be good not to take up a new Scripture passage every day, but rather to stay with one for a longer time. It can become a life-giving passage for me. This brings me deeper into the life of God as He accompanies me into the MYSTERY of my LIFE.

Alternative Forms of Prayer

Form B
based on *Guigo II*

Lectio Divina

Step one: LECTIO means "reading"

Lectio means directing one's whole attention to Holy Scripture.

Prayer: Lord Jesus * You Son of the living God * teach me to listen to what You say to me in the Holy Scripture * that I may recognize your holy face.

In this first step I take up the Bible, not as a book I am accustomed to, but as a book of prayer, of community, of life. It is the HOLY PAGE that I read where God is the author of the message to me. I return to the message which I am reading as though I were hearing it for the first time. I take great pains with it to absorb the meaning of the passage fully. The "Light of the Word and the Spirit of Grace" help me to believe and accept the message of God as my own.

Step two: MEDITATIO - meditation

Meditation, thoughtful reflection, is the function of the intellect in the profound search for the hidden truth of God.

Prayer: Lord Jesus * Son of the living God * the living Word * teach me to accept your Good News as a spiritual food and to assimilate it as my own * that it may transform me * and attune my Spirit completely to what you are and what you wish.

In my need of help I call upon the Holy Spirit to heal the blindness of my heart. I read the passage of Scripture again and with ever growing attention. I ask for a humble attitude towards the light and power of the "yes" I have given in faith. I want the movements of God to surprise me. His Word reshapes the thoughts, voices and ideas in me to His liking, so that I adopt his thoughts and follow His will. My thoughts and desires are to resonate with His.

Step three: ORATIO - prayer

Prayer is a total turning of the heart to the Triune God.

Prayer: Lord Jesus * Son of the Living God * penetrate my heart with the love that unites you with the Father. Be in me an uninterrupted prayer to the Father.

In this third step, I try to speak to God with all the desire of my heart. Out of my ineptitude I cry to the Spirit of God for help.

I turn also to Mary for help, to share with me the prayer of her own heart, to encounter God with the same confidence she had in His love and generosity. She is now my mother as well as John's. In the firm faith of Mary I surrender my resistance and become a child of God, a son or a daughter of one Father. In her immovable faith and silent adoration, in her simplicity and serving love I accept the love of Christ and I call upon Him for help.

I am ready with gratitude and amazement to see what He will teach me in the Holy Spirit. This Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of burning love, teaches me how to pray to the Father. The more I embrace the love of Jesus, the more I learn to speak to my/our Father, that is, to *pray*.

Step four: CONTEMPLATIO - contemplation

In contemplation we lift ourselves up to God, rise above ourselves and are given a taste of timeless (eternal) joy.

Prayer: Lord Jesus * Son of the Living God * bestow on me a longing for a deeper love-experience in the Triune God. Holy Spirit, make me share in the loving union in God's Family * May I experience then in deep silence the mystery which surpasses each word and personal perception of mine.

My heart and mind will be enlightened by reading and reflecting on the "Lectio Divina". The movements of my heart long for more clarifications, and a change of heart. I feel that I am blind, deaf and paralyzed before God. If I have prayed with confidence and trust for all my sisters and brothers, and for the whole Church, the Lord will surely give me an answer and not deny me anything. He will make me share in the love of the Divine Family of Father, Son and Holy Spirit and give me a greater understanding of His Divine message. All Three live in me through Baptism. As His daughter and son He invites me to a joyful banquet. Thus I, a poor sinner, have been accepted into His Divine family through His infinite mercy. He bestows on me the grace to renew my love for Him in the bridal union of His liberating love.

Mary is here especially close to me. She was able, as woman and Mother of Jesus, to reflect in childlike simplicity on this great mystery of God's Divine love.

Step five: ACTIO - human cooperation

This step represents a person's doing and acting on, each day as being predominantly determined by yearning for encounter with God. In all things we are open to God's Word and to the Spirit.

Prayer: Lord Jesus * Son of the living God * Incarnate * live in me. * You, Fullness of divine love of which Scripture speaks * You who have eaten and slept and worked * teach me so to live that you shine through me as I eat * as I sleep * as I work * and in every other activity of my life. * Make me a visible Word of God for others.

This last step is adapted from Guigo II, as it follows from the life and love foundation for human and spiritual activity in walking every day on the path of the Divine Word.

Hidden prayer calls for changes in me and in the things I do. These changes prepare me for my next entry into the prayer of Lectio Divina *as a progressive, enduring cycle of prayer. How I live my Christian calling and mission in community depends on the interaction between the Living Word of God and the reality of my everyday life.*

Alternative Forms of Prayer

Form C
based on R. Pöhl

Desert days

"It is necessary to go through the desert and linger there to receive the gifts of the grace of God. In the desert we can practise renunciation of self, freedom from everything that is not God. The soul can empty itself and leave room only for God.

The Israelites lived in the desert. Moses lived in it before the Lord gave him his mission. St. Paul went first through the Arabian desert on his way to Damascus. We cannot avoid the desert. It is a time of grace.

If we wish to bear truly spiritual fruits, we need time for stillness and being alone. Silence is necessary: inner concentration, the forgetting of all created things. Only in this stillness can God build up His kingdom and have us experience how God forms us interiorly, how we acquire personal intimacy with God, how our soul attains an exchange with God - in faith, hope and love."

Later the fruits manifest themselves to the extent that they have been allowed to grow."

Ch. de Foucauld, Letter to Father Jerome

The following two models present a selection of different kinds of approaches for a desert day. These can be adapted to exterior or interior situations, to the seasons of the year.

In the "Go-wander" model, the word "go" stresses actual movement. To go into the desert implies getting up and actually going on foot along the way. "The desert" may be in the forest or the town, on the mountains or on the road to a mission station. It is necessary to look for

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opportunities for prayer in one's day and then to spend that time on the renewal.

This model describes six sequences of inner steps, each accompanied by its own verses of Holy Scripture. In each step, the topic sentences are capitalized.

Model I

Go - wander

I observe my inner movements - I reflect on the encounter

"When we love someone, we enjoy talking to the beloved person and being present to him. It is just the same with prayer: confidential dialogue with the beloved. We observe him, tell him that we love him, enjoy being near him, and would prefer to live and die near him."

Ch. de Foucauld, Letter to a Friend

- * **1) I GO into the DESERT.**
Exodus 4: 27; 5: 1; 14: 12; 16: 13; Deuteronomy 8
- * **2) I SEEK the Lord with GREAT YEARNING.**
Mark 6: 31; Luke 6: 38; 9: 57; Matthew 6: 26; 7: 13 - 14
Isaiah 51: 5
- * **3) I set out to be TOGETHER WITH THE LORD ON THE WAY**
Mark 8: 27 Luke 10: 40 Acts 8: 26 - 36; Luke 24: 13 - 35
- * **4) I am on the Way WITH THE LORD**
Mark 10: 21; Acts 9: 32; Matthew 15: 32; John 4: 10

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* **5) I RETURN to the COMMUNITY**
Exodus 3: 13 - 14; Luke 24: 32; Mark 10: 52

* **6) EVALUATION of the day**

*God
is like
a spring in us,
offering us
hospitality.*

(Alfred Delp)

Reflections - Evaluation

STEP ONE I GO INTO THE DESERT

- Where is my desert?
- What does a desert experience mean to me?
- Where do I stand at this moment of my life? Do I have a clear direction?
- Do I experience God "with me" in my life?
- Do I have an idea where He is leading me?
- Does He lead me and show me my way?
- What response do I have for Him, for others, for myself?

STEP TWO I SEEK GOD WITH MY WHOLE HEART

How do I seek the God of my life?

Where do I seek Him?

There are four books in which I can seek Him:

- 1) Creation
- 2) Holy Scripture
- 3) My life-experience in my deepest self
- 4) In the community

How do I encounter God?

How do I begin a conversation with Him?

Will I invite Him into my life without reservations?

Do I leave to Him the directing, guiding of my life?

STEP THREE WITH GOD ON MY WAY (The theology of the way, Luke 24)

Do I walk with Jesus every day?

How do I experience this being-with-Jesus-on-the-way?

Do I recognize His presence and His power?

Does He open my eyes for the Scriptures?

Does my heart burn on our way together?

A person who has experienced Jesus is someone with:

- a new identity (new name)
- a new direction in life
- a new vision, values

STEP FOUR TO BE WITH THE LORD ON THE WAY

What does our way together look like? Is He an encouraging companion?

How will I try to go with Him every day?

How strong is my conviction of the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in myself/ in others?

Which influence does this awareness have on others?

Am I a contented person, one who radiates the mystery of the indwelling of the Holy Trinity?

How does this mystery change my life from day to day?

STEP FIVE *RETURN TO MY COMMUNITY*

Which experiences of this desert day am I prepared to share with my sisters/brothers?

How has this day influenced my life in community?

What kind of community person am I?

Do I make things easy for others in the community?

Can I share my life with others?

What kind of fire do I give to my community?

 The fire of anger that consumes others?

 The fire of the Kingdom of God, life and light, that gives warmth and courage?

STEP SIX *EVALUATION OF THE DAY*

What happened today? Have I been given a new insight or a new awareness?

God speaks to us in everything that deeply moves us, motivates or inspires us. Has He spoken to me today? What was the message? How have I answered?

How have I lived this day? Have I been moved interiorly? Unmoved? Were there signs of a change? Was I ready to respond? Or was there resistance?

Was there any moment of grace (Kairos), an encounter with Christ?

What was my feeling about God, myself, others, life?

Model II

the BOOK OF CREATION

the BOOK OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

the BOOK OF THE SOUL (Heart)

the BOOK OF THE COMMUNITY

In the second model of the four books, the opportunity is given for a whole day or for half a day, to read the Book of Creation, that is, to find God in nature, or to read and meditate on Holy Scripture, from which I select a suitable reading. A third is the Book of the Soul, that is, the book of my life (biography). This means I must keep a journal and review it prayerfully. A fourth is the Book of the Community, that is, of the family, the community of my faith and vocation, the people of God, (small community, parish, family and so on) where I live just now. On a desert day, one may read two or three books in succession or even just one if it be consulted slowly and peacefully.

This Four Book Model can be of great help during a desert day. The following questions help me "read, meditate, pray and contemplate" on the evidences of God in my life and His speaking to me every day (Lectio Divina = reading of life).

1) THE BOOK OF CREATION

(Brother and Sister Creation)

This is the first book in which God addresses us. Have you read the Book of Creation? What have you read in it?

Look at your surroundings. What feelings arise in you?

You, too, are part of this creation. Do you believe you have a special place in it? Just as creation has different seasons, your life and your apostolic service have seasons.

The seasons can portray your life: Which season of your life are you in at this moment?

Spring is the new beginning.

Summer is the time of sunshine, of joy, of happiness.

Autumn is the time of surrendering and diminishing.

Winter is the time of death, hardship, cold, bitterness, preoccupation with signs of life, monotony, darkness.

2) THE BOOK OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

(The Word of God in your life)

God speaks to you through His Word. What has He said to you today? In the readings of the Liturgy? In the Lauds...?

Try to encounter the wisdom of God. Read the Book of Wisdom.

What position does the Word of God occupy in your life? In your prayer? In your apostolate? How do you read and pray your own life now in the light of the Word of God?

What message do you preach to others?

3) THE BOOK OF THE SOUL

(Heart - your own life)

When you look into the book of your life, of your heart, what do you see?

What do you read there?

Is it full of grace and consolation?

Do you experience new challenges?

Is it a book of sorrow, joy, encouragement, hatred, anger, reconciliation?

Does it reflect a time of crisis?

When you read the book of your life with your inner eye, what does it tell you about the different chapters? How does it describe your vision of life? What does it say about love, friendships, your brothers and sisters?

4) THE BOOK OF THE COMMUNITY

(My place among the people of God)

Here is the logbook of God's People who are together on the way of Jesus. Here you will see many conflicts and problems in the field of relationships among people. How is this book read relevant to the present reality of my congregation/diocese/parish/ family? In my own country? - In the global world?

This book consists of relationships. *God is community*. I always seek the community aspect of *the Trinity in my community*. I make good use of my time with others, I reflect that I am making history when I deal with others. These relationships last into eternity. Love lasts forever.

What is happening here? Why? How does it affect me? How do I go from the challenges in the community to my own job? Am I giving a straight answer? Am I only reacting? Do I rebel against something?

tiny steps

How I am prepared for relationships among people? Do I bring to realization a sincere community? Do I live in a situation of conflict or fraternity? Do I feel sent by the Lord/the community to my apostolic work?

- Which book I am going to read today?
- I can also try to achieve an integration of all four books.
- I concentrate on one (or more) of these books this desert day.

*on the Way
with Jesus,
the Divine Word*

Program
for
the Retreat in Everyday Life
with scheduling for
1997 - 1998

September 29, 1996 - The beginning of the Retreat in Everyday Life

PHASE I - From Call to Conversion

- 01 week: Sept. 28 - Oct. 4, 1997 - Desire and promise
- 02 week: Oct. 5 - Oct. 11, 1997 - God our Creator and Lord
- 03 week: Oct. 12 - Oct. 18, 1997 - My life, a history of salvation
- 04 week: Oct. 19 - Oct. 25, 1997 - Meaning and goal of my life
- 05 week: Oct. 26 - Nov. 1, 1997 - My illusions and disappointments
- 06 week: Nov. 2 - Nov. 8, 1997 - I am loved unconditionally
- 07 week: Nov. 9 - Nov. 15, 1997 - Healing of wounds and bitterness
- 08 week: Nov. 16 - Nov. 22, 1997 - I am a sinner
- 09 week: Nov. 23 - Nov. 29, 1997 - Jesus, my Savior
- 10 week: Nov. 30 - Dec. 6, 1997 - Jesus, the Incarnate Divine Word
- the One I love

PHASE II - From Conversion to Mission

- 11 week: Dec. 7 - Dec. 13, 1997 - The Call and the Coming of
Jesus Christ
- 12 week: Dec. 14 - Dec. 20, 1997 - Becoming human

Program 01

- 13 week: Dec. 21 - Dec. 27, 1997 - The Birth of Jesus
- 14 week: Dec. 28 - Jan. 3, 1998 - The Manifestation of the new-
born King
- 15 week: Jan. 4 - Jan. 10, 1998 - The hidden life of Jesus

From this point in time till Lent we are given some weeks of deliberate interruption. In January the Arnoldus Family celebrates the two feasts of blessed Arnold and Joseph, on January 15 and 29.

During this pause of some weeks, it would be profitable to read one or more biographies of either of these two blessed or of Blessed Maria Helena or Mothers Josepha or Mary Michael.

February 22, 1998 - Continuation of Phase II

- 16 week: Feb. 22 - Feb. 28, 1998 - The mission of Jesus begins
- 17 week: Mar. 1 - Mar. 7, 1998 - The strategy of Jesus
- 18 week: Mar. 8 - Mar. 14, 1998 - Jesus calls me by name
- 19 week: Mar. 15 - Mar. 21, 1998 - Jesus teaches and challenges me
- 20 week: Mar. 22 - Mar. 28, 1998 - The Love of Jesus draws me
towards the foolishness of love
- 21 week: Mar. 29 - Apr. 4, 1998 - The Following of Jesus - the
narrow path

PHASE III - From Mission to Self-Giving in Love

- 22 week: Apr. 5 - 11, 1998 - The Last Supper - Jesus' prayer in the
Garden of Olives - The Betrayal
- 23 week: Apr. 12 - 18, 1998 - Carrying the Cross - Death - Burial of
Jesus

Program 02

PHASE IV - From Self-Sacrifice in Love to Liberation

24 week: Apr. 19 - Apr. 25, 1998 - Easter, Jesus rises from the dead:
HE LIVES!

25 week: Apr. 26 - May 2, 1998 - The Risen Lord lives among His
own and sends them out to
all the world.

Now there follows a second, longer pause and rest on the way of our renewal retreat in everyday life. It is meaningful to linger for a while at this point, praying and listening to the liturgical texts, and to thus gradually approach Pentecost, allowing oneself to be led by the disciples of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles and doing one's best to learn how they read and came to terms with the signs of the times, on the level of the local Church and the diaspora, without losing sight of the Risen Lord.

May 24, 1998 - Continuation of Phase IV

26 week: May 24 - 30, 1998 - The promised gift, the Spirit of Jesus

27 week: May 31 - June 6, 1998 - The One and Triune God: origin
and source of inexhaustible love of
our Missionary Community with the
Divine Word

28 week: June 7 - 13, 1998 - In all things seek closer communion
with God. Mary will help us become
selfless ministers of the Divine
Word.

On the Way with Jesus the Divine Word

We
make
the path
by walking.

Genesis 17: 1

Walk
before
my face.
Be whole.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

*Come, Holy Spirit,
make us holy.
Fill our hearts
with a burning desire
for the Truth, the Way
and the fullness of Life.
Enkindle in us your fire
that it may make us into light
that shines and warms and consoles.
Let our heavy tongues find words
to speak of your love and beauty.
Make of us a new creation
so that we become people of love,
your holy ones,
visible words of God,
then we will renew the face of the earth
and everything will be created anew.
Come, Holy Spirit,
make us holy, strengthen us,
stay with us. Amen.*

(Eastern Liturgy)



Christ, by Ernst Barlach

PHASE ONE OF OUR RETREAT IN EVERYDAY LIFE

From Call to Conversion

Beginning a renewal process is not a matter of jumping into cold water and swimming. Rather, to continue with this metaphor, I wash every day; I know what water is and what it implies. I have experienced the pleasure of diving and swimming or I have learned from someone how to dive and swim. But this does not just come about without practice, without courage and an attraction toward water and the good feeling of refreshment and relaxation.

Spiritual renewal is an invitation to view the daily practice of meditation and prayer in the refreshing water of faith as a daily offer to entrust myself personally and wholly to the Lord and His wisdom. This tells me to swim against the tide of every day and develop the inner strength to survive. Only dead fish swim with the current.

Exercising my faith in an ever more strongly secularized world confronts me with the concrete call of God, in the world of creation, my neighborhood, and in the questions and challenges of people: It also confronts me with the hopes and fears, the power of evil and the mighty works of God in salvation history and arouses in me faith questions. Because of all this, I can freely take to the road with Jesus, the incarnate Word of God. I can accept His offer of an hour during which He will speak with me and share with me the mystery of His mission community with the Father through the Spirit who prays in my heart and in everyone's heart.

God's incarnate love desires and yearns for us all, especially myself who owe Him my life and vocation. But do I detect this yearning of God in myself? Do I trust this divine yearning totally? Perhaps it is

only my yearning for Him that I experience as profound and liberating.

I know I need God. I know too that He gives me an undivided love, just as I am: an integral human being, His creature, living and working, failing and sinning, giving and receiving. He is prepared every moment of my life until I die, to take upon Himself guilt, shame and death on the cross for us all. Is this already my *life-wisdom*, born of a grace which is a gift of faith?

In my repeated reflection I realize how I have been guided, released, healed and freed by this love. This has recently been renewed in me as a driving power that gives me trust in the unconditional love of the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, who brings me home from the strange land of sin to my *Father's house* and there prepares me a banquet (Luke 15).

The first phase of the renewal can be a way to recognize and discern the power of evil and sin in me with the eyes of faith and the love of Jesus. It can be a way to liberate me from my unwholesome condition. The mercy of God, our Abba, and His embracing, kissing love is the basic message of the first phase of the renewal for me and for us all. This "invitation to spend an hour with Jesus in prayer" frees us from the slavery of Pharaoh and the modern gods. This is what God wants to achieve by His call and my conversion to renewal.

This persevering meditation from day to day, week to week gives me the time and space to grow and become free enough to reconcile my own unfaithfulness and God's unconditional trust in me. Then I can take more decisive steps out of love for the Divine Word.

At the end of the first phase, the question arises: What answer can I make to this love, this call? What can I do? What can I do together with others? What should we do, we members of the Arnoldus family, we sons and daughters, as brothers and sisters who have one basic charism flowering into different missions throughout the world?

Here, too, it is the small steps of concrete actions that are more important than great ideas and plans that have not yet come into

being. Perhaps, through patient, common discernment of spirits, the dreams of the Church with prophetic content can materialize.

The tempo of growth in spiritual things has its own inner regularity: we become one with the ways of God's love, in patience and hope under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This is valid for the whole way, for all of the renewal process.

**The first and
greatest act of
charity is
to announce
the gospel.**

A. Janssen

**Only God
can fill your heart.
It is far too great
to be held captive
by creatures.**

Blessed Maria Helena

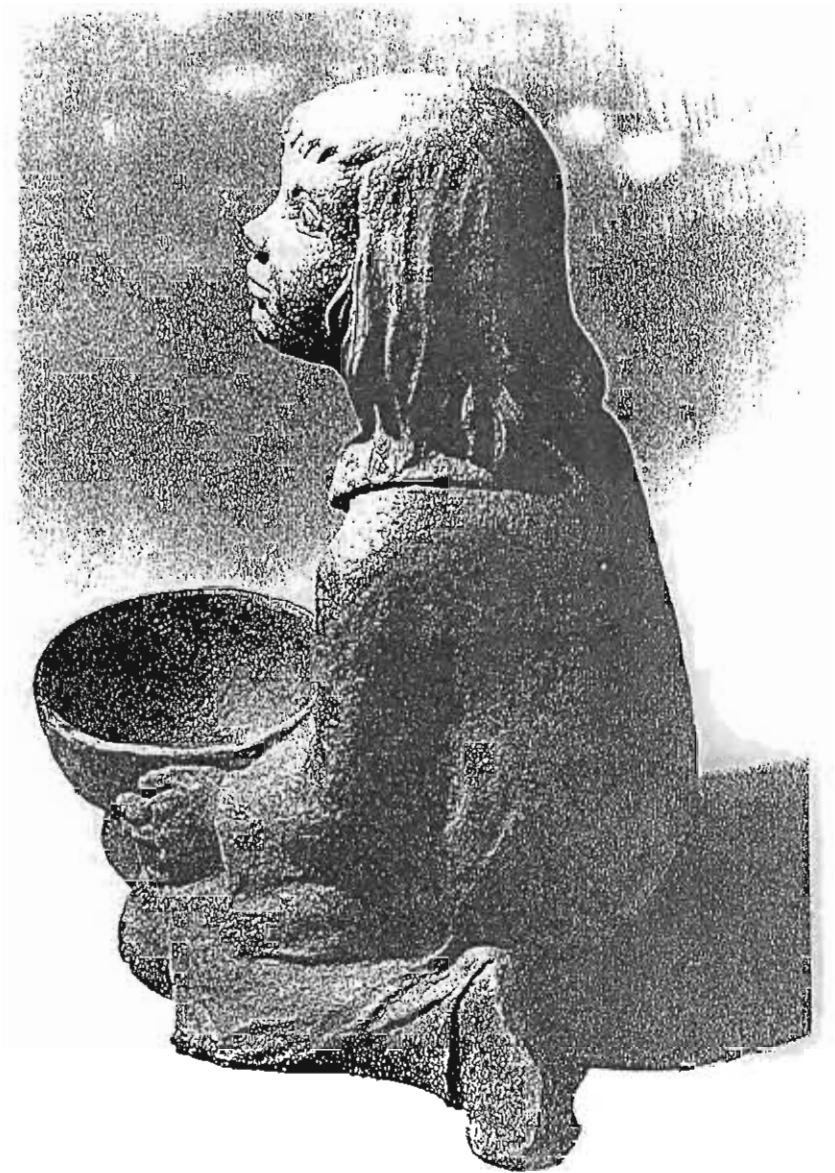
Before Meditation:

Lord, speak your Eternal Word
in me and enable me to hear it.
Lord, shine your light in me and help me see it.
Lord, print your image in me and let me guard it.
Lord, do your work in me
and let it renew me completely.

Kloster Rheinau, 14th century

I need you, Lord,
as my teacher.
I need you every day.
Give me the clarity of conscience
that alone can sense the presence of your Spirit.
My ears are deaf;
I cannot hear your voice.
My sight is dim;
I cannot see your footprints.
Only you can strengthen my hearing
and clarify my sight
and cleanse my heart.
Teach me to sit at your feet
to listen to your Word.

John Henry Newman, + 1890



Lord, empty me - Lord, fill me. by Sr. Dorothea Steigerwald

YEARNING AND PROMISE

The situation:

My faith tells me to live each day of my life in the place to which my vocation calls me. The Retreat in Everyday Life is a special gift to bring the blessing of God upon every day of my ordinary life. Every morning my heart opens itself to this new gift from a loving God, a gift that can awaken a yearning for His freeing and redeeming love. So His love is a moving and fulfilling promise on my way.

What I ask for:

- that I can deepen my appreciation of God's presence with me every day.
- that I can become more aware of God's yearning and affection for me.
- that with God's strength and encouragement I can respond to God's love with all my heart.
- that I learn to treasure the love of God by reading, listening, meditating, praying. And that as I walk my way to God I may find His Word to be a source of refreshment and strength.

What I meditate on:

A. Isaiah 43: 1 - 7

Affectionate love accompanies and surrounds me. (Psalm 23) - Wherever I go today, God's love walks every path with me.

1st Week 01

B. Hosea 11: 1 - 9

God is father and mother.

C. Isaiah 49: 14 - 16

In God's love I find security and protection, since my name is written on the palms of His hands.

D. Isaiah 55: 1 - 11

The Lord offers me everything I need for my life.
"Come.....and refresh yourself."

E. Luke 3: 21 - 22

Jesus accepted baptism, prayed, received the Holy Spirit and lets me share the unique love of His Father as son or daughter.

F. Repetition

How do I experience being a brother or sister to Jesus?
How do I experience my being chosen and loved in my daily life whether I live and work by myself or with others?

G. Luke 11: 1 - 13

Jesus shows me how, with my whole being, I can bring my yearning into the presence of God.

H. Summing up:

I am trying to express in simple words what I desire and humbly request from God here and now for these days of renewal. These things I can put into the form of the Jesus Prayer, or a rosary or ejaculations or my own words lovingly repeated to any melody I like.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

Where, when and how the promises of God touch my desires.
How can they inspire and guide me?

1st Week 02

Recommended reading:

I read in my autobiography the chapter on the moments and times of grace and happiness (childhood, adolescence, considering my vocation, etc. leading to my decision). The book referred to here is the journal or my unwritten "book" of memories that can perhaps be recalled.

BACK TO THE ROOTS

Where are the roots of our strength?
They are always to be found where we are at home.
And where are we at home?
Not only in a particular country or place, in a specific street or building.
We are at home with an aria from Mozart, a string quartet from Haydn,
a poem of Rilke's or an evening prayer that we learned in childhood from mother,
in the memory of a journey in the land of our imagination, in the heart of a friend, in the soul and the thoughts of someone we love.
Here are the roots of our strength.

Elli Michler



After Meditation

Jesus, Savior, have mercy on me.
Enlighten my eyes
that I find the way to you.
Discipline my feet that I
never stray from you.
Open my mouth
that I receive my speech from you.
You want me to love the people I live with.
Let me so serve them
that they find their salvation
and be admitted to Your Glory.

Abbot Alcuin (+ 804)

Spirit of Truth,
Light for my path,
For each perception of faith
I thank you.
Make my faithful service
fruitful
and lead everyone
you have entrusted to me
into the fullness of truth.

Author Unknown

GOD, OUR CREATOR AND LORD

Principle and Foundation

*"God, you are my God. I am seeking you.
My soul is thirsting for you." (Ps 63: 1)*

The situation:

The variety of things and kinds of living creatures demonstrate an inestimable abundance in the cosmos and in the nature that surrounds us. All this came from a single source, God, who created everything out of nothing and unites and holds it together under Christ, the head of all this creation.

What I ask for:

- that the Lord and Creator animate me to learn to understand and share His work.
- that I be grateful for my human existence.
- that He enable me to understand created things and my part in creating them.
- that God, the Father and Creator of all things, move me to praise Him in all my daily activity.

What I meditate on:

A. Genesis 1: 26-27. 31

The God of my life has created me in His own image. This gives me value as a man or woman that I may live as a human being in a loving relationship with God and the rest of humanity.

2nd Week 01

B. Psalm 104 and Psalm 8

God in His love created me and everything I touch in my life.
His creating goes on in me and all the plants and animals by
day and by night.

C. Repetition

As I review the texts of Genesis and Psalms 8 and 104, I can
compose my own Psalm of Creation or my song to my Creator.

D. Wisdom 11: 21 - 26

The Lord conserves everything, because He is a friend of
life.

E. Sirach 17: 1 - 15

In every respect, the created human being is wonderful. He can
comprehend the greatness of God's work and extol and praise
the wonders of God.

F. Ephesians 1: 3 - 14

In Christ God has chosen us from eternity and revealed to
us the mystery of His will. Through the Word of Truth and
the Spirit of God we are heirs of heaven. Through the
redemption we are God's possession, called to praise His
glory.

G. Repetition

I go back to the places that helped me the most to praise God.
Perhaps I can compose my praise in writing, or possibly an
antiphon with text and melody.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

How God manifests Himself in the commonplace experiences
of every day.
And how God speaks to me through the people I meet.

Recommended reading:

The Song of the Sun of St. Francis of Assisi.
Use the text and song while walking or journeying. During the
week keep reciting it and let it have its effect on you.

The Foundation: Fact and Practice (EB 23)

God freely created us so that we might know, love, and serve him in
this life and be happy with him forever. God's purpose in creating us is
to draw forth from us a response of love and service here on earth, so
that we may attain our goal of everlasting happiness with him in hea-
ven.

All the things in this world are gifts of God, created for us, to be the
means by which we can come to know him better, love him more
surely, and serve him more faithfully.

As a result, we ought to appreciate and use these gifts of God insofar
as they help us toward our goal of loving service and union with God.
But insofar as any created things hinder our progress toward our goal,
we ought to let them go.

In everyday life, then, we should keep ourselves indifferent or undeci-
ded in the face of all created gifts when we have an option and we do
not have the clarity of what would be a better choice. We ought not
to be led on by our natural likes and dislikes even in matters such as
health or sickness, wealth or poverty, between living in the east or in
the west becoming an accountant or a lawyer.

Rather, our only desire and our one choice should be that option
which better leads us to the goal for which God created us.

*David L. Fleming, SJ., A contemporary reading of the Spiritual Exercises. A
Companion to St. Ignatius Text. St. Louis, Missouri 1987, 2nd edition, p. 8*

MY LIFE AS SALVATION HISTORY

The situation:

Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Sarah, Hagar and Miriam), was the leader of his people in the difficult times of Abraham's history. This same God of history is guiding my life to my personal salvation. I can look back over only a part of my way, but I can recognize Him in it.

What I ask for:

- that I may recognize God in His dealings with me and other people.
- that I may comprehend and desire the guidance of God in my life.
- that my whole life may be and remain a trusting adventure of faith.

What I meditate on:

A. Psalm 139

God is mother, God is father: in Him I lived (St. Paul) from the beginning of my life. He surrounds me with affection.

Where I go, YOU also go. (Buber)

B. Psalm 105

God showed His initiative when He led Israel to freedom.

"He led his happy people forward, to joyful shouts from His chosen..." (verse 43)

C. Milestones of the guidance of God in my life

I let my memory roam over my life noting the events, encounters, escapes from danger, adventures in foreign cultures, getting lost...experiences with people, with groups, ...meetings that have proved to be significant...deliverances and illuminations from internal or external pressures... Events that were fulfilling.

D. Experiences of love in my life

I bring to mind people who truly loved me. I trace back how their love was given me. I also consider people I have especially loved and treasured, who have accepted my love, with whom I feel completely protected and well understood.

E. SVD Constitutions 205-209; SSpS Constitutions 205-209

Personal friendship with Christ is the foundation for a fulfilled life in a celibate relationship of friendship with men and women. I recall to mind such experiences, trying to understand God's message which they convey to me.

F. Repetition

God's love is at work in a wonderful way. How can I orient myself today as I review the guidance of God in my life and in recent days?

G. Psalm 118

God has become the Savior of my life, the melody of my heart: "My strength and my song is the Lord."

How do I show my joy, my gratitude, to the Lord? How do I show these to people?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

God has spoken to me in new variations of signs, words, symbols, silence, people, cultures and the cry of bitter need. And through songs of praise and celebration... Now in all these, how close can I approach Him?

Recommended reading:

Ephesians 1
Gospel of John 1: 1 - 18
Prologues of SVD and SSPS Constitutions

BRIDGES OF SERENITY

**A rare smile
from close by
loses itself from time to time
in my cell
and waits for a reply.**

**One day I shall
arise,
open the door
and simply
go forth.**

**Someone calls me
by my secret
personal name.
And welcomes me.
Past and done with
is my solitary isolation.**

Conrad Miesen

3rd Week 03

In his teaching about the following of Christ, Abbot Basil took his Brothers to a crossroad and said: "The Christ is a person who decides and acts."

One of the Brothers asked: "How shall I know which road is right for me?"

The abbot replied: "Decide for yourself. Take the next step in the name of Jesus the Lord. He is the Way. In Him God blesses you on all your ways."

"The one who remains standing, is powerless, at the mercy of all the afflictions of the world, since the blessing of God empowers only the one who decides and moves."

"Why, then," asked the same Brother, "does my way so often go through dryness and darkness?"

Abbot Basil replied: "Know that God pursues not your preferences but your salvation. And reflect on the law of the grape vine: pruning improves the yield of grapes."

From Gib mir ein Wort, Heiligenbronner Geschichten

3rd Week 04

THE GOAL OF MY LIFE

The situation:

All too easily can I lose myself in the plenitude of possibilities, occupations, demands and encounters. The duration of my life is passing and I ask myself what I really want in my life. How will I achieve it? Does my life have a goal at all?

What I ask for:

- to show me the limits in my life.
- to lead me to His own life, His Heart.
- to lead me deeper into the understanding and the mystery of my life especially when the darkness of faith, mourning and pain, sickness and death engulf me.

What I meditate on:

A. The value of my Life (imaginative exercise)

I pretend to myself that after a medical examination I am sitting in the doctor's reception room waiting for my report. I am called into the office. I compose myself internally and externally to hear the diagnosis. I note that the doctor is serious. After a deep sigh he begins to speak slowly. He hesitates; he says the wrong things. I become a trifle impatient and ask him to be candid. After a little pause for reflection he tells me sadly that I have an incurable disease with the prospect of living only two or three months longer.

How do I react to that? I go home. What do I think on the way and how do I manage to understand?

Who do I want to talk to? Who is so close to me that he/she can share my anguish?

I must inform my provincial. How? I will write a letter. What is important enough to be included?

What is going to happen during the next two to three months? What do I feel when I consider the coming two months that are still left to me?

(Anthony de Mello: Meditate with Body and Soul. Exercise 25)

B. The correct perspective (imaginative exercise)

I pretend to myself that the two to three months given me by the doctor have passed. I am lying in bed, weak and sick, but with no great pain. It is evening. I am all alone. I do not know how many days I still have to live. What am I conscious of as I consider that my life will end very soon?

What has this realization taught me during the past weeks? What does it tell me now?

I remember some of the important events of my life, my decision to follow my vocation. Am I glad I did? As I look back over my life, what is there that I am grateful for still today?

Regarding that decision, if today I could begin my life again, would I entertain such an offer again? Would I make my acceptance conditional?

If I could give my best friend only one phrase of advice, a sentence or a word, as I depart from him, what would I say?

(A. de Mello. Exercise 26)

C. Principle and Foundation (EB:23) cf. Introduction 15, p. 27 or 2nd Week 03, p. 63 of this Manual: *David Fleming, S.J., A contemporary reading of the Spiritual Exercises.*

D. Repetition

This time we concentrate on freedom. How does my freedom grow in my union of walking with Jesus? Does this attract me?

E. Mark 12, 28 - 34

How will I phrase my question when I put it directly to Jesus? What do I hear Jesus answer?

F. Matthew 25, 31 - 46

People stand before the court of God. I am among them. How the people and God astonish me as I listen to this sentence. I pray for the grace to adapt this standard in the way I treat and evaluate myself and others.

G. Repetition

What do I long for with all my strength? With all my soul? Is it something to wish for, to avoid difficulties in my personal life, or something to yearn to possess?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

Which purposes guide me? Which ones do I pursue consciously or not? How do these agree with the fundamental intention of my life? I want to name them, to transform them, to offer them to God.

Recommended reading:

SVD Constitutions 121 - 124, 220, 316, 417
SSpS Constitutions 118 - 122, 223, 316, 421
Biography of Arnold Janssen or Joseph Freinademetz;
pick one and read it from cover to cover.

4th Week 01

Better to fly a little lower
till one sees
that the wings are strong,
than rashly to risk
the danger of Icarus.

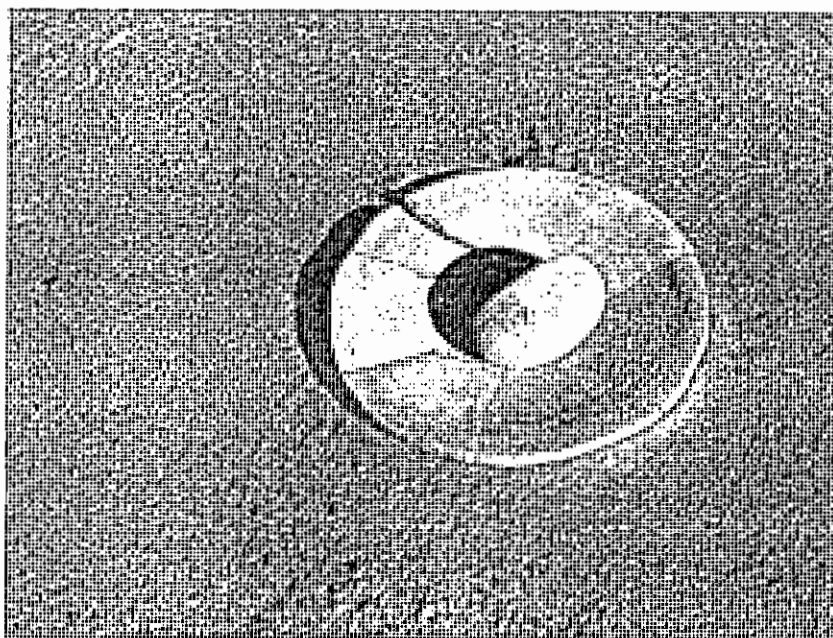
John Janssen

*Show yourself as a God who listens.
Be the great ear poised to hear everything I say.
Be the listener who hears even things unsaid.
Be the understanding one to whom, even when I no longer
understand, my secret intentions lie open.
Be the attentive one who especially encourages me to
open my mouth.
Be the questioning one who finally asks the right
questions.
Be the one who knows, but never gives pain.
Be the rebuke that burns but does not consume.
Be the "yes" to the whole of the past.
Be the glance that brings hope to blossom.
Be the answer that really satisfies me.
Be the great, silent response that needs no more words.*

(Norbert Lohfink)

Hinter den Dingen ein Gott, Freiburg 1981, p. 45, 3rd edition

4th Week 01



Like a broken pot you hold in your hand
the shards of your lies about yourself.

Do not hold on to them, let go, let it happen to you.

You will be amazed how a new vessel will grow out of them.
Take it to the brook, use it to scoop up water, and survive!

Author unknown

MY ILLUSIONS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

*"The time has come; the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent
and believe the Good News"*

(Mark 1:15)

The situation:

So many things can keep me far from God's. Possibly not even in every case my known sins, but rather things I cling to, my home made ideals and ideas of perfection. This way is plastered with intentions that lead to disappointment. As long as I cling to my pride in myself, my ideals, I can never be freed from this unholy cycle. The way of freedom and redemption begins only when I acknowledge my misery to myself and to God.

What I ask for:

- that the Lord open my eyes to my illusions.
- that He help me to place all my hope in Him.
- that I may stand before Him as I really am and thus advance with the others along the way to freedom.

What I meditate on:

A.Psalm 77

I reflect on the works of the Lord. I will think of all the wonders He has accomplished. God, your way is holy. You alone are a God who does wonderful things.

5th Week 01

B. Luke 4: 1 - 13

Jesus too suffered temptations and was surrounded by illusions. He lived out of the word of the Father and endured the tempter in the desert of every day.

C. Repetition

What delusions have already been exposed and what disappointments have I already abandoned, which have I not? What ideals and hopes in my life have I not yet fulfilled? Have I offered them to God so He can fulfill them?

D. John 2: 1 - 12

With the disciples I have been invited to the celebration. The wine is finished. I go to Jesus. Can I, with Mary, believe He will transform me? If not, I can hardly address Him.

E. John 3: 1 - 9

A new birth has come into my life. Do I request the cleansing spirit of renewal, or do I seek only an improvement of my life?

F. John 4: 1 - 26

Jesus led the Samaritan woman to see the truth about her life and to appreciate true love. How ready am I to embrace truth?

G. Repetition

Which springs of water do I seek out? Which alternative actions do I try again and again? How can I make the admission of my alternative solutions a door to freedom? What false hopes must I renounce? Can I place my hope in Jesus?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

Where do I encounter illusions, disappointments, resignation or alternative gratifications in myself, my society,

my world? How far do these take me from the presence of Jesus? How do I attend to new things?

Recommended reading:

SVD Constitutions: 121

SSpS Constitutions: 119, 120

Isaiah 5: 1 - 7 (The vineyard which the Lord planted yields sour grapes.)

Ezekiel 16 (Israel's election, sin and redemption)

**It pleases God, the Lord,
to test us
and to send us out into the storm.**

**We are grateful
and carry our cross
with patience and joy,
since it will be clear that**

"In cruce salus - in the cross is salvation."

**After the storm
will come
a dependable peace.**

Arnold Janssen



Psalm 146: 8: *The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down*, by Sr. Irmgard

I AM LOVED UNCONDITIONALLY

*"Take from me whatever keeps me from You.
Give me everything that draws me to You.
Take me from myself and give me to be totally yours"*

Br. Klaus v. der Flue

The situation:

One thing will be clear again and again in everyday living: my self-worth, my salvation is not determined by my activity, my righteousness, but only by the love and grace of God. He gives them to me without strings or designs because He wants to give. So faith means to affirm this unconditional love, to accept, trust and make it the foundation of living. God does not love me because I exist; but I exist because God loves me. From this flows true freedom and creativity that manifest themselves in deeds and words of love.

What I ask for:

- that I so experience in my ordinary life that God loves and accepts me as I am.
- that I believe and so know: the salvation of myself and all humanity is grounded only in the mercy of God.

What I meditate on:

A. Luke 7: 36 - 50

In this event, who am I, the sinner, the pharisee? I assume one role after another and in each discuss it with Jesus.

B. Repetition

Jesus invites me today to be a guest at his banquet. How do I answer? How do I conduct myself in Jesus' presence?

C. Luke 15: 11 - 32

Which of the sons am I? May there not be attitudes of each in me? How do I encounter the special love of the Father now, today?

D. Repetition

Can I adopt and maintain the actions, words and concerns of the Father?

E. John 13: 1 -15

How do I view and experience Jesus?

Can I let Him wash my feet?

And in this matter, how do I treat others? Often they would wish to wash my feet. Do I accept this gesture of love?

F. Repetition

Am I ready to wash someone else's feet? How do I go about this?

G. Psalm 103

Prayerfully I go through the Psalm and pause at every verse that speaks to me and remember the story of my relationship of love with God. I continue praying in my own words.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

The love of God, which is without any ulterior designs, is pledged to me every day. How do I live and share this love with my confreres / fellow sisters?

Recommended reading:

Psalms 8 and 104 (the magnificence of the divine and the dignity of the human)

Sirach 16: 24-17, 32 (the goodness and providence of God)
"To read" (review) from the viewpoint of God the Creator and Maintainer of all life, my life in regard to creation and to maintaining.

*If I could be
your mirror
and you see yourself in it
and see yourself in me.*

Isolde Lachmann

Once before going on a journey,
Rabbi Rafael called a student.
He wanted to give him a seat in the wagon.

The student said: "I fear I shall crowd you."
The rabbi answered loudly:

We shall love each other more
and there will seem to be plenty of room."

Martin Buber

To live with each other every day

I always ask myself the question:
Why do people not persevere in love?
Why is it so difficult when we live with each other
every day?
I think we are too glad to cheat ourselves.
We swear to love the other person and in reality we
love ourselves, our own EGO.

One expects too much from others.
The other should be friendly, should admire us, carry
us in his arms, go through fire for us.
He is allowed no bursts of temper, no bad sides.
Woe when he criticizes me. The slightest
disappointment and my heart is deeply bruised.

We think too little of what we owe to others of what
we could give him, what we could do for him.
Be not too quick to say: "You do not love me."
As long as you yourself have not given everything.

The most important

hour

is always the present.

The most important

person

*is the one standing face to face
to you now.*

The most essential

work

is always love.

Meister Eckhart

HEALING OF WOUNDS AND BITTERNESS FREEDOM FROM ANXIETIES AND WHAT CRIPPLES LIFE

The situation:

There have been experiences in my life that constrict me, cause me anxiety, vex and obstruct me. These are wounds that will not heal, bereavements I do not mourn, tears I cannot shed, injustice suffered but passed over in silence. Such experiences often reemerge as concealed aggression or cynicism and all too easily poison my life and that of others.

In the course of time I have become used to this and cannot bring myself to change. When Jesus asks me today, in this week: "Do you wish to be healed?" (John 5: 6) what answer will I give to Him?

In the New Testament Jesus is seen healing more often than He is forgiving sins. Is this, perhaps, what I have experienced in my life?

In the Gospel, the sick person is led down the way where three people play roles, one who helps, one who heals and one who opposes.

Also in my life there are hurts of body and soul that often lie hidden for long periods, causing persistent rancor and unreconciled bitterness. This sort of thing used to happen in my family with my brothers and sisters, and now in my society and community, it still does.

These deep invasions of the human being are often the hot-

7th Week 01

bed of poisoned soil for denials of life and of uncharitableness.

The salvation history in the Gospels can help bring me to Jesus that I can approach Him and request what I know I need most: concrete healing and/or reconciliation.

What I ask for:

- that Jesus expose to me my suppressed wounds of body and soul, my bereavements, my unreconciled attitude toward certain people and institutions or my hurtful images of God. And that then He lead me to healing and reconciliation through His Spirit and His Word.
- that Jesus give me the strength and courage to face my anxieties and resistances, to offer them to Him and to request healing and freeing.

What I meditate on:

A. Mark 2: 1-12

Am I crippled? Which part of me is lame? Could I be healed by Jesus? Or do I need liberation from _____? Can I trust Jesus and so ask Him to do whatever will heal and free me? Should I ask someone to bring me to Jesus, to allow myself to be carried by another?

B. Mark 5: 24 - 34

What burdens, what acknowledged problems have I carried about with me for years? When did I ever approach Jesus for help? What strength comes to me from Him? Can I tell Jesus the whole truth? I listen to Jesus, to what He says to me.

7th Week 02

C. Repetition

I can close with Psalm 3

Which enemies pursue me?

"You are my glory; you establish me."

D. Luke 19: 1 - 10

In what aspects of my life, my vocation, my work have I proven to be too small-minded, too insignificant? Where do I experience myself as inadequate? How am I trying to make contact with Jesus, with His healing?

E. Mark 10: 46 - 52

Out of my deepest need have I already cried: "Jesus, have mercy on me!"? Do I accept encouragement from others or allow them to lead me to Jesus, also when I can hardly distinguish Him in the situation? Can I allow Jesus to say what He wishes to do to me? And if He says: "Go, your faith has made you whole," how can I turn back?

F. Matthew 12: 9 - 21

With Jesus, humanity goes before the judge. The solidarity of Jesus with the sick, the weak, the crippled and the oppressed is part of the accusation and condemnation of Jesus to death. He is the servant of Yahweh, "my chosen one in whom my soul delights" (Isaiah 42: 1-4).

G. John 11: 1 - 44

Jesus has power over death and life. He can bestow life to the fullest and rouse the dead to new life. Which death have I already undergone? Who or what has restored me to new life?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

How do I experience myself as hyper-sensitive, cynical, obstructed, unreasonably morose and unreconciled? When and whence do these symptoms of my affliction arise? Is it

7th Week 03

always the same? Do I experience or live out such statements as these:

"I alone am doing this. You, Ma'am, have only to get ready. Why ask others? The human being stands alone. Help yourself and God will help you! I have always fought my way through by myself; I'll be that way this time too. I don't need others. They need me! I have asked, but no one can help me."

These and other such phrases may be part of myself. I look at them. I speak about the points with Jesus or with a good friend.

Recommended reading:

SVD Constitutions	SSpS Constitutions
410 The call of Jesus to conversion and faith	414
411 The sacrament of reconciliation	415
412 Ongoing conversion	416

When I read my own story of healing in the context of my need of salvation, which texts would I add to the Constitution texts or underline?



John 4: 34: *My food is to do the will of the one who sent me.*
Cathedral of our Lady in Hildesheim, Germany

I AM A SINNER

*"You say to yourself: I am rich and need nothing. ...
You do not realize just how you are miserably and pitifully poor, blind and
naked." (Rev. 3: 17)*

The situation

Have I ever had the experience of wounding someone deeply?
And the further experience of having this person forgive me
without my first asking his pardon? I know from recent experience
that this enables us to deal easily with each other, look
each other in the eye without embarrassment.

Today I realize all the better what my share of that sin was. I
cannot attribute guilt to this person who has forgiven me. At a
distance I now recognize my guilt and can endure it.

To be conscious of sin is truly a grace. Without a sign of forgiveness,
I cannot tolerate it. This experience that came to me
unconditionally many saints share with me. They know they
have been sinners.

This knowledge is the fruit of conversion, of being shaken, of
being loved.

The experience of grace is an experience of depth. The consciousness
of sinfulness presents itself in the depths I am traversing and tells me
I am unconditionally loved. This I can experience again and again. Grace
is love, and only love can take soundings for sin and procure forgiveness
as a free gift.

What I ask for:

- that I experience that without God, or alienated from God, I cannot live.
- that I be shamed and shaken awake by the Lord and realize how far I am from grace.
- that I perceive sins as pain and in remorse be brought to see the structure and social ramifications of sin and remain aware of that.

What I meditate on:

A. Luke 10: 25 - 37

First approach: I place myself in the situation of those who are in need. What comes to my mind? Do I want help? What help do I wish from others, from God? Who am I when no one is concerned about me?

B. Repetition

Second approach: I put myself in the role of the priest. What do I think now? Can I gaze at the other person, see sympathize with her/him?

C. Repetition

Third approach: I take the role of the Levite. What stirs in my mind? My guilt is identical. What does it say to me?

D. Repetition

Fourth approach: I take on the character of the merciful Samaritan. I allow the Spirit of God to touch me. With whom do I sympathize? Do I have sympathy for the people around me where I live?

E. Repetition of the whole scene

I perceive again the story as the Bible tells it. I move through the different situations, pausing where I perceive myself and



Luke 7: 39.45: *The woman who was a sinner*, by Roland, Peter Litzenburger

turning to the places that mostly affected me. What does my heart tell me now? What do I pray my Lord and Brother for? What do I thank Him for in my life?

F. Luke 10: 36 - 37

Today I come to Jesus to listen to His questions. What questions has He for me? What is my sincere answer?

G. Ezekiel 36: 25 - 29

God is good and rich in kindness. He bestows a new heart and a new spirit on me. Only He can free me. He alone is my God and our God, the Savior of the whole people. His fidelity is unique.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

How much do I dither before the claim of the situation of my neighbor? How do I go about blind to the need of my neighbor and excuse myself with a claim to lack of time, prior commitments or even by an admission of guilt? How do I show false sympathy for myself, for others?

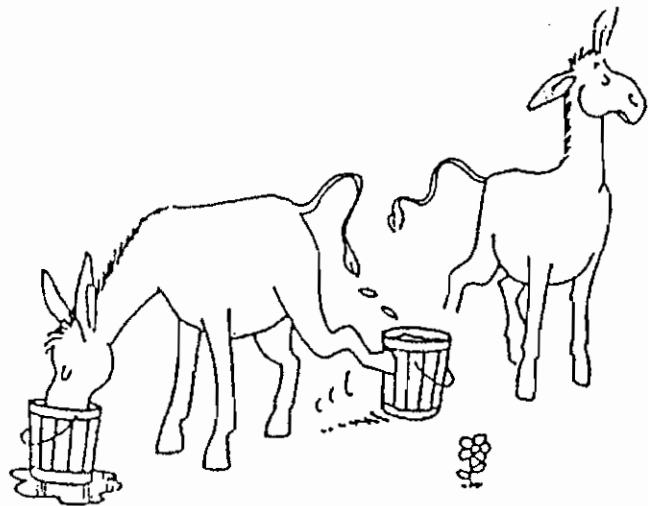
Recommended readings

SVD Constitutions	SSpS Constitutions
507 The world and our obligations to its needs	507
507.2 Openness to the world in accord with the norms of the Gospel; this requires training in the discernment of spirits	507. 2
508 Shaping our lives according to our faith	508
509 Spiritual life and our professional activity form a unity	503
Scripture: Romans 5: 1 - 11; 6; 8: 1 - 11	
Ezekiel 36: 20 - 36	

Thirst for God

How does one induce a donkey who is not thirsty to drink?

And how can one - with all respect - bring a human being to thirst for God when he has renounced his thirst and finds contentment in beer and hard liquor, television and traveling?



There is only one solution: tie a thirsty donkey next to an other donkey. The thirsty one will drink from his bucket with great enjoyment, simply because he has a great, unslaked thirst.

The other donkey will be impressed, approach his bucket and gulp down the refreshing water.

People who have a hunger and thirst for God are a better sermon for those around them than many well constructed words.

(Jacques Loew)

From: Willi Lambert, Aus Liebe zur Wirklichkeit. p. 27 f.

The horse leaves manure in his stall, and although the manure is filthy and stinking, the same horse works very hard to transport the manure to the field. There it produces beautiful grains and noble wine which would never have grown without the manure..

People have a kind of manure (or garbage, or compost material), that is, needs that they do not throw out or overcome or lay aside. These can be carried to the field of God's great love. This takes effort and diligence and calm determination. And we need no help in the transporting. So scatter your compost on this wonderful field where it will quietly produce admirable fruit.

J. Tauler

JESUS MY SAVIOR

"For Him I have accepted the loss of everything and I look on everything as so much rubbish if only I can have Christ... All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death. That is the way I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead."

(Phil 3: 8-11)

The situation

We people receive our life from a source which is love. This deep stream gives us living water, unconditional love, which comes only from God. Jesus by His life and death on the cross generously gives this love to us. This faith in the love of God is the basis, and mystery, for a free, redeemed life.

What I ask for:

- that I may grow ever more profoundly in the community of love the Son has with the Father and the exchange of love He has with the Holy Spirit.
- that this encounter with God will give me trust and strength on my way through all the days of my life.
- that ever more I may experience the yearning of true friendship with Jesus and pass this friendship on.

What I meditate on:

A. Psalm 146: 7

"Yahweh, forever faithful, gives justice...gives food...gives liberty..."

9th Week 01

B. Psalm 121

"Help comes to me from Yahweh."

C. Repetition

How do I come to know the Lord and his watchfulness over me? Am I prepared to allow Him who loves me to free me?

D. Luke 15: 4 - 7

Jesus is my shepherd. He takes me in his arms and shows also to others the joy now found in me.

E. Ephesians 2: 4 - 10

It is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by any merit of your own.
When we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life with Christ.

F. Psalm 32

"I will go to Yahweh and confess my fault." However, you have pardoned my sin.

G. Summing up:

I call to mind the "Song of liberation in my life" and write down the words, the melody, the interior messages as a psalm or a recurring verse. It should be with me all day.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

Do I bring pain to people? Do those in my neighborhood cause me pain? I can realize from my faith that Jesus has taken all this upon himself and paid for it.

9th Week 02



Luke 15: 32: ...your brother here was dead and has come to life;
he was lost and is found, by Sieger Köder

Recommended reading:

SVD Constitutions

SSpS Constitutions

412 Life is conversion; patient growth in love

416

121 We share the life of obedience of Jesus

217; 218

Phil.1:12 - 2,5 the experiences of the apostle Paul

Eph. 3:14 - 21 our faith and hope call Jesus to live in our hearts

Hebrews 12:1 - 11 Jesus is the creator and perfecter of our faith

*"But happy are your eyes
because they see,
your ears
because they hear!
I tell you solemnly,
many prophets and holy men
longed to see
what you see and never saw it;
to hear
what you hear, and never heard it."*

Matthew 13: 16 - 17



St. Francis under the Cross, by Sr. S. May, OSF

JESUS - THE INCARNATE DIVINE WORD - The One I love

The situation:

As a missionary in the Society of the Divine Word or of the Servants of the Holy Spirit, I know I have been called to this way by the Spirit and the "Son of Man", Jesus Christ. He goes the whole way with me. This way of His, along which He guides me during my life, leads through people to Jerusalem, to Calvary, and beyond them, to the Father. He invites me to walk this way with Him in community, in different cultures, in dialogue with other denominations and religions, sharing the circumstances and life of the poor. This is a journey of faith through the different stages of my life.

What I ask for:

- that Jesus make possible my journey with my co-believers, my fellow sisters and brothers, and those who share my culture to the languages and circumstances of the poor.
- I can gaze out of my sufferings and joys upon Jesus and from Him learn to have unconditional trust in the Father.
- that the renewal experience in my society, province — will bring me the company of the Holy Spirit to challenge, encourage, give confidence and guidance to open up and deepen my missionary vocation.

What I meditate on:

A SUGGESTION:

to spend the whole week concentrating on Jesus as the one upon whom all my love is focussed. He became human for me and delivered Himself up to death for me.

Luke 23: 33 - 49

I stand among the crowd under the cross as they converse, look upon Jesus and invite Him to take possession of me.

SECOND SUGGESTION:

I take the place of the thief, hang upon his cross, speak with Jesus and learn what He has to say to me.

THIRD SUGGESTION:

I read the Passion narrative in any one of the Gospels and stand beside an individual or group (Peter, Pilate, the disciples, the crowd, people who mirror me or engage my sympathy and try to understand why they acted as they did. I look upon Jesus to perceive what He did for me and what I can do for Him in return. In all this, I involve myself with Jesus and seek dialogue with Him which will bear fruit in my day-to-day living both within myself and with others.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

I will walk as people do in their sufferings, taking their place, mortifying myself, carrying the cross with them, joining their solidarity with the weak, the persecuted, the repressed, the defiled. I will deepen my faith until I comprehend better how Jesus accepted all this willingly despite his own innocence, and so redeemed all human beings, including myself.

Recommended reading:

Romans 8
The Epilogue of the Constitutions.

10th Week 02

SECOND PHASE **of our renewal for every day**

FROM CONVERSION TO MISSION

The first phase of our renewal process for every day dealt with the moving from call to conversion, from the depth of yearning for the Creator who makes everything new, to the merciful, liberating love of Jesus, our Brother and Redeemer. This experience has been given us on our way, the more we put ourselves at his disposal and allowed ourselves to be guided and fulfilled by His Word and Holy Spirit.

Already in the introduction to the *first* phase some questions arise concerning the next phase. They must now be reviewed to help us understand the way we have already traveled, as well as the way to come.

- How do I respond to this love, this call, every day?
- What can I do?
- What should I do together *with the Sisters and Brothers*?
- What is our first common duty as sons and daughters of our Arnoldus Family, as brothers and sisters, toward the basic charism of mission and communion in the world which has been confided to us?

(Refer to the introduction to the first phase, item 3)

These enquiring and groping questions arise from the actual call and invitation Jesus gave to His disciples; to me, to us, when He said, as Mark reports:

- "He appointed twelve;
- they were to be His companions

2nd Phase 01

- and be sent out to preach
- with power to cast out devils."

(Mark 3: 14-15 and 7 - 19)

Following this free selection by Jesus, we daily share in His Word and Spirit, way and mission, life and community, love and association with the Father. With Jesus we share daily in the challenge of beloved trust and the desire for unity and peace with people. To be in His company and to follow Him daily, let us look at, feel, taste, ponder and understand the workings of salvation. They lead us into contemplation. We open ourselves profoundly to His mysteries that He shares with us every day, because he wishes to guide us into deeds which are truly good.

For this I need space and time. Jesus will accept us/me into His school of Word and Life. He instructs us in his mysteries. This school began in the first phase of our way. Perhaps something of this has brought me along the way. I might pay attention to these questions. Let me put them thus:

- What has happened to me thus far?
- What has evoked trust or mistrust?
- What will the Lord say to me about this?
- What is my honest answer?
- What is it that prevents me from answering?

In the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius (91 - 98) after the beginning of the second week there is a discussion of the "Parable of the 'Call of the King'". How can this parable open the door to the mysteries of Jesus?

Jesus the King invites me to discipleship, to be one of His close companions to whom He reveals Himself, whom He distinguishes by a loving relationship and a sharing of common duties. The companion so closely united with the King, Jesus, will know where the King comes from, what He sets himself to do, who His enemies are, what His plans and endeavors are.

In this spiritual relationship, I grow as His companion. I experience His loving presence that calls, teaches, heals, challenges and accepts me as I am.

This companion of Jesus desires to bear with Jesus all humiliations, disappointments and poverty this mutual relationship calls for. I know when I agree to the association and live and love in it, that I will never be abandoned by Jesus. So I have a permanent relationship with the King in work, prayer and rest. The servant of Jesus shares His mission, the basic good news of salvation, of liberation, of righteousness and peace, to all people. So in the fulfillment of this mission will God, the Father of Jesus Christ our Brother, and our Father, be glorified.

This parable points to the two poles in Mark 3: 14-15, "to be with Him" in friendship and to share His mission to proclaim Jesus and glorify the Father.

*"Live quietly with God
work gladly for God
View things from God's viewpoint
Talk things over with God
Glow with zeal for the Glory of God
find your joy in God
Rest deep in the heart of God."*

Mother Mary Michael

THE CALL AND THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

Rev. 2:17 *"I will give him a white stone - a stone with a new name written on it, known only to the person who receives it."*

The situation:

As Christians we believe that God calls the world to communion - to a society that is in a sincere relationship with Him, all creation and especially all human beings. In this relationship, culture, nation, seniority, sex and race are in harmony. For us of the Steyl Family, communion is the goal of our mission service.

Communion is primarily an initiative of God's and the foundation of the deepest relationships that the human person cannot bring into being alone. Communion is life and calls people to life, builds bridges between continents, peoples, faith communities, man and woman.

It is the basic law of love and of vocation. As Christians and missionaries we take great pains to recognize the will of God in His call to communion.

(From a working paper for the 14th General Chapter 1994, Rome 1993, pp. 12-13)

What I ask for:

- that my ears and my heart be alert to hear the call of Jesus, my King
- that Jesus will accept me as His companion in the service of His call to communion and to mission.
- that I become more profoundly aware of the call, that I may experience more personally His love for me and for others, and that I feel daily growth in my relationship to his mission.

What I meditate on:

A. Isaiah 52: 13 - 53, 12

Do I recognize my King?

B. Mark 3: 7 - 19

Jesus is near to people, to me. He calls, selects, sends.
People follow Him.

C. Luke 9: 23 - 26

Will I preserve my life? For whom? Will I sacrifice my life? -
for whom?

D. John 17: 9 - 19

What does the prayer of Jesus show me for my own
relationship to and vision of His kingdom?

E. Repetition:

How do I answer in prayer, in actions?

F. SVD Constitutions 101; SSps Constitutions 101 and 102

What offer must I make Him? (I try very hard to express this in
writing.)

What I pay attention to in daily life:

How I experience interiorly and exteriorly, that Jesus, my
King, visits me to enlist my cooperation with His mission.
Perhaps I can name my opportunities to do this.

Recommended reading

SVD and SSps Constitutions 100 - 200 and following
Philippians 2: 5 - 11
Colossians 1: 12 - 20
Hebrews 1 - 2; 1 John 1: 1 - 4

11th Week 02

INCARNATION

The situation:

The name of our Society (SVD) and the Constitutions
invite me, in the light of the incarnation and mission of the
Divine Word, to look attentively and lovingly at the world of the
One and Triune God. From this viewpoint the need and condi-
tion of the human race takes on a different aspect, not the one
my human eyes would suggest. To regard a human being with
his own eyes helps me to look away from myself and give love
and concern to others. This is how God uses my bewilderment
and cooperation to make his salvific will effective for other peo-
ple. This invitation to become human is extended to all my
brothers and sisters.

The Son of God walked into our world with all its afflic-
tions, anxieties, warring ideologies and injustices and sought a
place to be born and dwell. He availed himself of a girl, a young
woman named Mary in the town of Nazareth.

What I ask for:

- an inner vision of the Son of God, the Incarnate Word of
God who chose to assume flesh out of love of us people.
- That I can learn to respond to this love of the incarnate
divine Love.
- that this Love can lead me to follow Him very closely.
- that like Mary I may accept the guidance of the
Redemptive concern of God and enter into his service.

What I meditate on:

*This contemplation offers two scenes, that of the Blessed
Trinity and that of the Virgin Mary (see SE 101-109; 262)*

12th Week 01

A. John 1: 1 - 18

I try to view the world as it is and to appreciate that God has entered this concrete, historical world and become completely human for my sake, for our sakes.

B. Luke 1: 26 - 38

In Mary God invites humankind to cooperate in the mystery of the incarnation of his beloved Son. I regard Mary and eavesdrop on the discussions between her and the angel, Gabriel, how Mary finally comes to an unconditional acquiescence. Her "yes" makes it possible for the Son of God to become one of us.

C. Luke 1, 39 - 55

I consider the visit of Mary to Elizabeth, go with Mary through the mountains and observe how the two of them meet under the eye of the one God.

D. Review

What does the meeting of these two blessed women signify to me and how does this affect me when I meet blessed people? What echo does the Magnificat send through me? Can I resonate with it or do I prefer to sing, dance my own Magnificat?

E. Matthew 1: 18 - 25

In this meditation on the mystery of the birth of Jesus, can I appreciate the feelings and expression of St. Joseph?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

In my love for my own milieu, how do I treat strangers and foreigners (also in my own Society)? How does Jesus invite me to take a greater share in the preaching of his Kingdom of God?

Recommended reading:

SVD and SSPS Constitutions, the prologues
Ephesians 3: 1 - 14
14th General Chapter, working papers, pages 10 - 17
I The Present Situation
II Communion
III Our mission

*May the darkness of sin and
the night of unbelief vanish
before the Light of the Word
and the Spirit of Grace.
And may the Heart of Jesus
live in my heart and in
the hearts of all people.*

*Arnold Janssen -
program prayer for missionaries*

TAKE IN YOUR ARMS

What is the good of it,
when you come to the crib that I have had Greccio make for
you in the cave?

What is the use
when you marvel at the lowliness of the divine Child, when
you share the joy of the Holy Virgin, or the wonder in the
heart of Saint Joseph, when you do this and nothing more?

What is the profit of your watching the zeal of the shepherds
who abandoned everything to seek out and gaze at the
Savior?

What is the good of it if you celebrate Christmas, present
your gifts and are affected for a couple of hours?

I have given you the crib not to be stared at, but to be
embraced.

One must take this Child into his hands, must put his arms
around the mother of God and her husband, must join the
company of the shepherds and become one of them. To
become one with the events of the Holy Night, that is
coming to the crib!

One must personally learn the meekness of the Child, and
take into one's own heart the wonder and the joy of the
parents. One must be inspired by the shepherds. One must
show at Christmas that you have celebrated the birth of
Christ. And one must conduct one's self on the way that at
Epiphany one has one's own gift to bring. Not a thing, but
rather one's self

Christmas sermon of Francis of Assisi

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

The situation:

"God's ways are also our ways. God's history is also our history, since the Son of God came into our world and took on a body. He is God-With-Us/Emmanuel. He has made an actual contract with us and taken up everything we are, except sin.

His greatness finds expression in this that he has assumed our poverty to the point of death and approached us in death itself. This Emmanuel will also take flesh in my life here and now: saving, loving and liberating, He will share my pain and hope.

What I ask for:

- that I come to know Jesus as God-With-Us and the incarnate Word of God.
- that in the mystery of his incarnation through his birth, childhood, I may be near Him in the poor and weak, and learn to serve Him with all my heart.

What I meditate on:

A. Christmas - John 1: 1 - 14

God is the Word, is Light and comes into His Own .. and the Word is made flesh. - What does He mean to me along the way? How will He be born in me? Will His coming into my life meet resistance or great desire?

In the nature of things, nothing can deny the difference between the Creator and his creation. The incarnation of Christ has resulted in a unification of the whole of humankind, including ourselves, with the Lord. The calling on the Name of Jesus establishes and intensifies this.

There is a distinct resemblance between the incarnation of the Word and the dwelling of the Holy Name in us. The Word became flesh. Jesus became human. The secret reality of the Name of Jesus flows from our souls and permeates our whole person. Romans 13:14 "Let your armor be the Lord Jesus Christ."

The living essence of the Name permeates our bodies. "Your name is like oil poured out" (Song of Songs 1:3). If I repeat the Name with faith and love, He in his great might will immobilize and overcome that "law of sin which lives inside my body" (Romans 7: 23). Therefore we can imprint the Name of Jesus upon ourselves like an incarnate seal to keep our hearts and bodies clean and holy. "Set me like a seal on your heart, like a seal on your arm." (Song of Songs 8: 6). But this corporeal seal is neither a piece of wax nor one of lead. It is an outer sign and the name of the living Word.

From "The Prayer of Jesus" - published and prefaced by Emmanuel Jungclaussen

B. Luke 2: 1 - 7

There are lodgings. Am I one? To be present at the birth of Jesus and to receive Him in my lodging in joy, gratitude, as a gift from the Father to me and all the people on earth?

C. Repetition

Has Jesus found a place yet? With me - with my neighbor? He has become one of us and is not afraid of the darkness and chill of sin.

D. Luke 2: 8 - 14

To find a little child ... wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger.

E. Luke 2: 15 - 16

I will go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us. I spend time with the shepherds ... find everything as it was announced to us - My wonder at this Child is appropriate here. I converse with the Child by the use of my eyes, my mouth, my laughter, my gestures, my hands ... Where is my Bethlehem in my everyday life?

F. Luke 2: 19 - 20

Mary treasured everything that had happened in her heart and pondered over it. I ask Mary to help me to keep in mind and ponder God's Word. - Which memories and thoughts emerge in my heart?

G. Repetition

Applying my mind - Have I ever held a child in my arms? Have I ever experienced the birth of Christ in my own life or in that of someone else?

H. Isaiah 9: 1 - 6

A Child is born to us ... And I give Him the name

13th Week 02

I. Summing up:

In me and through me God will become human, be born. What has this Child of God and the human race shown to me, told me? To whom have I given room? Whom have I carried in my arms. To whom have I given a loving answer?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

In my life how do I encounter helplessness, powerlessness, the homelessness of a child, of anyone, for instance, a mother or father? Can I share with them the mystery of the birth of Jesus? How can I make this mystery become present to others?

Recommended reading:

SVD and SSPS Constitutions 103 - 105
Christmas lyrics
Music - listen to Christmas oratoria (G.F. Händel)

**"And were Jesus born
a thousand times in Bethlehem,
but never in your heart,
you would be hopelessly lost."**

Angelus Silesius

13th Week 03

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE NEW-BORN KING

The situation:

"At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything and through whom he made everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command" (word) (Heb 1:1-3)

What I ask for:

- that the Father who reveals Himself to all peoples may so attract me to His Son Jesus that I become more deeply aware of Him, experience His love and His nearness and serve Him more resolutely,.

What I meditate on:

A. Luke 2: 8 - 18

I approach Jesus as a shepherd, wondering, listening, praising Him in unpretentious and sincere terms, rejoicing, going with Him.

B. Matthew 2: 1 - 12

I request from the Father to recognize the signs of His coming as the wise men did and to be determined to visit Him among us.

C. Luke 2: 19 - 21

Mary is a prototype of the Steyl Family. She contemplated in her heart the reality of Jesus and the significance of His Name. This Name I bear in a special way as a son or daughter in the Society of the Divine Word, or the Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit, or in the Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit of Perpetual Adoration.

D. Repetition

Meetings between Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Simeon, Ann, the shepherds, the magi and myself are calls to a living faith. How can these call me in my everyday life?

E. The manifestation of the Lord - review!

The wise men followed a star; they sought a King, the Light of the World and found Him. They took another way home to resume their ordinary living. I go with them.

F. Summary View

Wherever Jesus manifests Himself, people go to meet him, accompanied by the light and truth of His word. During these days I go to meet whom?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

In wath Way is my star leading me to Bethlehem? Where are my friends along the way? Where is the glory of God radiating among us people?

Recommended reading

In the depth of the night this message comes to us:
the journey of the morning star begins

A human son is born to us,
His name is "God will save us."

The heart becomes alert: believe your eyes, entrust yourself to the things you see; since the Word of God soared out of the heights and came to humankind.

No other sign is our own, no other light is there in our darkness than this man who lives among us, a God who is our Brother.

Sing to your God. In Jesus He has confided his love to us. So we try to bring our world into "the new earth" where all flesh will see His salvation.

And as the sun shines for us with warmth and light, like a radiant bridegroom (cf. Ps. 19:5), so will our leader-in-peace be radiant in his appointed time.

He unifies the human race, his love shines on as moon succeeds moon. He has given us his body, so we celebrate the New Covenant.

From "You are the Breath of my song" - sung by Huub Oosterhuis and Bernard Huijbers, Freiburg 1976

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF JESUS

The situation:

Land, people, culture, habits and customs of the Jews were all imprinted on Jesus in his childhood, adolescence and his young adulthood. His daily life was uneventful and ordinary. Except for a few incidents which marked him as unique, his every day life seemed uneventful.

What I ask for:

- that the Father lead me more closely in the footsteps of his Son and enable me interiorly to grow with Jesus.
- that I learn to treasure and love this growing friendship and interior union with Jesus.
- that Mary, the mother of Jesus, will become also my mother and help me to ponder in my heart the experiences of the nearness to and the distance from God. And in my faith-life, that I may give humble testimony to all this.

What I meditate on:

A. Matthew 2: 13 - 18

Jesus, Mary and Joseph are refugees. They depend on God's guidance and are guided and accompanied by dreams.

B. Matthew 2: 19 - 23

The family of Jesus after their flight as refugees find a home. They hide away in Nazareth, a small, insignificant village.



Two flutists, by Sr. S. May, OSF

This home provides them with a mutual trust in with the members of their extended family and kin. Jesus grew up here and advanced in wisdom, love and the fullness of the Spirit. (cf. Luke 2: 35 - 40)

C. Repetition:

In a glance at our time and my personal situation which is marked by homelessness, I look at the refugees, evacuees, asylum seekers, the homeless, many groups of marginal people ... called "the fourth world". When I think of what happened to Jesus and compare it with my time and neighborhood, how does Jesus look and speak to us Christians today?

D. Luke 2: 41 - 50

On the sabbath after his 12th birthday, according to the Jewish calendar reckoning, his 13th birthday, Jesus is an adult Jew; on this day the boy celebrates his Bar-Mitzva (dutiful son).

As a "dutiful son" Jesus and the other Jewish young men make their own decisions to accept the responsibility for observing the laws and duties mandated by God.

This permitted him to sit among those learned in the Scriptures and take part in the discussions held in the house of his Father. I will embrace today the duty assumed by the young Jesus and bind myself as he did: to love God with all my heart and follow His choice.

E. Luke 2: 51 - 52

The parents must painfully give freedom to the young man who is an adult and wants time and place for his independence. In this context, how do I evaluate my own relationship with and severance from my parents who had an important part in my spiritual vocation?

F. Repetition

I mull over my own sorrowful and yet joyful experiences and insights on my way to today.

G. Summary View

I live with the family of Jesus in Nazareth, that is, in their everyday life. Learn to believe. What has come to me during these weeks?. How am I wiser, more like Jesus? more filled with the Spirit?

What I pay attention to in everyday life:

From the hidden life of Jesus I learn the direction for my own life. I listen attentively to God's call and live more aware of Him and His help.

Recommended reading:

There is need for courage each day

Courage gives unity to our religious life. It gives it the character of seclusion. It becomes a sensationless ordinary life, a life of obedience, an ordered life, a simple life and even a life of stillness, a life of courage with a certain continuity. Daring to embrace such a habit of life is an indication of our faith.

Naturally a life of this kind carries built in dangers. Ordinary living can seduce one into comfort, can tempt one to flee to apathy, into meanness of spirit, into mediocrity.

In such a life there are circumstances in which one can shrink from known dangers and present difficulties and fail to use one's freedom. And when the adventure seems courageous and brave, one can fail to endure the hardships of a truly interior religious life.

We look at Jesus who had the courage to live an ordinary life for 30 years. We ask him to give us the grace to understand what his hidden life has to tell us.

From Karl Rahner: Meditations on the book of exercises of St. Ignatius, page 161

THE MISSION OF JESUS BEGINS

The situation:

We follow the Word - in the mystery of the incarnation of the Divine Word and in the Paschal mystery. John 1: 14-16: "The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory ... from his fulness we have, all of us, received - grace in return for grace."

The Father has called us to listen to the Word, to see and to believe, to read His Word, to live and to share it with one another, open to the Spirit who guides us to do the will of the Father, to become disciples - chaste, poor, obedient, incorporated into the life of the Trinity.

We are called by the Divine Word as Arnold Janssen was, to follow the Word who emptied Himself, to follow the Son of Man, Jesus Christ - in poverty, humility and meekness to a new life in His resurrection.

We start out with our brothers and sisters of many cultures, sent by our Brother, Jesus Christ, to pass over our borders and to be with so many others, to bring happy tidings and to receive them with respect, understanding, sympathy and brotherly love.

We stand for justice and peace. Led by the Spirit of Jesus, we serve as Christians, full of happiness and hope, sharing the message of a new life. We become one with all people, especially with those who are seeking but are far from hope or who live on the margins and wait for Him to pass who is Healer and Liberator.

So we are witnesses and fellow bearers of the dream of the Kingdom of God, of the union of all peoples and races in the Triune God who draws us to this goal.

What I ask for:

- that I burst out in brotherly love.
- that I stand up for Him and His people.
- that I follow the Incarnate Word.
- that I follow the call of the Father.
- that I become a witness to His love.

What I meditate on:

A. John 1: 14 - 16

"The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory ... from his fulness we have, all of us, received - yes, grace in return for grace." And how is His grace working now in my relationships, in my trust in the leadership of the Incarnate Word of God?

B. Matthew 3: 13

Jesus learned to believe in the ever present mystery of His relationship with the Fatherhood of God and His commission to the people of Israel. He made the decision to leave Nazareth and everything He was familiar with. Today I can identify with the decision of Jesus. I, too, depart from my home and follow His voice.

C. Matthew 3: 13 - 17

In the baptism by John, the voice of His Father affirms the decision of Jesus and His mission in the power of the Holy Spirit. My baptism is an event in which I allow myself to be immersed in the mystery of God by the Holy Spirit and share my mission with others.

D. Repetition:

Jesus as man was strengthened in His baptism by the power of the Holy Spirit and was made more aware of His calling, of

16th Week 02

His mission given Him by the Father. How do I experience anew conversion to Him and how do I perceive the awakening to mission in my everyday life?

E. Matthew 4: 1 - 11

Jesus is tempted in the desert - not to evil, but to a messiahship of a kingdom full of glory and honor with the power to manipulate. But the Spirit who led and accompanied Him into the desert gives Him the power to discern, to see through the deceptions of the enemy. This Spirit enables Him to recognize the call of the Father to continue along the way of poverty, perseverance and powerlessness.

F. Repetition:

Have I been led into my desert the way Jesus was? Does my temptation lie in clearly evil things or does the devil side-track me off the path of Jesus through apparent good? Do illusions and fantasies inspired by the devil distract me from His path?

G. Repetition:

Where and how have spirits tempted me this week regarding my call to conversion, and how have I experienced the liberating Spirit of Jesus?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

In His mission, Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, grew through hearing the Word of God, through prayer and the practice of daily discernment. This attentive response to the call and the will of his Father in the events of every day gave Him the knowledge and confidence to even confront devils.

How do I discern, each day, the will of the Father and my mission in the Kingdom of God, in the Church, in the world?

16th Week 03

Recommended reading:

SVD "Following the Word", No. 1, pp. 46-61

*We realize
the value
of water only
when the spring
is dry.*

16th Week 04

THE STRATEGY OF JESUS

The situation:

"When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, 'David is now in the wilderness of Engeddi.' Saul thereupon took three thousand men chosen from the whole of Israel and went in search of David and his men east of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. He came to the sheepfolds along the route where there was a cave, and went in to cover his feet. Now David and his men were sitting in the recesses of the cave; David's men said to him, 'Today is the day of which Yahweh said to you, I will deliver your enemy into your power, do what you like with him.' David stood up and, unobserved, cut off the border of Saul's cloak. Afterwards David reproached himself for having cut off the border of Saul's cloak. He said to his men, 'Yahweh preserve me from doing such a thing to my lord and raising my hand against him, for he is the anointed of Yahweh.' David gave his men strict instructions, forbidding them to attack Saul." (1 Sam 24: 2-8a)

What I ask for:

- that through the guidance of the Holy Spirit I may recognize the temptations in my life.
- that I call upon the name of Jesus for help and protection against evil.
- that I may be freed from evil through Christ, my Lord, and that I follow His path.

17th Week 01

What I meditate on:

A. John 8: 31 - 51

As a human being I feel divided. This experience points in two directions. God and evil are in conflict. The closer people come to Jesus in the Bible, the more they recognize evil. It comes down to a decision for or against God, for or against Jesus, for or against life. We Christians are all familiar with these experiences. It comes to the choice: God or evil, Christ or His enemy, the one God or the worship of idols. No one can be the slave of two masters.

According to St. Augustine, doctor of the Church, two opposed loves are building cities. Love of self builds the city of Satan; love of God builds the city of God. The pilgrim, St. Ignatius of Loyola, illustrates his inner experiences with a similar image. There are two totally opposed domains, each with its banner, two camps that war against each other.

The banner of Satan flaunts its power in front of me: riches, power, popularity and pride. The banner of Jesus Christ proclaims the exact opposite: the abandonment of self and position, compassion for others, vulnerability through solidarity in sacrificing one's life for one's friends.

Our only strength is confidence in the invisible might of the Kingdom of God. This may appear outwardly to be foolishness, weakness, powerlessness and poverty. Jesus enlists people with attentive hearts for everything lowly, the weak, the homeless, and invites us to give our lives for those even poorer, for the persecuted, humiliated. Human life is here knit together by word and spirit that come from the mouth of Jesus and builds bridges of hope to other cultures, faiths and those in need.

B. James 3: 15 - 4, 10

I look closely at the strategy of the Enemy and his enticements: power, glory and pride. And I consider the three areas of the strategy of Jesus: poverty, vulnerability and humility.

C. Galatians 5: 16 - 25

I ask the Holy Spirit to instruct me and give me the capacity to discern what it means to live the all-embracing love of Christ and to bear fruits of love, joy, peace, gentleness, trustfulness, patience and self-control.

D. Ephesians 6: 10 - 20

Spiritual warfare is a daily affair. How am I prepared for it?

E. Repetition:

Jesus is to follow a career that is not centered on self-promotion. Where does this take me when I abandon all that I value and accept what the Incarnate God values?

F. Matthew 13: 1-9. 18 - 23

I take the time to inspect the soil of my life to see what is flourishing there and what is not.

G. Summing up:

How free am I to commit myself to the Kingdom of God, to make concrete decisions for the word of Jesus, to respond to His call? - I ask for the power to be free and to move forward courageously with HIM.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

What and who draw me to Jesus? What and who divert me from His way? Can I identify the points of weakness where the Enemy can penetrate my life? How extensive do I wish my profound friendship with my Lord Jesus to be?

JESUS CALLS ME BY NAME

The situation:

Jesus freely and deliberately chooses people to serve Him. The gospels tell us how Jesus called a group of people by name. I meditate on the mysteries of Jesus and try to see how Jesus calls me by name, that I may listen to His voice and respond to Him by name.

What I ask for:

- that the Father lead me and for Jesus' sake give me a listening ear and an attentive heart.
- that I may recognize the wishes of Jesus in the looks and words of other people.
- that my love for my Friend, Jesus, will prepare me to accept greater poverty and endure hardship and even persecution.

What I meditate on:

A. Luke 19: 1 - 10

"Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I must stay at your house today." This invitation of Jesus is addressed to me too: two men here experience the deep desire to meet, to make a new beginning. One of them through the power of love uses the name of the other and leads the heart of the other person to be responsive.

B. Mark 2: 13 - 17

I am called to the house of Levi to eat with tax collectors and

sinner. How do I act in this company? - As so often in my life, Jesus calls me to something I did not expect. Whom shall I eat with today? Will HE also be there?

C. Repetition:

Jesus chooses, calls and gathers people and accepts them as they are. I bring myself with all my weaknesses and strengths, desires and dreams. His vision of life encourages me to grow.

D. Matthew 16: 13 - 18

Jesus questions his disciples about their understanding: "Who do you think I am?" This question is put to me too. My answer just now is ...

E. Repetition:

Peter answers and Jesus gives him his mission assignment: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church." Jesus knew very well what He wanted. For my part, He will give me my assignment when He wishes to. I wait patiently.

F. Acts of the Apostles 9: 1 - 9

"Who are you, Lord?" is the question Saul asks. Jesus appears to Saul and tells him where to go. I need to pay more attention to this question of Saul and ask myself: How does Jesus reveal Himself to me? Which road does He wish me to take today when I ask Him this same question?

G. Summing up:

This week Jesus has called me by name repeatedly, sometimes from within me, sometimes from things outside me. What have I come to realize in this calling of Jesus? How was my mission expressed when I listened to His word, to His voice? How concretely does my life correspond to His call?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

I allow myself to be addressed by God and called by name. I give this call priority in my daily decisions.

Recommended reading:

SVD and SSpS Constitutions 401 ff.

Affection

**Your smile
and mine
the more often
it is born between us
will make me blossom richly**

**even when my roots
are among the stones.**

Isolde Lachmann

JESUS TEACHES AND CHALLENGES ME

The situation:

The basic law, the Magna Carta of the Kingdom of God, is defined in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus teaches with authority and faces the future with confidence. The future, in the mind of Jesus, is always to be seen in the relationship of the Father to the Son. The Son accompanies us into the future and allows us to share in His mission to people and to the cosmos. My inner attention is focused on the words of Jesus. These I plant like seeds in the furrows of my heart so that they can grow roots and flourish in the center of my being.

What I ask for:

- that I may be open and have strength to listen to the teachings of Jesus and live according to them.
- that He awaken in me His choice for life and His yearning for righteousness and peace and fill me with His burning zeal for the Kingdom of God.
- that I trust fully in God and His guidance even when it is difficult to discern His will and I grope about in darkness.

What I meditate on:

A. Matthew 5: 1 - 12

I join the disciples in this crowd of people and find a position near Jesus, to listen carefully to the good news of the



Kingdom of God, to ponder it in my heart and make myself a disciple of the Spirit of Jesus.

B. Repetition:

The talk about the Kingdom of God is not just vision and promise. Rather, it lays the foundation for confidence in the God of the future and in the future of the world here and now. It challenges me to plan what I am to do (how and where?); it confirms my hope (hope in what concretely?); it stimulates me to be active (in what way?). What does Jesus have to say about the salvation history of my past life? How do I see my own future?

C. John 12: 44 - 50

Jesus, the Light of the world, will guide me out of darkness, give me strength of belief and trust till I am filled with light and can carry it into the world.

D. Matthew 6: 24 - 33

The promise of Jesus is meant for me, too: "Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well."

E. Repetition:

I look at my own courage and my indecisiveness with the eyes and mind of Jesus and ask Him to teach me how to live in freedom and childlike dependence on God.

F. Luke 6: 47 - 49

Choosing and deciding require a foundation. What is the foundation of my house, sand or rock? Have I built it on a bridge? Or on an island?

G. Summing up:

This past week has indicated many things Jesus is teaching me ... about His call, His mission, His description of the Kingdom of God now and in the future and about my

charism and my talents. He has taught me things about the people with whom and for whose sake I follow the way of Jesus. They are people in anxiety and need in this country and abroad, in the Church... So I must ask what all this means for me personally. Let me select just one specific experience and go over it prayerfully in the presence of the Lord, the Holy Spirit and then bring it to the Father.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

How are the Beatitudes relevant in my everyday activity and how do I live them?

Recommended reading:

The Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1 - 12 and Luke 6:20 - 26

**The preaching
of the Gospel
is the first and most important
expression of love
for one's neighbor.**

Arnold Janssen

**MAY POWER
LEAD TO FREEDOM**

where strength
never disregards the weak

where vulnerability
feels no need for protection

where hope
understands despair

where the individual is a person
and not just a number

where order does not serve itself
but gives others room to live

where a sense of responsibility
challenges willfulness

where the goal does not justify the means
because integrity is prized

where weakness can live
where need finds a home

where those on top and those below
can influence common decisions

where the same criteria of behavior
are used for brothers and sisters

19th Week 04

where structures do not imprison
but give orientation

where the dignity of the person
is not trod underfoot

where I need not keep silence,
because I can risk being open

where not performance
but the human person counts

where human poverty
finds a comforting presence

where I discover that I am a Christian woman
and have a right to a role in the present world

where I have a living relationship
to a personal God

that is where the soil is ready
for power to lead to freedom

(Almut Haneberg)

19th Week 05

THE LOVE OF JESUS DRAWS ME TOWARDS THE FOOLISHNESS OF LOVE

The situation:



Luke 19:2-5: *Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry,
because I am to stay at your house today,* by Sr. S. May OSF

"We are the real people of the circumcision, we who worship in accordance with the Spirit of God; we have our own glory from Christ Jesus without having to rely on a physical operation. If it came to relying on physical evidence, I should be fully qualified myself. Take any man who thinks he can rely on what is physical: I am even better qualified. I was born of the race of Israel and of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrew parents, and I was circumcised when I was eight days old. As for the Law, I was a Pharisee; as for working for religion, I was a persecutor of the Church; as far as the Law can make you perfect, I was faultless.

"But because of Christ, I have come to consider all these advantages that I had as disadvantages. Not only that, but I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For him I have accepted the loss of everything, and I look on everything as so much rubbish if only I can have Christ and be given a place in him. I am no longer trying for perfection by my own efforts, the perfection that comes from the Law, but I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ, and is from God and based on faith.

"All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death. That is the way I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead. Not that I have become perfect yet: I

have not yet won, but I am still running, trying to capture the prize for which Christ Jesus captured me.

"I can assure you, my brothers and sisters, I am far from thinking that I have already won. All I can say is that I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come; I am racing for the finish, for the prize to which God calls us upwards to receive in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3: 3 - 14)

What I ask for:

- that the love of the Father draw me closer to his Son Jesus, that I may flourish in this love and become more like Him.
- that the love of Jesus may draw me to follow Him in the foolishness of love.

What I meditate on:

A. John 6: 60 - 71 (or John 12: 23 - 26)

Jesus has taught me to hold his word firmly, to live it and to pass it on. "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." Many young people have abandoned the Lord, their spiritual companion. So Jesus challenges the disciples: "Will you go away too?" What strikes me in this frank dialogue between Jesus and His friends?

B. Mark 10: 17 - 22 (or John 12: 1 - 8)

Jesus has a special way of looking at the rich young man and the woman (Mary Magdalen, when anointing the Lord). He is unable to conceal His love and affection for the young man and for the woman. He looks at me in the same way.

20th Week 02

C. Repetition:

My choice and decision: to go away from Jesus or to remain with Him ... How do I regard Jesus, my spiritual companion, my brother and my sister, my superiors? - How do I put the folly of love into practice?

D. John 13: 1 - 17

I attend the Last Supper. "Do you wish me to wash your feet?" Jesus asks me. I let these words sink in and I look at Jesus who is washing the feet of the disciples. And I let His glance lead me deeper into the mystery of His love, suffering and example of silence.

E. Repetition:

I am a servant of the Divine Word - of the Holy Spirit - how much do I allow myself in my daily life to imitate the love and self-giving of Jesus in the mystery of service? Do I realize to whom and to what my daily "Yes" is addressed?

F. Philippians 1: 12 - 26 (or Luke 10: 25 - 37)

For me Christ is life, and death gain. Brotherly and sisterly love unfold in imitating Jesus' daily self-giving, even to death.

G. Summing up:

My life has places where Jesus touches, addresses and challenges me to embrace the foolishness of love. Am I ready today to take one more step out of my hesitations and refusals so that I might be led by the love of Jesus? Where I am hesitant to accept the invitation of Jesus - can I see His helping hand? How can I be this hand for my brother, my sister, if I do not open the eyes of my own heart for Jesus' love?

How do I respond to the love of Jesus when He addresses me, looks at me, accompanies me, challenges me and demands that I bear pains and injustice?

20th Week 03

Recommended reading:

Read the first letter of John slowly.
Write a letter to Jesus or to a very good friend.
"Our Mission at the Service of Communion," working paper
for the 14th General Chapter S.V.D., Rome 1993, pp. 1 - 37.

20th Week 04

Learning Love

Tell me, dear foolish one, if your lover no longer loved you,
what would you do?
I would love on, lest I die.
For not to love is death and loving is living.

On the right side of love is the loved one,
and on the left, the lover.
So the lover can reach his beloved
only by passing through love.

Love tests the wisdom of the lover and asks him
whether he had loved the beloved more
when he assumed her nature or when he redeemed her.
The lover was confused but finally answered
that Redemption was decided upon
to take away what was hurtful
and Incarnation chosen to bring happiness.
And from this answer arose another question:
"Which love was the greater?"

Raymond Lully, 1235 - 1316

20th Week 05

THE FOLLOWING OF JESUS - THE NARROW PATH

"You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last." (John 15: 16)

The situation:

To go with Jesus means to be introduced into the mystery of His way, His life, His truth. If I go this way with HIM, I can never again turn back if I am to be a true disciple. This tells me that I must reckon with opposition and conflicts from within and from without. I am just as open to attack as He was. If following Christ means the narrow path, which only a few walk, I must ask myself whether my way be the broad or the narrow path. Am I challenged in my lifestyle? What conflicts do I face up to? Or do I seek the easy way and push aside all conflicts and inner tensions and thoughts of death?

What I ask for:

- that in challenging periods of struggle (humiliations, derision, being put down, being disregarded, unjust treatment) I don't give up, complain or grieve, but go forward with Jesus and take courage from Him.

What I meditate on:

A. Mark 11: 1 - 11

Go with Jesus into Jerusalem - prepare yourself for His coming so that you can experience both joy and pain. Where is my joy in my Lord?

B. Mark 11: 15 - 19

"My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."
Must my heart too be cleared out by Jesus to get my life in order so that I can become aware of the needs and the cries of people?

C. Mark 12: 1 - 12

Jesus is the foundation stone. He was rejected. In the eyes of the world, am I a rejected foundation stone? Does my sense of rejection help me to free captives, comfort the afflicted, strengthen those in pain, give new hope to the despairing, give my voice to the poor and mute?

D. Repetition:

Is the way I live my day, the way Jesus is guiding me? What useless things do I bring into my life, my temple? Does the Lord have the privilege of living in me and do I rejoice at his coming every morning, or am I already busy with my affairs? Am I challenging the anger of Jesus? Am I a building block for the Kingdom of Jesus?

E. Mark 12: 41 - 44

"This woman gave everything she possessed." To give away everything: things, position, relationships, bad memories, to give it all away and retain nothing for myself - to give everything to Him and be free to listen only to the Father and to adore Him. To give myself, to share with those who have nothing, this is to have everything, this cannot be taken away.

F. Repetition:

Am I ready to go with Jesus into the Jerusalem of my daily life, no matter what awaits me there and is demanded of a disciple?

G. Summing up:

Jesus' way is my way. Where do they meet, where do they both go together? Can I show real trust and love, especially in desperate situations?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

Is the thread running through the pattern of my life a thread of love in following Jesus in community?

Recommended reading:

SVD: "Following the Word", No.1, 1988, pp. 51 - 61
(Following Jesus - Passing Over)

SVD: Part Two of the Constitutions, Life of Union with the Divine Word: Const. 201 - 219, 301 - 315

SSpS: Part Two of the Constitutions, Our Life of Union with the Lord: Const. 201 - 219, 301 - 316

Luke 14: 25 - 35 The path of Jesus leads to a decision and to purifying my motivation.

Matthew 8: 2 - 22 A young man with mistaken values

2 Corinthians 2: 14 - 17 For some we are the "smell of death that leads to death"; for others, we are the "sweet smell of life that leads to life." Are we among those who "go around offering the word of God for sale"?

Philippians 2: 12 - 18 To be a disciple means "to shine in the world."



2 Cor 5:19: God was in Christ reconciling...entrusting to us the message of reconciliation, by Sr. S. May, OSF

Phase Three

FROM BEING CALLED TO SELF-GIVING IN LOVE

In the preceding phase of our Retreat in Everyday Life, I was invited by Jesus to walk in the greater freedom of discipleship, to accompany Him and to allow Him to give me a mission.

This way of discipleship has broadened and deepened my faith, my vocation and the understanding of our common missionary charism. Now, the mystery of pain and death with Jesus, my Friend and Savior, leads me deeper into His love.

The goal of this third stage is to help me realize the gift of freedom in the depth of my heart. I become aware of how I am embraced by God's love especially in pain and suffering.

I will reflect on the Suffering Friend, the incarnate and broken Word of God, and on the things that Jesus lived for which touch me. I am invited to come closer in relationship with Him. In him I may have my sinful and unredeemed self saved and transformed, in the midst of my ordinary living. This will give concrete significance to the word of Jesus:

"A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends." (John 15: 13)

My prayer can be a deep reflection on the mystery of the Passion, so that I immerse myself in Jesus' sacrifice of Himself for me, and unite myself firmly to the answer of Jesus to His Father.

For my day-to-day striving, my slogan can be: *"I must swim against the current of life,"* because the superficiality of daily living with

its waves of anger, inattention, emptiness, frustration, annoyance and loneliness can so easily divert me from Him.

An appropriate preparation and accompaniment for this phase can be:

MUSIC :

- Händel's "Passion of Matthew"
- Bach's "Passion of John"
- Other suitable hymns and music

TEXTS :

Read the Passion in the four Gospels:

- Matthew 26 + 27
- Mark 14 + 15
- Luke 22 + 23
- John 18 + 19

The Way of the Cross:

I choose a place where I can walk around to meditate on Jesus and pray about His life and mine. And I also pray for my community and all my friends as well as those I look up to in my life.

I visit the sick and the dying:

Perhaps there are some friends or acquaintances who need a visit from me. I can visit these people and pray for them each day.

**"During my stay with you,
the only knowledge I claimed to have
was about Jesus,
and only about him
as the crucified Christ."**

(1 Corinthians 2:3)



Joh 13: I have given you an example, by S. Köder

THE LAST SUPPER - JESUS' PRAYER IN THE GARDEN - THE BETRAYAL

"Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. He had always loved those who were his in the world, but now he showed how perfect his love was." (John 13: 1)

The situation:

Jesus gives Himself to the disciples as a sign of the New Covenant before the temple guards come to bind Him and lead Him away. The decisive message of the farewell banquet of Jesus is that the disciples must see themselves as servants. This is apparent in Jesus' gesture of washing their feet. It tells them that they form a special group and are people who serve others. To offer service and to receive service are both important attitudes. These are to be characteristic traits of their lives.

What I ask for:

- that the Father make the scene of the Last Supper so present to me that the actions of Jesus move into my conscious reality.
- that I be ready to remain with Jesus in difficult hours.

What I meditate on:

A. Luke 22: 7 - 23

I join the disciples, prepare the table with them for the Paschal meal, and take my place at the table. Jesus gives Himself to the disciples and to me under the signs of bread and wine.

Under the appearance of bread the Lord takes me, speaks

words of gratitude and blessing over me, breaks me and gives me as nourishment to my brothers and sisters. "Love one another, as I have loved you." (John 15:12)

B. Repetition:

This being one with Jesus and remaining one with Him gives me the strength and joy to love my brothers and sisters, to serve them and discern anew my place in the Church, the people of God.

C. John 13: 1 - 17

Jesus washes the feet of everyone, finally mine too. He goes to each disciple, kneels before him, washes and dries his feet, even of Judas the Betrayer.

D. Repetition:

What happens when He comes to me? Where does my example become visible?

E. Luke 22: 39 - 46

He is going to the Mount of Olives, with the disciples following him. He invites them to watch and pray. In His prayer to the Father, Jesus seeks strength and stability. These are very hard hours for Him. He sweats blood. I enter into the mystery of the praying Jesus and His petition to His Father; I make myself one with Him in the Father.

F. Luke 22: 47 - 53

For Jesus this is a time of darkness caused by human greed for power. Jesus is betrayed by a sign of friendship and love. The kiss of Judas was a signal for the arrest of Jesus by those in power.



The arrest of Jesus is dramatic. The disciples are prepared to fight with weapons. Jesus shows no violence, since weapons have no part in the Kingdom of God. Violence only provokes violence in return. "They bound him and took him away." The "weapons" of Jesus are love and truth.

The disciples desert Jesus from that hour. Does my accompanying Jesus to the Garden of Olives end in flight or in following Him? I converse with the Lord. Am I a non-violent, loving and obedient person? How does Jesus see me at this time?

G. Summing up:

After praying with Jesus at the Last Supper, on the Mount of Olives and at the betrayal of Judas, we want to continue with Him on the way to Jerusalem. It is the Paschal Feast of the Jews and in it we see the mystery of pain, of being judged and handed over to those in power.

Where is the power of Jesus? Does it disintegrate into powerlessness? How do the disciples, how do I follow Jesus on the way to the Mount of Olives and then with the arrested Jesus back for interrogation before the religious and civil authorities of the city of Jerusalem?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

Do I celebrate in the Eucharist my self-giving with Jesus? Is this celebration a source of strength in times and situations of powerlessness or of being delivered into the hands of the proud and powerful? Today, in my world, how do I relive the Last Supper, the agony in the Garden of Olives and the betrayal of Jesus?

Recommended reading:

John 17: 1 - 26: I identify with the Lord in my service to the Father and the world.

Hebrews 9: 15 - 28: Jesus was offered once to take away the sins of many.

1 Corinthians 10: 14 - 28: Do I share in the blood of Christ, in the body of Christ? I cannot be a guest at the table of the Lord and at the table of the devils.

1 Corinthians 13: The greatest virtue is love.

*If
we love,
we do not need
much learning.*

Mother Josepha



Veni, jocar e mecum, (unknown)

*May
the Holy Triune God
live in our hearts
and in the hearts
of all people!*

Arnold Janssen



Come closer to me... Villa Cavalletti, Grottaferrata

CARRYING THE CROSS - DEATH - BURIAL OF JESUS

"... the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ." (1 Cor. 2:2)

The situation:

Jesus walks His way through a life of obedience in freedom and love for the Father and for us. He goes to the limit of human endurance: to death on the cross. Christ is still doing this today in His sisters and brothers. Through His death for the world He achieves salvation and hope in solidarity with the poor, the oppressed, the persecuted and those in prison. Through His cross and death He benefits the whole world.

"In dying we offer God our final act of self-surrender. We die in that communion with Christ which began in baptism, was strengthened in religious profession, nurtured in the celebration of the Eucharist and is now brought to final perfection. In death Christ calls us home into the perfect community of saints where we will gaze on the Father face to face, taken up into the eternal love which unites the Father and Son in the Holy Spirit." (SVD Constitution 415; cf. SSpS Constitution 419)

What I ask for:

- that I not avoid the cross, but that I can continue to imitate Jesus in His loving self-sacrifice to His Father for people.
- that Mary will help me to accept and to live with the sorrow and pain of Jesus, as well as to be broken with her Broken Son.

What I meditate on:

A. Luke 23: 26 - 32

Jesus is on the Via Dolorosa with the heavy cross on His way to Golgotha. I join the crying women next to Mary, His mother. Simon of Cyrene is forced to help Jesus carry the load. What does this scene teach me for my daily life?

B. Luke 23: 33 - 43

Jesus is mocked and reviled and nailed to the cross between two criminals. I stand in the midst of all these happenings and look around. How am I affected by watching this scene?

C. Invitation to meditate on each word spoken by Jesus on the Cross:

"Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23: 34

"Indeed, I promise you, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23: 43

"Woman, this is your son." "This is your mother." John 19: 26-27

"I am thirsty." John 19: 28

"My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" Matthew 27: 46

"It is accomplished." John 19: 30

"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Luke 23: 46

D. Repetition:

E. Luke 23: 44 - 49

Jesus dies on the cross. - "This was a great and good man." All the people struck their breasts. Do I stand there as a relative, as a friend of Mary or of the women of



Christ, covering mantle, by R. P. Litztenburger

Galilee? Am I an onlooker, or am I taking part? Am I a believing spectator, a person undergoing conversion?

F. John 19: 31 - 42

The lance — taking down from the cross — the burial.
From the wound in His side (heart) flow blood and water.
"Blood of Christ, invigorate me! Water from the side of Christ, wash me." "O Jesus, humble of heart, make my heart like yours."

G. Summing up:

Application of senses: see, listen, taste, touch, relish the goodness and mercy of God in Jesus, my brother - before a crucifix which inspires me.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

From the metaphor of the vine: "You are pruned already by means of the word I have spoken to you. Make your home in me as I make mine in you." (John 15: 3-4a)

Recommended reading:

Psalms: 22 and 23 and 51
SVD Constitutions 413 - 417; SSpS Constitutions 417 - 421

"That union with Christ which attains its perfection when we return home to the Father, is a source of joy in our earthly life (see Ph. 1: 20 - 21). God offers us his love in word and sacrament and urges us to proclaim our joy in the Lord through discipleship. The more we ourselves seek to express this joy and share it with others, the more intimately will we be united with the Divine Word in his life and mission." (SVD Constitution 417)

**He who
tore down
the temple
and in three days
rebuilt it
says he thirsts.**

**He who
possessed
power even
over blindness and lameness
says he thirsts.**

**He who
turned water into wine
and wine into his blood
says he thirsts.**

**He who
has received all power
uses none for himself
and he who so thirsts
for freedom and justice
puts up with the fact
that there is still vinegar.**

Rudolph Weiss



Life for the World, Flower arrangement: the cross seen by Kyoko Grant, Japan

PHASE FOUR

FROM SELF-SACRIFICE IN LOVE TO LIBERATION

**"I tell you, most solemnly,
unless a wheat grain falls on the ground
and dies, it remains only a simple grain;
but if it dies,
it yields a rich harvest."**

(John 12: 24)

Forms of renewal, like this retreat, follow one's personal way of faith. This way leads through the mystery of the grain of wheat to full development and human, spiritual maturity.

The Bible meditations on the Resurrection will open the eyes of our hearts so that with the Risen Lord, who is in our midst and goes wherever we go, we experience and witness to His love for God and people.

In this fourth phase of our renewal process, I ask that I meet the Lord on Easter morning, and accept His Easter gifts: light, joy, trust, the awakening of new hope.

*To prepare for the days to come, I meditate on
2 Corinthians: 1: 1 - 5.*



John 20:16-17: Jesus said, "Mary!"
She turned round then and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbunil", S. Köder

EASTER - JESUS RISES FROM THE DEAD - HE LIVES!

*"The disciples were filled with joy
when they saw the Lord."*

(John 20: 20b)

The situation:

The texts for this week were chosen to lead me to the source of joy, namely, an encounter with the Risen Lord. He is with me and has promised to comfort me and give me His gifts to fill me that I can comfort those to whom the Kingdom of God is primarily promised: the poor, the sick, the rejected and sinners, the sorrowing, the persecuted.

What I ask for:

- that in my life and service of preaching the Kingdom of God I never allow disillusionment, troubles and pains to cause me to abandon the search for hope, joy, the gift of new life in the encounter with the Risen One.
- that I can enjoy the challenge of meeting people of different races and cultures.

What I meditate on:

A. Mark 16: 1 - 8

The three women invite me to go to the grave with them. Am I reluctant to go? Who will take the grave stone away from the cave in my heart? What are my blocks (stones), my fears?

B. John 20: 1 - 10

It is a woman who rouses Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loves from their despondency by means of a message about an empty grave. They stir up the desire to go back and inspect the grave to see if the report is correct. Who enters first? - Am I the first to enter?

C. John 20: 11 - 18

In her darkness and sorrow, Jesus calls Mary by her name. She answers: Rabbuni (teacher). Mary springs up, runs to her brothers and sisters and announces: "I have seen the Lord." Where is HE who has already come to me on the Easter morning of my life? Who met me when everything in me was abysmally dark? Where has HE called me by name?

D. Repetition:

The Risen Lord takes the initiative to meet me. Where do I experience His initiative in my daily routine; what arouses my confidence, faith and attention?

E. John 20: 19 - 21a

In the evening, the doors are closed for fear of the Jews. Jesus comes and stands among them: "Peace be with you." He shows them His hands and His feet ... "The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord." I regard myself as gifted with His presence!

F. John 20: 24 - 29

"Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe." "My Lord and my God!" - How do I answer the Risen One? Can I repeat these words of Thomas?

G. Summing up:

The mystery of Easter is about a conversion from frustration to peace, joy. This conversion is not a single experience, but

an ongoing conversion into the Easter "Passing Over" into the joy and freedom of the Risen Word of God.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

Daily I receive with gratitude, joy and freedom all that brings life from within and without. This stream of living water becomes the great Easter stream of life.

Recommended reading:

1 Corinthians 15: 1 - 22

Psalm 118

SVD Constitution 121:

We share the life and mission of Christ who emptied himself and became a slave, obedient unto death, even to death on the cross (Ph. 2: 7-8). We are convinced that the blessing of God upon our apostolic work is found not only in joy and success but also in hardship and disappointment, misunderstandings and persecutions, loneliness and failure. Only when the grain of wheat dies does it yield a rich harvest (see John 12:24).

SSpS Constitutions 119, 120

Romans 6: 1 - 11 In baptism we died and were raised to new life.

Colossians 3: 1- 4 We thank God for our new life in Christ.

*Christ
has no hands
except ours,
to do his work today*

*Christ
has no feet
except ours
to guide people
his Way*

*Christ
has no lips
except ours
to teach people
his word*

*We
are the only Bible
that is open to the people of the world*

*We
are God's latest message
written in our deeds and words.*

From the 14th century

THE RISEN LORD LIVES AMONG HIS OWN AND SENDS THEM OUT TO ALL THE WORLD

The situation:

"And he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.' After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' "
(John 20: 21 - 22)

In this event, the Divine Spirit was breathed on the disciples of Christ. He is the Easter gift to the disciples from the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. In this Holy Spirit Jesus now sends out His disciples to make disciples of all people.

Communities of brothers and sisters have arisen in the Church to carry on our Lord's mission. Through the power of the Spirit they proclaim the word of God.

As "Servants of the Word" and "Servants of the Holy Spirit" in the extended family of our Founder Arnold Janssen, we are here directly addressed and invited to share our Easter gift of "mission and communion" in the world with other people and carry it to the ends of the earth.

What I ask for:

- that my brothers and sisters and I recognize the gift of the Holy Spirit and the word of the Risen Lord in our daily lives and remain available for any new mission that will serve the community.
- that ever more people in the whole world experience us who are Christians as Easter and Pentecost brothers and sisters.

What I meditate on:

A. John 20: 21 - 23

"As the Father sent me, so am I sending YOU." After He had said this, he breathed on ME and said to ME: 'Receive the Holy Spirit...'

Can I remember in my life moments of being sent by the Risen Lord? What does that mean for me now?

B. John 21: 1 - 14

Jesus appears again. There are seven disciples gathered. They work and toil day and night. "It was light by now and there stood Jesus on the shore." The disciple whom Jesus loved says to Peter: "It is the Lord." When I must labor alone, I regard my work, my efforts and complaints in the light of this appearance of Jesus.

C. John 21: 15 - 19

"Do you love me? Do you love me more than these others do? Feed my sheep." Jesus asks me three times. How do I answer Him? Do I listen to His instructions now, today? And what do these instructions mean to me?

D. Repetition:

I return to the place of meditation where I realize I need more time to take the message of the Lord to heart.

E. Luke 24: 36 - 49

The Risen Lord interprets the Scriptures: past, present and future, to the disciples. His presence and His revealed word guide the disciples out of their confusion into a future-oriented perspective: "You are witnesses to this." How do I allow the Risen Lord to put a new orientation into my life?

F. Acts of the Apostles 1: 15 - 36

The disciples in Jerusalem and elsewhere have recognized

the challenge of the Risen Savior and taken it up in deeds of faith. No one acts for himself, but in the power of the word of God we should together evaluate the situation and respond to it, pray over it and come to a common decision. Can I also thank the Risen Christ for these challenges? Where do I see the demand for the discernment of spirits in community?

G. Summing up:

There are two basic dynamics in Easter spirituality: mission in communion and communion in mission. The Risen One is sent (mission) to me and to all people to rescue us, to redeem us, to gather us together and bring us home to the community of the Father (communion).

There is also another view. The Incarnate Divine Word dwelt among us to found a community, to bring us together and teach us (communion) so that we can go out to all the world and preach the Kingdom of God to all peoples and so carry on the work of Jesus of Nazareth. (Cf. Mark 3: 13 - 14)

We are, then, "a community sharing in the mission of the Divine Word" (mission - communion) and we grow "into a living missionary community with the Divine Word" (communion - mission). Our Constitutions demand that we live both.

Looking back over the week, I pray, proclaiming the mystery of Faith: Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

How does my joy in the Risen Christ stimulate me to mission, to transcend culture and religion, to share frankly my faith and hope experiences with people who live in my community?

Recommended reading:

Acts of the Apostles 1:3: For forty days he continued to appear to them and tell them about the Kingdom of God.

Psalm 18, slowly, with repeated prayer

The prologue and epilogue of our Constitutions

Review the chapter-titles of our Constitutions. What strikes me?

Luke 24: 13 - 35

Acts of the Apostles 3: 1 - 15

Ephesians 2: 13 ff.

Find parallels to these in other Scripture texts.

*"Hold it as something great
that God has given you the privilege
of working in his service."*

Arnold Janssen



THE PROMISED GIFT, THE SPIRIT OF JESUS

*"You give breath, fresh life begins, you keep renewing the world."
(Psalm 104:30)*

The situation:

"Since missionary activity is by its very nature the work and revelation of the Holy Spirit, we place ourselves and our Society entirely under his guidance and direction. His light enables us to understand the gospel, to interpret the signs of the times and thus discern the will of God. His strength empowers us to become faithful co-workers and missionaries of the Divine Word." (SVD Constitution 105; (SSpS Constitution 105)

The Spirit is the gift to all people, and the Father pours out the Spirit of Christ today into the hearts that open to Him and long to be freed and saved. This Spirit enkindles love and raises to life, consoles and heals, liberates and establishes peace, sends out and assembles, tears apart and unites.

What I ask for:

- that all my brothers and sisters and myself become intensely aware of the power and might of the presence of the Holy Spirit and thus be filled with His joy and gratitude.

- community would come to believe in this power of the Holy Spirit and receive comfort and strength, reconciliation and love from Him, in order to present this to others.
- that the Spirit urge and enable me to seek God in my life, to find Him, to trust in Him and to serve Him in people.

What I meditate on:

A. John 16: 5 - 15; 14: 25 - 26

The Holy Spirit will bring everything to my mind that our Lord and Friend has said and will guide us into all truth ... as our helper, consoler, supporter, teacher and spiritual companion, the interior Master in the hearts of the disciples. With my hand on my heart let me ask myself: Is the Spirit really my accepted and established spiritual companion to whom I belong?

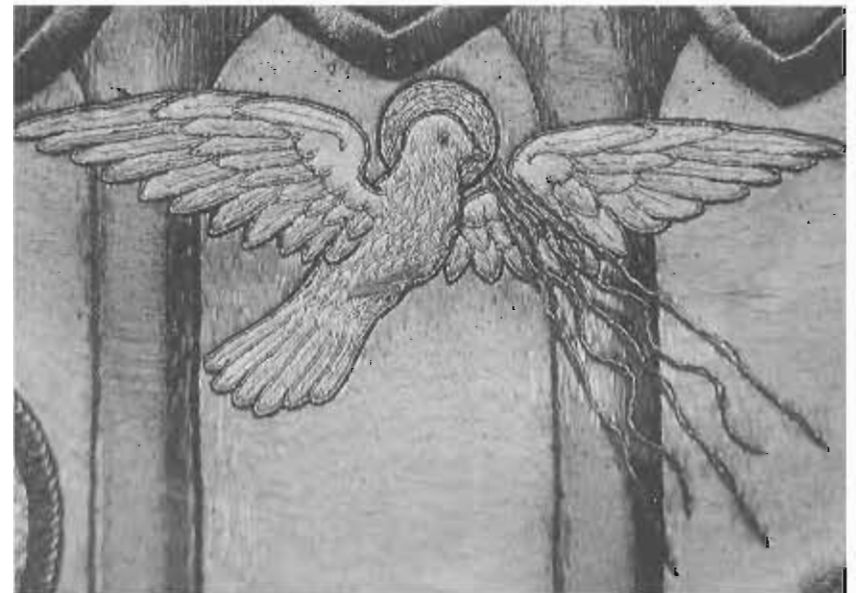
B. Acts of the Apostles 2: 1 - 21

The Spirit of God came upon the apostles on Pentecost and blows even today where He wills. He breaks down the old and creates the new. He guides the human race over the Babylonian confusion of tongues to the speech of love and reconciliation in international understanding. How do I bring my Pentecost into my everyday living? In the Society, my community, my family? In my pains and sorrows?

C. Repetition:

I let the wind and breath of the Holy Spirit fill and accompany me as I review what I have lived in my human contacts and encounters.

D. Acts of the Apostles 10: 37 - 48



The Mission of the Holy Spirit, Vestment of the Basilica in Kvelaer, Germany

According to the speech of Peter in the house of Cornelius, the Holy Spirit is already present and active in the hearts of the pagan family where Peter as an apostle "must" go. This Spirit that came to Jesus at His baptism is the same that comes to Cornelius and his family in Cesarea. - I reflect on the gift of my baptism, on the Spirit that sends me out to people.

E. 1 Corinthians 12: 1 - 11

The richness and variety of the gifts of the Holy Spirit poured out and shared in the community, in the people of God, in the concrete situations of every day, in surprises from above ... Let me name my gifts from the Holy Spirit one by one.

F. Romans 8: 14 - 17

I am a child of God through the Spirit: The spirit of sons and daughters "makes us cry out, 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God. And if we are children we are heirs as well: heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, sharing his sufferings so as to share his glory."

G. Summing up:

Praying the Veni Creator or the Veni Sancte Spiritus (singing, humming, speaking), allowing the prayer to move and convert me.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

The Holy Spirit is at work in all things, but not everything is from the Holy Spirit. I notice how the Holy Spirit wants to manifest Himself in me and outside me so that I can follow Him with loving attention.

Recommended reading:

SVD and SSpS Constitutions 301 - 316

Prayers to the Holy Spirit from the heritage of Father Janssen and Mother Maria and Mother Josepha

I write a song of gratitude or compose a repetitive verse to the Holy Spirit.

John 15: 27: "And you too will be witnesses, because you have been with me from the outset."

**"This is
how the Holy Spirit works
in the soul.
He works slowly,
but steadily,
quietly,
peacefully."**

Mother Mary Michael

**Love fills everything.
It makes the heart tender and difficult things easy.
The sisters should be so motivated
that everything proceeds out of love.**

**Everyone must intend to serve God
with a joyful heart and cheerful disposition.
Let us love each other as is fitting for sisters
who through the Spirit of love
have joined the same congregation.**

SSpS Constitutions and Statutes of 1891: Chapter 3, rule 18

26th Week 04

THE ONE AND TRIUNE GOD: ORIGIN AND SOURCE OF INEXHAUSTIBLE LOVE

**of our Living Missionary Community
with the Divine Word**

STEPS TO ACHIEVE LOVE

"The first commandment is:

'Listen, O Israel, the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.

The second is this: You must love your neighbor as yourself.' " (Mark 12: 29 - 31)

The situation:

God's passion for people and creation knows no bounds. The love of the Father in sacrificing his Only Son becomes the source of life for all and flows through union with the Holy Spirit into the hearts of all people of good will. This living and productive reality and inexhaustible source of love in us is the One, Triune God. His flood of love is shared with us through the Holy Spirit in many ways. It empowers us to seek and to find this source of life and to love and serve him in self-sacrifice as a "Servant of the Divine Word" or as a "Servant of the Holy Spirit".

What I ask for:

- that in all things I may seek and find, love and serve the Triune God.
- that I live out my gratitude toward Him and share it with others, in my community and in the all too human and imperfect Church.

27th Week 01

What I meditate on:

A. John 3: 16 - 21

First Meditation to Attain Love according to Ignatius: "the gifts of God to me, to us."

God is life - God is love. He will share His life and love in our "small world", that we may have life. God's love is unfathomable, especially in Jesus who surrenders Himself for us. He wants to include us in the mystery of His love. How do I perceive this mystery in myself and in others?

B. 1 John 4: 7 - 16

Love for God proves itself in genuine love of neighbor and oneself, when I accept His unconditional love and share it with my neighbors. Sharing means viewing others through God's eyes as brothers and sisters. In this love I enter into the lives of others unselfishly whether they be broken down and frustrated or enjoying happiness.

C. Romans 5: 1 - 5

Second Meditation to Attain Love: "God gives Himself to us, to me."

Because of our faith we have peace with God and are justified through our Lord Jesus Christ. In faith we have access to this grace which holds us in existence. We must keep up hope and give glory to God also in times of affliction. "And this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us." (Romans 5: 5) In what way does my gift of faith, of love, of hope, of grace become active in my life?

D. Sirach 51

Third Meditation to Attain Love: "God works for us, for me."

God is my guardian in the deepest human need, in persecution, agony, failure. His love embraces me always and

especially there where no human being can reach with his love. Through the death of Jesus, God has gone to the depths of human existence. Through Christ's resurrection, He has transformed our life so that we share in the love and glory of the one Father. I sing a song of thanksgiving and search through my life noticing His love and presence. This I share with my brothers and sisters.

My hymn of gratitude for the love of the Lord is ...

E. Zephaniah 3: 17

"Yahweh your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult with joy over you, he will renew you by his love; he will dance with shouts of joy for you as on a day of festival."

Fourth Meditation to Attain Love: "God as giver and gift."

The love of God is one and triune, source and stream, sun and light. He is giver and gift, father and mother, brother and sister, one in three persons, communion of life and community of mission.

So God continues to manifest Himself as love in our midst, in my own life. My God rejoices over me. He enjoys making me happy and creates me anew in his love. Do I dare resist this happiness of God? Can I take part in this jubilation of God over me?

F. Repetition:

I write my own Benedictus or Magnificat, my psalm of thanks or of praise, my own thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Or I write down the notes of the basic melody of my life and so place myself before the Triune God as a completion of the Retreat in Everyday life.

G. Summing up:

The title of our retreat was: "With Jesus, the Divine Word, on the Way." I have now walked this way at the side of Jesus, and have come to experience and to know Him much more deeply. This way opened to me the eyes and ears of my

heart to recognize the Father of Jesus as my Father too. Jesus is my Savior and the Lord of my life and my Friend. I walk with many brothers and sisters that He also called. His Spirit and His Word accompany all of us. The way goes on - with HIM.

What I pay attention to in daily life:

I look at Jesus, the Way, live his "Life", and realize that I have been filled with "love" and "truth".

Recommended reading:

"The Father sees his image in the Son and the Son in the Father and they recognize the limitless perfection of divinity in each other. From this knowledge they breathe out the deep and unfathomable love that the Son breathes out to the Father and the Father to the Son. From this love comes God the Holy Spirit. O wonderful mystery of might, majesty and love!

O what love must fill the Eternal Son when he sees that he owes the infinite treasure of his divinity to the Father! And what love God the Holy Spirit has for the Father and Son when he sees ... that the infinite treasure of his divinity stems from the Father and the Son!" (*Arnold Janssen's sermon for the profession of eleven Sisters on June 13th, 1897*)

"Christ has sent us no other spirit and is sending us no other spirit than the one he owned and always owns. The Holy Spirit comes to us from the Heart of Jesus." (Arnold Janssen)

The prologues of the Constitutions of the SVD, SSpS and SSpSAP

27th Week 04

Read the first two parts of the Constitutions attentive to the themes "Trinity", "Father", "Divine Word/Word of God", "Jesus/Christ" and "Holy Spirit". Do the same with the Constitutions of the other two congregations. Doing this will make it clear that all three congregations have a common basis for their spirituality, which unfolds in pluriform and contrasting ways in the charisms.

Psalms 33; 65; 117; 139

Luke 24: 36 - 50

John 1: 1 - 12

Matthew 5: 43 - 48

James 2: 14 - 26

1 Corinthians 13

Peter McHugh, "The Spirituality of our Founder and our Congregation", 8th General Chapter of the Servants of the Holy Spirit, Rome 1978

***"The earth
impresses me not only with her enormous number of poor
people. She can enrich me with her life or pull me back into
her dust. She can adorn herself before my eyes
with all kinds of magic and mysteries.
She can inebriate me
with the fragrance of her availability and unity.
She can dangle me on her knee
in expectation of all that is growing in her womb:
her enchantments cannot harm me any more
since the earth itself has become, for me,
the Body of Him
who is and
who is to come."***

Father Teilhard de Chardin,
"The Divine Milieu", 1962

27th Week 05

Because you love,
you beat yourself painfully for your
limitations.
Those who love have great plans for the
salvation of the world,
but realize with a shock how slight their own
power is.

The lover
is vulnerable before the unsolvable mystery
of suffering.
Your love and mine cannot change the fact
that thousands are hungry today,
that wars are always present,
that there are exploitation, violence,
enslaving and horrible brutality.

Only if we love will we nurture, not destroy,
life.
In love we share the pain of the world
and find ways to renew hope, step by step.

Ulrich Schaffer

Responsibility without love makes callousness.
Righteousness without love makes us hard-hearted.
Cleverness without love makes us sly.

Hypocrisy is born of loveless friendliness.
Injustice is born of loveless truth.
Obstinacy is born of loveless expertise.

Might without love makes us brutal.
Honor without love makes us arrogant.
Ownership without love makes us greedy.

A loveless life is purposeless.

**IN ALL THINGS SEEK CLOSER UNION
WITH GOD
MARY ... WILL HELP US
BECOME SELFLESS MINISTERS
OF THE DIVINE WORD**

Constitutions: SVD 122 - 123; SSsP 119 - 122

"Blessed is she who believed."
(Luke 1:45)

The situation:

"Since the Holy Spirit alone makes our proclamation fruitful, we rely upon his guidance and grace and not upon our own efforts and abilities. Therefore, we, like our Founder, must be men of prayer, *filled with faith and hope, constantly seeking closer union with God*. This is the source of our apostolic zeal." (SVD Constitution 122; SSsP Constitution 120)

"In our endeavor to live our missionary vocation faithfully we look to Mary, mother of the Incarnate Word and our mother. With full confidence we entrust our life and service to her protection. *She will help us become selfless ministers of the Divine Word*, dedicating ourselves untiringly for the life of the world." (SVD Constitution 123; SSsP Constitution 121)

What I ask for:

- that I be filled and led by the power of the Holy Spirit in my apostolic work and in prayer just as the Founder was.
- that as a missionary I may seek in all things closer union with God.
- that I never build on my own self-will.
- that I may ask Mary's help and advocacy with her Son in becoming a self-sacrificing servant of the Divine Word and a visible word of God for others.

What I meditate on:

A. Luke 1: 39 - 45

Mary set out ... went as quickly as she could to a town in Judah, ... went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth ... heard the greeting ... was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth gave a loud cry and said: *"Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of my Lord?"* Here a transformation takes place in the traveling, in the meeting. Transformation happens in the house, in the embrace, in the speech. The affirmation and the joy grow, because love goes out and seeks a meeting!

B. Luke 1: 45

"Blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled." Cousin Elizabeth speaks as a prophetess and touches the ear and heart of Mary. The primary reason for Elizabeth's congratulations to Mary is not the latter's physical motherhood, but her faith. This cry of jubilation echoes the promise of God.



Luke 1: 40-41 *The visitation Mary und Elizabeth,*
St. Martins in Capitol, Cologne 11th century

C. Repetition:

Looking at Mary, I see the way that I have traveled. "Mary departed." She was a missionary for others because she was involved with the mission of Jesus. She allowed the love of God to embrace and guide her.

How was I when I started this retreat with Jesus, the Divine Word? What attracted me right from the beginning? Was it the love of God in me that drew me? Was it the Holy Spirit who satisfied me when I sought or met someone else? "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." Do I discover that the Spirit of God lives and works in the words and gestures of our spiritual relatives if we greet each other and our exchanges reflect our faith?

D. Luke 1: 46 - 55

God's gift to us radiates in Mary. In every human being who is touched by the light of the Word of God and the Spirit of love and grace, the spring of joy and new life bursts forth and gradually becomes like a hymn of praise of God, a light for the world.

E. Luke 1: 46

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord." Mary's heart is filled with the music of the future God has shown her. She is sensitive to the echo she finds in people who pray to God and thank Him. Prayer in the mission of Jesus is not estrangement from, but a turning toward the world, to all that God is doing in our history.

F. Luke 1: 48 - 49

"He has looked upon the lowliness of his handmaid ... Holy is his name." God is not looking for my success, my effectiveness in the missionary apostolate. Rather He is seeking me, my heart. God calls people to greatness - but HE alone is holy ... A community composed of spiritual brothers and sisters, who seek their own honor and greatness and not the holiness and right-

eousness of God would obscure the holiness of the Church.

G. Luke: 1: 51

"He has shown the power of his arm" - the mighty have been pulled down, the lowly have been exalted; the hungry and the poor have the gospel preached to them. Captives and the sick will receive salvation, He will stretch out his arm. A refuge and a new earth will be given to the street children, for of such is the Kingdom of God.

How do I live my own Magnificat? Does Mary have a place in my life? Will she meet me, make HIM visible for my service to the Word? Can I as a missionary love and honor Mary as my mother, singing the Magnificat even as I look upon the Crucified and Risen One?

What I pay attention to in daily life:

I make a new start, fostering and deepening the good in me and others. I go the way of Jesus, carrying the seed of the word of God, greeting people, visiting them, sharing with them what I am and what I have. I want God's fruit of love to grow in me till I become *a visible word of God* among those who seek God.

Recommended reading:

Hebrews 11. Great number of witnesses to our faith.

Ephesians 3: 1 - 14 the unfathomable mystery: how God chooses his own.

Lumen Gentium, chapter 8

Scripture: This is an invitation to take up the word of God, to take it to heart, to repeat it and pray and serve HIM.

SVD Constitutions 101 - 124

SSpS Constitutions 101 - 122

What do these texts tell me about the Word of God, the Holy Spirit and myself?

I share with a brother or sister the story of my vocation to be a missionary.

"The grain of wheat does not remain by itself. To the seed belongs the motherly mystery of the earth - to Christ belongs Mary, the holy earth of the Church, as the Church Fathers call her.

The mystery of Mary means this: that the Word of God did not remain alone, but has taken to himself the earth. In the 'earth' of his mother he became human. Now, merged with the earth of all humankind, he can lead us back to God."

Joseph Ratzinger/Hans Urs von Balthasar

(Maria - Kirche im Ursprung, Freiburg 1981, 2nd edition, p. 9)

TO SEEK AND FIND GOD IN ALL THINGS

A student asked his Rabbi: "Tell me where God is." The Rabbi answered: "Tell me where He is not." The answer of Ignatius to the question of people "Where is God?" lies in the words: "You can seek and find God in all things."

There are many typical Ignatian expressions, but the phrase: "To seek God in all things" is a true foundational principle, upon which all the others rest.

This seeking and finding God must be something very concrete in our lives, while still remaining a mystery.

In a letter to a confrere Ignatius writes:

"The students must seek the presence of God our Lord in all things, for instance, in speaking, traveling, seeing, tasting, hearing, thinking, indeed in everything they do. God's majesty is in all things through his presence, his works and his being."

This art of contemplating in which one finds God our Lord in all things is easier than when we try to absorb harder and more abstract spiritual material. We can accomplish this only with great difficulty. This excellent practice of living in the presence of God calls forth many graces of the Lord, even if there be time only for a short prayer, and prepares us for future graces."

*From Willi Lambert, "Aus Liebe zur Wirklichkeit",
Grundworte ignatianischer Spiritualität, pp. 23-24*

The going out of our small "Individualistic ego" into the broader Reality occurs only through the Holy Spirit. This transcending of self and experiencing God is, as Ignatius says, "a joy beyond everything else."

"When one has gone out of himself and entered into his Creator and Lord, he perceives and enjoys the eternal good in all created things, made and maintained through His presence everywhere. This is, as was said above, "a joy beyond everything else." For to those who love the Lord, all things are offered as helps to come closer and ever more one in growing love with their Creator and Lord." (EB 58, Spiritual Letters)

From Willi Lambert (page 25)



The twelve disciples, (Detail) by Sr. S. May, OSF

TO SEEK GOD IN ALL THINGS

(Ignatius of Loyola)

*"When you seek me you shall find me, when you seek me with all
your heart; I will let you find me."
(Jeremiah 29: 13)*

*God, you are my God, I seek you.
Lord, you are my God, I hear you
in the roar of the sea,
in the murmur of the wind,
in the sea gull's cry to heaven.*

*God, you are my God, I seek you.
Lord, you are my God, I see you
in the glitter of the sea,
in the sparkle of the waves,
in the gleam of the seashells.*

*God, you are my God, I seek you.
Lord, you are my God, I feel your presence
in the warmth of the sun, in the caress of
the wind,
in the burning desire in myself.*

Lord, you are my God, I love you.

PRAYER

Teach us true holiness:
to love you as Creator
in all things
and to love all things in you;
to find you in all things,
to praise God in people
in whom is found God's image.
And then in all our deeds
of love and duty to be no less attentive
than we are in prayer, for being fully attentive
in our service of God is prayer.
Thus everything for us
should become holy
through our unending Yes
to you, O God,
who are everything
and are in everything.

Based on Ignatius of Loyola



Tabernacle, by Beate Pellert, Köln-Luderscheid

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