

AN IGNATIAN EXPERIENCE



WRITTEN BY
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-Vicki Wehmeyer
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About the Author

This material is written by Vicki Wehmeyer. Vicki is a teacher and supervisor for Sustainable Faith, and trains spiritual directors in Ignatian spirituality and accompaniment for the Spiritual Exercises. She studied four years at the Lanteri Center for Ignatian Spirituality. In May 2019, with three other women, she walked the Ignatian Camino in Spain, following the steps of Ignatius and visiting the places that influenced his writing of The Spiritual Exercises.

Welcome

AN IGNATIAN EXPERIENCE

Congratulations on your decision to embrace this abbreviated version of The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. May this ten week journey of prayer and scripture reflection enliven your life and relationship with God— as it has so many others— and leave you hungering for an even deeper experience of His love.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

It began with a man, Inigo of Loyola. Inigo was born near the point in history when Columbus set sail to discover new worlds. It was an age of adventure! Inigo caught the excitement and had great dreams for himself.

His early life was quite colorful. At age 16, he took a position in the court of the treasurer of the Castile kingdom of Spain. His dream was to become a great knight and win the hand of a beautiful woman.

At age 26, he became a soldier and fought against the French in a losing battle that left him severely wounded. A cannon ball ruined his right leg, but it seemed that his pride was injured more deeply. He was carried back to his home at Loyola where he endured two brutal surgeries on his leg (one for vanity alone) and nearly died from fever and infection. It was during this long, boring process of recovery that Inigo's life made a radical turn.

He reluctantly read a couple of books his sister-in-law offered and found himself absorbed in the stories of the saints and the life of Christ. He noted that when he daydreamed about his life as a great soldier, he found little joy or peace. Conversely, when he thought about the heroic deeds of the saints, he had much joy and peace. He decided to leave his family home and travel to Jerusalem to live as a "simple pilgrim" in the land where Jesus had lived, imitating the lives of the saints.

However, God had other plans! As Inigo— or Ignatius, as he would come to be called— was walking to Barcelona to catch a ship to Jerusalem, God met him in deeply spiritual ways. From these experiences, Ignatius formed several prayer practices, later to become The Spiritual Exercises.

The Spiritual Exercises encompass the life, conversions, values, hopes and wisdom Ignatius received from God. He wanted all people to know His Lord and Majesty— his name for God— in the deep, intimate, personal ways he had.

Ignatius wrote the original version of The Spiritual Exercises to be an intense, cloistered thirty day retreat. When he realized most people couldn't leave work and family for thirty days to pray and reflect, he wrote The Retreat in Daily Life, referred to as the 19th Annotation.

Various needs and life circumstances led to shorter adaptations, like this one. Usually ten to twelve weeks long, these versions, called the 18th Annotation, are like taking the fast train through the five themes of The Spiritual Exercises.

HELPS FOR AN IGNATIAN EXPERIENCE

COMPARISON IS NOT YOUR FRIEND.

There is no set way or gold standard experience. Each person's experience is unique, just as we are uniquely different from one another. Let God direct your experience.

CALMING OR QUIETING DOWN IS YOUR FIRST (AND MOST IMPORTANT) DAILY TASK.

We are inclined to hurry and "do" the day's assignment rather than simply be with God. In so doing, we miss the heart and mind preparation so needed if we are to be open, aware, and attentive to God's presence and movement. Begin each time with sitting still and relaxing. You might use a Breath Prayer or simply follow your natural breathing in and out. When you feel quieted inwardly, move to using the Prayer Template to organize your time.

CONTEMPLATION IS THE GOAL.

Not bible study, or increased knowledge, nor intercessory prayer. Contemplation is the practice of looking intently upon something or someone, then noting what stirs in us; an emotion, question, response, or desire. We bring that response into an honest conversation with the Father, Son, or Spirit.

CONSECRATE THIS TIME.

Honor this time as a unique God-graced experience. You may not do something like this again. Notice inner movements of desolation and consolation, important images, words, memories, or moods. Note these in your journal, asking God to help you understand them.



WHAT TO EXPECT

AN OVERVIEW OF AN IGNATIAN EXPERIENCE

[WEEKS ONE - FOUR] We begin by reflecting on God's tender love and care for us, and His gracious ongoing work in our lives.

[WEEK FIVE] Next, comes a week of looking at how all humans, including ourselves, have responded to our loving and caring God. We ask God to help us understand our patterns of sin which hinder us from receiving God's love, as well as loving ourselves and others.

[WEEKS SIX - EIGHT] Continuing on, we observe the life and ministry of Christ, seeking to discover who God is and how He acts as we watch Jesus, God in the flesh, live out His values and vision. A look at true discipleship, we hope to find Jesus becoming a close and trusted friend we desire to follow, know better, and love more deeply.

[WEEK NINE] Finally, we travel with Christ, our close friend, through the darkest days of His life; His suffering and death. It tells us, even more deeply, of God's love for us.

[WEEK TEN] We end An Ignatian Experience with the resurrection of Jesus and reflect on how God would have us love our world in the way He loves us and the world.

Covering these themes in just ten weeks may feel too fast. Pay attention to that desire and consider embarking on the 19th Annotation– the nine month Spiritual Exercises experience.



The Prayer Template

TO BE USED EACH DAY

The following template will help to give structure to your daily time of prayer.

FIRST, QUIET DOWN.

Relax and get comfortable in your place. You may want a cup of tea or coffee. Slow your breathing down. This helps to calm the mind and heart; neurologists believe it opens both mind and heart to new thoughts and experiences. Remind yourself that you are in the long and loving gaze of God.

SECOND, ASK "HOW DO I COME TODAY?"

Ask yourself this question and write a one or two sentence answer. There is no right or wrong answer; try to refrain from judging, analyzing, or criticizing. Be honest. God wants to be with you just as you are.

THIRD, ASK "WHAT DO I DESIRE?"

What do you most want as you come to be with God? Write down your desire in one or two sentences. Be honest. God loves to hear your truest desires.

FOURTH, READ AND REFLECT.

Read the scriptures or reflections listed for the day. Notice what engages you.

FIFTH, HAVE A CONVERSATION.

Talk with God, like a friend talks to a friend, about your experience with the day's scripture or reflection.

SIXTH, WRITE A SHORT SUMMARY.

Note how you experienced God and how God may have experienced you.

SEVENTH, JOURNAL AS YOU LIKE.



WEEK ONE

GOD'S LOVE AND CARE FOR US

DAILY READINGS

DAY 1 Read Isaiah 43:1-7

Consider: Who is God for me? How does God see me?

DAY 2 Read Psalm 139:1-18

Consider: How does God gaze upon me? How open am I to receiving this act of intimacy?

DAY 3 Read Psalm 23

Consider: What words or images move me?

DAY 4 Read Luke 12:22-34

Consider: What worries and fears do I want to relinquish?

DAY 5 Read Psalm 131

Practice resting and being still in God's long and loving gaze.

DAY 6 Read Hosea 11:1-4

Consider: How has God cared for me? How does He care for me now?

DAY 7 Read again one of the scriptures above that was particularly meaningful for you. Ask God if there is more He wants to give you from the verse.

The Grace to Seek

I want to be more aware of how God is present and near and trust in His care and love.

REMEMBER TO USE THE PRAYER TEMPLATE EACH DAY

A Grace to Seek

Ignatius understood well the common and deeper desires of all humans and what leads to their truest fulfillment and enjoyment. Each week, we will explore a new Ignatian grace to seek; a prayer to ask for a certain grace or gift that only God can give.

For example, this week the grace to ask for (see the previous page) is to be more aware of how God is present and near and to trust in God's care and love for you.

As a practice, each day this week simply ask for that grace. You may sometimes feel like you are just asking and there is no real desire or feeling for it. This is normal and is not a problem. Ignatius advises us to ask for the desire to desire the grace. Ask for the desire and wait and see if God gives it and if not, trust that He knows what is best for now.



WEEK TWO

A DEEPENING INTIMACY

DAILY READINGS

DAY 1 Read Luke 11:1-13

Consider: I ask Jesus for what I want.

DAY 2 Read Isaiah 55:1-13

Consider: Am I able to be still and listen to God, in scriptures and in the deepest desires of my heart?

DAY 3 Read Psalm 103

Speak a simple prayer of gratitude from your heart.

DAY 4 Read Romans 8:26-27

When prayer is a struggle, I can find consolation in the Spirit's help.
Consider: Where do I struggle most in prayer?

DAY 5 Read Psalm 63:1-8

Consider: What do I thirst for?

DAY 6 Read Psalm 36:5-10

Consider: What stirs in me when I read the writer's words?

DAY 7 Review the week and savor the gifts you were given.

Return to a scripture that was particularly meaningful for you and linger longer there.

The Grace to Seek

I want to learn how to feel God's presence with me all through the day.

A Prayer of Examen

FOR USE EACH DAY

Our over-packed days can rob of us opportunity to be aware of the many ways and times God was graciously present in our day. It may have been in a conversation, an activity, in the beauty of creation, or simply in washing the dishes. The spiritual practice of Examen slows us down enough to recognize God's presence, to identify what was life-giving (and what was not) in our day.

Take the next few moments to reflect on the last 24 hours.

Next, imagine yourself in the presence of Jesus— talk to Him, thank Him for the day and His presence in it. Ask for grace to see the day as God sees it. Watch it as a flow of scenes, like a movie or slideshow. Allow Jesus to interrupt the flow and focus on whatever warrants reflection.

When were you most aware of God's presence? Express gratitude for that awareness.

Where were you least aware of God's presence? What hindered you? Express sorrow for failure to notice.

Where may God have seemed absent, but been present in a way you did not recognize?

AN IGNATIUS TIDBIT

ST. IGNATIUS THOUGHT THE EXAMEN WAS A GIFT THAT CAME FROM GOD. IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE JESUITS, ONE OF THE FEW RULES OF PRAYER THAT IGNATIUS MADE FOR THE JESUIT ORDER WAS THE REQUIREMENT THAT JESUITS PRACTICE THE EXAMEN TWICE DAILY — AT NOON AND AT THE END OF THE DAY. JESUITS, AND MANY CHRISTIANS, CONTINUE THE PRACTICE TODAY.

HELPFUL EXAMEN APPS

Pray As You Go* | Grupo Comunicación Loyola
Examen Prayer | Michael Denk
Reimagining the Examen | Loyola Press

*Pray As You Go has a helpful audio version of the Examen Prayer.



WEEK THREE

LIVING A FREE AND FULFILLING LIFE

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1** Read the Principle and Foundation (see the next page)
Consider: How do I praise, love, and serve God? What activities, people, or material things help me achieve this end? What holds me back or gets in the way of my praising, loving, and serving God?
- DAY 2** Read again the Principle and Foundation
Consider: Read the excerpt from Kevin O'Brien SJ (see the next page)
- DAY 3** Read Luke 1:26-38
Notice how Mary handles her fears and keeps her focus on God as she responds to His purposes for her life.
- DAY 4** Read Philippians 3:7-16
Consider: When have I experienced or seen a similar focus and freedom in my life?
- DAY 5** Read Mark 10:17-27
Consider: What attracts me to following Jesus and what holds me back?
- DAY 6** Read again the Principle and Foundation
Rewrite the Principle and Foundation in your own words.
- DAY 7** Review the week and savor the gifts you were given.

The Grace to Seek

I want a deepening awareness of my calling to praise, love, and serve God and others and a desire for an interior freedom towards all things.

Principle and Foundation

A KEY IGNATIAN REFLECTION

For use in WEEK THREE: DAYS 1, 2 & 6

Ignatius knew what it was to be fiercely and passionately loved by God. This love drew him to live a life committed to God and God's purposes. To capture this commitment, Ignatius wrote what we might call a mission statement for his life. This statement is called the Principle and Foundation.

The Principle and Foundation is much more than a mission statement; it is an invitation into a life that is deeply fulfilling and enjoyable.

The following is a contemporary interpretation of the Principle and Foundation by David L Fleming SJ, adapted by Fred Galano.

The goal of our life is to love, praise and serve God forever. God, who loves us and gave us life. Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into us without limit. All the things in this world are gifts of God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God insofar as they help us develop as loving persons. But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives, they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some obligation. We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God.

Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening life in me.

For use in WEEK THREE: DAY 2

When we experience God's love and care, a spiritual freedom develops in our hearts and minds. It is an interior freedom which allows us to hear and respond to God's will and call. However, our "stuff" can get in the way: fears, prejudices, greed, need to control, perfectionism, jealousies, etc. They lead to an inner chaos and tendency to make poor choices. We can become excessively attached to persons, places, material possessions, titles, occupations, etc. While these are good in themselves when directed by God's love, they can become disordered attachments and push God out of the center of our life. God's desire is that our whole being know and be filled with His love. —Kevin O'Brien SJ



WEEK FOUR

GOD IN ALL THINGS AND CONSTANTLY CREATING ME

DAILY READINGS

DAY 1 Read Genesis 1:26 & 2:9

Consider: God created human beings and all of creation. As I consider His ongoing creative work in this world, how do I want to respond to Him?

DAY 2 Read Psalm 104

Consider: Where do I see God's glory revealed in my life and in the creative world around me?

DAY 3 Read Jeremiah 18:1-6

Consider: God creates me more intently than a potter creates a pot. How do I find myself being shaped and molded by God? Do I welcome His creative work or am I resistant?

DAY 4 Read Ephesians 2:10

Consider: I am God's work of art, a masterpiece, a one of a kind creation. How does God feel and respond when He looks upon His masterpiece, me?

DAY 5 Repeat Jeremiah 18:1-6 using the Prayer of Repetition (see the next page).

DAY 6 Repeat Ephesians 2:10 using the Prayer of Repetition.

DAY 7 Review the week and savor the gifts you were given.

The Grace to Seek

I want to be filled with wonder, awe, and gratitude for God's ongoing creative work in me and in the world.

Prayer of Repetition

A KEY TYPE OF IGNATIAN PRAYER For use in WEEK FOUR: DAYS 5 & 6

To help us simplify and slow down our praying, Ignatius suggests that we do “repetitions” of previous scriptures. This does not mean that we reenact a prayer period minute by minute, or rehearse every part of the scripture passage.

Instead, we return to some word, image, desire, insight, feeling, attraction, resistance, or other interior movement that was particularly strong when we first prayed that scripture or reflection.

“Repetitions are not meant to be boring, as if to say, ‘I’ve already done that!’ Instead, they are intended to help us go deeper.” —Kevin O’Brien SJ

THE STEPS FOR PRAYER OF REPETITION

- Identify a scripture passage that was meaningful for you.
- Bring to mind the meaningful part and ask the Lord, “What more do you want me to receive from this scripture passage?”
- Listen and then have a simple conversation with the Lord like two friends chatting.

Prayer of Repetition is like a seasoned fisherman who knows he can go back time and time again to a good fishing hole and find fish. The spot never seems to empty of good fish, and he gets a new one every time.



WEEK FIVE

SIN: MAN'S RESPONSE TO A LOVING, CARING GOD

DAILY READINGS

DAY 1 Read the following Ignatius experience excerpt:

"I will call to memory the sin of the angels; how they were created in grace and then, not wanting to better themselves by using their freedom to reverence and obey their Creator and Lord, they fell into pride, were changed from grace to malice, and were hurled from heaven into hell?" -Ignatius

Consider: How could angels turn away from God?

DAY 2 Read Genesis 2:4-3:13

Consider: How could Adam and Eve turn away from God?

DAY 3 Read Romans 3:9-18

Consider: How could I turn away from God, who loves and cares for me?

DAY 4 Read Romans 6:23

Glance through the newspaper, or internet news, and note the destructive power of sin and the disorder it causes to nations, communities, families, and individuals.

DAY 5 Read 2 Samuel 11:1-12:25

The following is a prayer for awareness and change: Lord grant me an understanding of the sin that is underneath my actions and attitudes, my choices and decisions, my customs and habits and for a strong grasp of the disorder they cause. Grant me help to turn away from those disorders and change my ways. Lord grant me an understanding of this world and its ways, values and hollow pursuits that I might shake them off and be more like you. Amen.

Consider: David's sin and its effect.

DAY 6 Read Romans 8:1, 38-39

Consider: My sin does not define me. I am forgiven. I am a saint, deeply loved by God.

DAY 7 Review the week.

The Grace to Seek

I want to grow in awareness of the hidden, sinful tendencies that influence my decisions and actions; and I ask for a sincere gratitude for God's mercy and faithfulness to me.

The Reality of Sin

Sin is an inescapable reality of the human condition. We abuse the freedom God gives us, and make choices that hurt God, others, and ourselves. We see the effects of sin in the disorder of our individual lives and in social structures that dehumanize, marginalize, oppress, and hurt people.

It is not our aim to get mired in guilt, self-hate, or despair, but to simply understand how our sinful tendencies influence our decisions and actions and the resulting effect of sin on ourselves, others, and our world.

Even as we recognize these hard realities, we remember that God loves us unconditionally and wants to free us from anything that blocks our growth into the person God hopes us to be.

To this end, we keep our eyes fixed on God's ever-present mercy and seek healing. Just as bodily healing often begins with some physical pain, healing of the soul begins with a graced awareness of our disordered loves and self-preoccupations.

ADAPTED FROM KEVIN O'BRIEN SJ



WEEK SIX

THE INCARNATION

DAILY READINGS

DAY 1 Read John 1:1-5, 14-18

Imagine, as Ignatius did, sitting with the Trinity and hearing them say, "Let us work the redemption of the human race."

DAY 2 Read Luke 1:26-38

"Notice how our triune God works— so simply and quietly, so patiently. A world goes on, apparently oblivious to the new creation that has begun. I take in Mary's complete way of being available and responding to her Lord and God." —David Fleming SJ

DAY 3 Read Luke 1:39-56

Imagine the joy, awe, and wonder Mary and Elizabeth feel when they meet. Using the Imaginative Contemplation (described on the next page), enter into their joy and celebration.

DAY 4 Read Matthew 1:18-24

Consider: Joseph's courage, generosity and obedience toward God's plan for his life. Use the Imaginative Contemplation again.

DAY 5 Read Luke 2:1-7

Ignatius suggests putting yourself directly in the scene: "See the person, that is, to see [Mary], Joseph, the maidservant, and the infant Jesus after his birth. I will make myself a poor, little, and unworthy slave, gazing at them, contemplating them, and serving them in their needs, just as if I were there with all possible respect and reverence."

DAY 6 Read Luke 2:8-19

Consider: How might you want to respond to these amazing events? Like the shepherds? Like the angels? Use the Imaginative Contemplation on the next page.

DAY 7 Review the week.

The Grace to Seek

I want to feel awe and wonder over the astounding way God responded to man's choice to sin by sending His Son into my world and in human form— just like me.

Imaginative Contemplation

PRAYER WITH THE IMAGINATION


For use in WEEK SIX: DAYS 3, 4 & 6

Imaginative Contemplation is a way to get to know and meet Christ in the gospels. The ultimate goal is personal encounter with Him. The Holy Spirit makes present the mystery of Christ found in the particular passage, and helps you to explore things in a way you might not find possible through regular reading of the scriptures or study of the scriptures.

As you reflect on the daily readings, let the events of Jesus' life be present to you. Visualize the event as if you were making a movie. Pay attention to the details: sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings of the event. At some point, place yourself in the scene and meet Jesus there.

We might initially worry about going beyond the text of the Gospel. As you offer your time of prayer to God, begin to trust that God is communicating with you. If you wonder if your imagination is going too far, then do some discernment with how you are praying. Where did your imagining lead you: closer to God or farther away? Is your imagining bringing you consolation or desolation?

Some people find imaginative prayer difficult. They may not be able to picture the scene easily, yet they have some intuition or gut reaction to the story. Or they may hear or feel the story more than visualize. Pray as you are able; don't try to force it. Rest assured that God will speak to you, whether through your memory, understanding, intellect, emotions or imagination.



WEEK SEVEN

BEING WITH JESUS IN HIS EARLY LIFE

DAILY READINGS

EACH DAY THIS WEEK, USE EITHER THE IMAGINATIVE CONTEMPLATION FROM WEEK SIX OR THIS WEEK'S IGNATIAN MEDITATION (SEE THE NEXT PAGE). BOTH OF THESE ARE KEY FORMS OF PRAYER MEANT TO ENHANCE OUR PRAYER EXPERIENCE.

DAY 1 Read Matthew 2:13-23

Consider: Jesus' early days were ones of escape and exile.

DAY 2 Read Luke 2:39-40

Consider: Jesus grew up much in the same way that all humans do.

DAY 3 Read Luke 2:21-38

Consider: What moves in your heart when you read the passage?

DAY 4 Read Luke 2:41-50

Consider: What did Mary and Joseph see, feel, and wonder when their son was missing and when they found Him in the temple? What did Jesus see, feel, and wonder? Was He experiencing a deeper sense of His vocation?

DAY 5 Read Luke 2:51-52

Consider: What questions come to mind about Jesus' teenage years and young adulthood? Ask Him and listen.

DAY 6 Read Matthew 3:13

Consider: Jesus prepares to leave home to begin His public ministry. How did He bid goodbye? What do you imagine Jesus, His mother, His family, or His community felt? Does it remind you of a time of leaving in your life?

DAY 7 Repeat any scriptures that were particularly meaningful to you this week.

Use the Ignatian Meditation form of prayer on the next page.

The Grace to Seek

I want to know, love, and follow Jesus.

Ignatian Meditation

PRAYER WITH THE MIND, MEMORY, AND THE WILL For use during WEEK 7

In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius introduces us to several forms of prayer. This week, try Ignatian Meditation, which uses the mind, memory, and the will. As you try the different prayer forms, notice which ones work best for you.

STEPS FOR IGNATIAN MEDITATION

- Read the chosen scripture.
- Stay with the words, phrases, or images that catch your attention.
- Use of memory: Does this passage stir anything in your memory? Anything in your life? What is it? Why is it important?
- Use of intellect: What does this passage mean? You may ponder, reflect, reason, draw parallels or compare to other passages.
- Use of will: Your resolve to do. You may want to make a decision about how to savor the message or open yourself to feel the appropriate feelings related to the scripture passage and what it means for your life.



WEEK EIGHT

BEING WITH JESUS IN HIS MINISTRY YEARS

DAILY READINGS

THIS WEEK CONTINUE TO USE THE PRAYER OF IMAGINATIVE CONTEMPLATION (WEEK SIX) AS WELL AS THE IGNATIAN MEDITATION (WEEK SEVEN). WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS YOU NOTICE? HOW MIGHT THESE TWO TYPES OF IGNATIAN PRAYER CHANGE YOUR DAILY PRAYER PRACTICE?

DAY 1 Read Matthew 3:13-17 & 4:1-11

Consider: As Jesus begins His ministry, what feels most significant to you about these two life-defining events? What moves you? Why?

DAY 2 Read Mark 1:21-39

Consider: What surprises you, stirs in you, or concerns you as you observe Jesus in His daily life?

DAY 3 Read Mark 10:13-16

Consider: Jesus astonishes many by His prioritizing of the children. Does this surprise you?

DAY 4 Read Mark 10:46-52

Consider: Jesus heals many. Do you want healing? For what? Can you ask Jesus for that healing?

DAY 5 Read Mark 8:27-30

Consider: Why would Jesus ask this question? Imagine yourself being there. What would your answer be?

DAY 6 Read Matthew 4:18-22

Consider: Jesus calls you to follow Him. What feelings come up? Fears? Excitement? What draws you to follow Him?

DAY 7 Review the week.

The Grace to Seek

I want to know, love, and follow Jesus.

Week 8

KNOW HIM MORE CLEARLY
LOVE HIM MORE DEARLY
FOLLOW HIM MORE CLOSELY

In this week Ignatius asks that we observe Jesus closely. This up-close observing leads us to know Jesus more deeply. We cannot love someone unless we first know him or her on a deeply personal level. We will not follow Him with the sacrifice that is asked if we are not rooted deeply in His love for us and our love for Him.

Accordingly, we want to watch what Jesus does, what He doesn't do; what He says, what He doesn't say; who He hangs out with, and who He doesn't hang out with.

SOME HELPFUL REMINDERS

- The prayer material is not homework or tasks for a to-do list. It is for relationship with the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- If you feel like you are working too hard, you probably are. Avoid problem solving or focusing on productivity in your prayer time.
- Let God initiate.
- Avoid comparisons with how others are experiencing the exercises.
- Refrain from shortening your prayer time or changing locations. Keep to the rhythm of space and time you committed to when you began.



WEEK NINE

BEING WITH JESUS IN HIS SUFFERING AND DEATH

DAILY READINGS

DAY 1 Read Matthew 21:1-11

Use your imagination to put yourself in this scene. What do you notice? What do you hear? What do you feel?

DAY 2 Read Matthew 26:17-30

Consider: What or who are you drawn to in this scene?

DAY 3 Read Matthew 26:36-56

Consider: Our love for Jesus leads us to be with Him as He is betrayed, misunderstood, rejected and alone. We want to stay with Him, to be present to Him. Ask Jesus what He needs? How can you be a friend to Him?

DAY 4 Read Mark 15:1-41

Consider: What are you feeling as you watch the cruelty and injustice inflicted on your friend, Jesus? Is it sorrow, confusion, compassion, regret, fear, anticipation? Speak to Jesus about whatever you are feeling, or perhaps you are simply present to Jesus without words.

DAY 5 Read Luke 23:50-56

Consider: What might God the Father and God the Holy Spirit experience as they watch Jesus' body be laid in the tomb?

DAY 6 Read Luke 23:56b "But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment."

Consider: This has been called the Longest Sabbath. Jesus' mother, disciples, friends have lost their dearest friend to a violent and senseless death. They are traumatized. In following the customs of the Sabbath, they cannot be busy or distract themselves with work or activities. What might they have felt, thought, or questioned during that very long sabbath day? What would that long day have been like for you?

DAY 7 Review the week.

The Grace to Seek

I ask to simply be a friend to Jesus in the darkest and most difficult time of His life.

Jesus Fully Human

For use each day in WEEK NINE

In the last week of Jesus' life we see little of His divinity. Absent are the miracles. Absent are the voices from heaven. We see Jesus fully human and vulnerable.

Some views hold that because He was God, He got a lighter version of suffering. However, in these verses, we see that He enters fully into the pain and suffering of rejection, betrayal, violence, abuse, humiliation, and aloneness. He suffers physically, mentally, psychologically, and emotionally. This is not a church passion play— it is real life, real suffering, real violence, real abuse.

This can create a particular tension for us. We may feel powerless to help or "fix it". We may be angry at ourselves knowing our sin led to Jesus' suffering. We may be angry at Jesus for not speaking up to defend Himself or for not using His divine powers.

Ignatius gives us good advice. He encourages us to be a companion and a friend; to simply walk and be with Jesus as one would be with a friend in suffering or difficulty.

Each day, ask Jesus, "How can I be a friend to you in your time of suffering?" What do you need? Then listen to His answer.



WEEK TEN

BEING WITH JESUS IN HIS RESURRECTION AND WORK IN THIS WORLD

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1** Read John 20:1-10
Imagine the disciples finding the empty tomb.
- DAY 2** Read Luke 24:13-35
Consider: Has your heart burned these weeks? What desires stir in your heart now?
- DAY 3** Read John 20:10-22
Consider: How do Mary Magdalene's responses feel similar to your own?
- DAY 4** Read Mark 16:4-20
Consider: How is Jesus inviting you to partner in His work in the world? How do you want to respond?
- DAY 5** Read The Contemplation to Love Like God steps one and two (see the next page)
Reflect on the reading.
- DAY 6** Read The Contemplation to Love Like God steps three and four (see the next page)
Reflect on the reading.
- DAY 7** Read Living the Ignatian Experience (found after The Contemplation to Love Like God)
What suggestions feel like God's invitation to you? How will you respond to those invitations?

The Grace to Seek

I ask to enter into the joy that Jesus felt over His resurrection and to follow Him in His work in this world.

THE CONTEMPLATION TO LOVE LIKE GOD

**ADAPTED FROM KEVIN O'BRIEN'S
IGNATIAN ADVENTURE**

WWW.IGNATIANSPIRITUALITY.COM

We end these ten weeks of An Ignatian Experience with this reflection: Contemplation to Love Like God.

In this final and key Ignatian reflection, we let God's overwhelming love empower our lives.

Before beginning, take time to seek the following Ignatian grace:

I ask for what I desire. Here it will be to ask for interior knowledge of all the great good I have received, in order that, stirred to profound gratitude, I may become able to love and serve the Divine Majesty in all things.

—Ignatius

The first step is to thank God for the many gifts you have received.

I will call back into my memory the gifts I have received— my creation, redemption, and other gifts particular to myself. I will ponder with deep affection how much God, our Lord, has done for me, and how much He has given me of what He possesses, and consequently how He, the same Lord, desires to give me even His very self, in accordance with His divine design.


Then I will reflect on myself, and consider what I, on my part, ought in all reason and justice to offer and give to the Divine Majesty, namely, all my possessions, and myself along with them. I will speak as one making an offering with deep affection, and say:

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will— all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given all that to me. I now give it back to you, O Lord. All of it is yours. Dispose of it according to your will.

Give me love of yourself along with your grace, for that is enough for me.

—Ignatius

CONT. ON NEXT PAGE



The second step of the contemplation is finding God in all things, in all people, and in myself.

I will consider how God dwells in creatures; in the elements, giving them existence; in the plants, giving them life; in the animals, giving them sensation; in human beings, giving them intelligence; and finally, how in this way He dwells also in myself, giving me existence, life, sensation, and intelligence; and even further, making me His temple, since I am created as a likeness and image of the Divine Majesty.

Then once again pray:

“Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will— all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given all that to me. I now give it back to you, O Lord. All of it is yours. Dispose of it according to your will.

Give me love of yourself along with your grace, for that is enough for me.”

—Ignatius

The third step of the contemplation is praising God who constantly labors for you.

God is not static. God, revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is dynamic, alive, always stirring, and always laboring to bring life to God’s beloved creation. God is love overflowing. In your prayer, consider the activity of God in your life and your world. Marvel at how God creates in, through, and with us. Can you see and hear God laboring in the world around you? Can you appreciate how God has “labored” specifically in and through you? Can you recognize how the labor of others supports you in your living?

The fourth step of the contemplation is praising God, who is the source of all goodness.

Love sees clearly into the depths of reality. With your vision sharpened by the Exercises, try to see in all things— in all creation and all people— the reflection of God’s very self. Recall specific occasions when you or someone else acted with justice, goodness, mercy, or another virtue. Appreciate how these actions were like rays come down from the sun, who is God.

As you end, consider the thoughts of German poet Rainer Maria Rilke who captures the movement of this Contemplation (and indeed the whole of these exercises) perfectly:

We are cradled close in your hands—
and lavishly flung forth.

Now we must take the love and grace that God has given us during this privileged time of retreat, incarnate it in our own lives, and go into the world with hearts on fire, doing with God what He most hopes for in this world.

living the Ignatian Experience

For use in WEEK TEN: Day 7

This ten week Ignatian Experience may be ending, but Ignatius himself would be the first to tell you that these exercises do not end. The gifts and graces continue to deepen and reveal themselves in new ways, both in prayer and in daily life.

Below are a few ways to continue your experience:

- Look back over your notes and savor the gifts God gave you.
- What ways of praying were helpful to you? Which ones do you want to continue?
- Read the book of Acts or one of the Gospels. Take a small section each day and use the Prayer of Imaginative Contemplation from WEEK SIX.
- Continue to learn more about Ignatian ways and concepts by logging onto www.IgnatianSpirituality.com or read The Jesuit Guide To Almost Everything by James Martin, SJ.

Prayerfully consider doing the 19th Annotation, the nine month Ignatian Exercises series. Just like this ten week Ignatian Experience, you will receive scriptures and readings for each day covering the same themes, only more in depth. Each week you will meet one-on-one with an Ignatian trained spiritual director, typically beginning in mid-September. For more information on the 19th Annotation, visit www.SustainableFaith.com