

Week One

After the Exercises

Finding God in All Things

How to use this booklet:

These passages have been chosen to underscore a theme that is very important in Ignatian Spirituality and in our walk with Jesus. It is “Finding God in All Things.” The general direction of prayer that is envisioned by this booklet is one of *Lectio Divina*. In this method, the passage one reads is meant to help one to reflect, then to move into prayer with God and then to move into a silent and deep communion with God. This trajectory has been described as a ladder: reading—thinking—praying—contemplating. As one finds oneself distracted at any time in the prayer, one simply goes back to reading the passage, letting the words open us to thinking and praying and contemplating. One might end up reading the passage many times or one might not be able to get through the passage because one stops to think, pray and/contemplate so frequently.

You might want to use one passage all week long, rotate through them or repeat one or another of them. There should be enough material to help someone pray for one week.

You probably want to give yourself at least 30 minutes for this.

Preparatory Prayer:

Ask the Lord to help you to find Him more fully in all the aspects of your life.

Lectio Divina:

Read the passage that you choose, stopping as soon as you feel drawn to reflect on the passage or you feel moved to pray. Let go of your sense of wanting to learn or to finish the passage, but instead desire to be open to God and, if you feel a call to just sit quietly in the presence of God, indulge in that. As you get distracted, return gently to the passage and read some more or read parts of it again. Distractions are natural.

Conclusion:

Thank God for your time and be specific about a time or two that you felt the grace of God or felt touched by God's wisdom.

Quotation of St. Ignatius:

“If God causes you to suffer much, it is a sign that He has great designs for you, and that He certainly intends to make you a saint. And if you wish to become a great saint, entreat Him yourself to give you much opportunity for suffering; for there is no wood better to kindle the fire of holy love than the wood of the cross, which Christ used for His own great sacrifice of boundless charity.”

Romans 8:28-30

And we are certain that everything works together for the good for those who love God, for those called by God’s purposes. Those God knew before time, God also predestined to be shaped to the image of the Son, that the Son might be the firstborn among many sisters and brothers. And with that, those God predestined, God also called; those called, God justified also; those justified, God also glorified.

From De Caussade

God continues to speak today as He spoke in former times to our fathers when there were no directors as at present, nor any regular method of direction. Then all spirituality was comprised in fidelity to the designs of God, for there was no regular system of guidance in the spiritual life to explain it in detail, nor so many instructions, precepts and examples as there are now. Doubtless our present difficulties render this necessary, but it was not so in the first ages when souls were more simple and straightforward. Then, for those who led a spiritual life, each moment brought some duty to be faithfully accomplished. Their whole attention was thus concentrated consecutively like a hand that marks the hours which, at each moment, traverses the space allotted to it. Their minds, incessantly animated by the impulsion of divine grace, turned imperceptibly to each new duty that presented itself by the permission of God at different hours of the day. Such were the hidden springs by which the conduct of Mary was actuated. Mary was the most simple of all creatures, and the most closely united to God. Her answer to the angel when she said: "Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum": contained all the mystic theology of her ancestors to whom everything was reduced, as it is now, to the purest, simplest submission of the soul to the will of God, under whatever form it presents itself.

Luke 10

²¹ In that same hour Jesus was filled with joy in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the learned and wise yet revealed them to little children; yes, Father, such was your benevolent will. ²² All things have been given to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, or the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son is pleased to reveal him.”

²³ Then turning towards the disciples he said in private, “Blessed are your eyes that see what you are seeing! ²⁴ For I tell you that many are the prophets and kings who desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, yet did not hear it.”

Week Two

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Finding God in All Things

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Conclusion:

Thank God for your time and be specific about a time or two that you felt the grace of God or felt touched by God's wisdom.

Quotation of St. Ignatius:

Try to keep your soul always in peace and quiet, always ready for whatever Our Lord may wish to work in you. It is certainly a higher virtue of the soul, and a greater grace, to be able to enjoy the Lord in different times and different places than in only one.

Romans 8

³¹ What, then, shall we say in answer to these things? If God is on our side, who can be against us? ³² God who did not spare his own Son, but rather gave him up for us all—how will He not also, along with His Son, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will level any charge against the ones whom God has chosen? God is the One who justifies. ³⁴ Who will condemn? No one. Christ Jesus who died—even greater than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also pleading for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall difficulties or problems or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

“For you, we face death all day long;
we are held to be as sheep for slaughtering.”

³⁷ No, in all of this, we are more than victors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am certain that neither death nor

life, neither angels nor evil spirits, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

From Brother Lawrence

“He does not ask much of us, merely a thought of Him from time to time, a little act of adoration, sometimes to ask for His grace, sometimes to offer Him your sufferings, at other times to thank Him for the graces, past and present, He has bestowed on you, in the midst of your troubles to take solace in Him as often as you can. Lift up your heart to Him during your meals and in company; the least little remembrance will always be the most pleasing to Him. One need not cry out very loudly; He is nearer to us than we think.”

Matthew 6

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more

than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life^[e]?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Week Three

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Conclusion:

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Quotation of St. Ignatius:

“ . . . <the Jesuit students or Scholastics> should practice the seeking of God's presence in all things, in their conversations, their walks, in all that they see, taste, hear, understand, and in all their actions, since His Divine Majesty is truly in all things by His presence, power, and essence. This kind of meditation, which finds God our Lord in all things, is easier than raising oneself to the consideration of divine truths, which are more abstract and which demand something of an effort, if we are to keep our attention on them. But this method is an excellent exercise to prepare us for great visitations of our Lord, even in prayers that are rather short.”

Philippians 4

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will proclaim it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be manifest to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be preoccupied about things, but in every circumstance, by prayer and intercession, with thanksgiving, present your petitions to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, all that is true, whatever is noble, all that is right, whatever is pure, all that is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—ponder such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or accepted or heard from me, or even seen in me—practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

From Brother Lawrence

“This made me resolve to give the all for the All: so after having given myself wholly to GOD, to make all the satisfaction I could for my sins, I renounced, for the love of Him, everything that was not He; and I began to live as if there was none but He and I in the world. Sometimes I considered myself before Him as a poor criminal at the feet of his judge; at other times I beheld Him in my heart as my FATHER, as my GOD: I worshipped Him the oftenest that I could, keeping my mind in His holy Presence, and recalling it as often as I found it wandered from Him. I found no small pain in this exercise, and yet I continued it, notwithstanding all the difficulties that occurred, without troubling or disquieting myself when my mind had wandered involuntarily. I made this my business, as much all the day long as at the appointed times of prayer; for at all times, every hour, every

minute, even in the height of my business, I drove away from my mind everything that was capable of interrupting my thought of GOD.

Matthew 13

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he buried it again, and then in his joy went and sold everything he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dealer looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold all he had to buy it.

Week Four

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Finding God in All Things

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Conclusion:

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Quotation of St. Ignatius:

From the Contemplatio: <I will> . . . look how God dwells in creatures, in the elements, giving them being, in the plants vegetating, in the animals feeling in them, in men giving them to understand: and so in me, giving me being, animating me, giving me sensation and making me to understand; likewise making a temple of me, being created to the likeness and image of His Divine Majesty;

Psalm 8

O LORD, our Ruler,

how great is your name over all the earth!

You have set your throne of glory above the heavens.

² Out of the mouths of babes and infants

you have set a stronghold because of your foes,

to silence the foe and the avenger.

³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have made;

⁴ what are human beings that you concern yourself with them,

mere mortals that you care for them?

⁵ Yet you have made them a little lower than the gods, and crowned them with glory and honor.

⁶ You have given them power over the works of your hands;

you have put all things under them,

⁷ all sheep and oxen,

and also the beasts of the field,

⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the the sea, whatever passes through the seas.

⁹ O LORD, our Ruler,

how great is your name over all the earth!

From St. Francis of Assisi

Canticle of the Sun

Most High, all powerful, good Lord,

Yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessing.

To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no man is worthy to mention Your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and you give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the
stars,
in heaven you formed them clear and precious and
beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather through which
You give sustenance to Your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water,
which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you light the night and he is beautiful
and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains us and governs us and who produces
varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

Praised be You, my Lord,
through those who give pardon for Your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.

Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord,
through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no living man can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will
find in Your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord,
and give Him thanks
and serve Him with great humility.

Matthew 28:20

²⁰ Jesus said, “. . . and know that I am with you at all times until the end of the age.”

Week Five

After the Exercises

The Gift of Life

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Conclusion:

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Quotation of St. Ignatius:

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

Genesis 1:29-31

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

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

From Carlo Carretto, *Letters from the Desert*

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

John 10:7-10

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

Week Six

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Conversion

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Conclusion:

Thank God for your time and be specific about a time or two that you felt the grace of God or felt touched by God's wisdom.

Quotation of St. Ignatius:

From one of his letters: You are mistaken in thinking that the cause of your disquiet, or little progress in the Lord, is due to the place, or your superiors, or your brethren. This disquiet comes from within and not from without. I mean from your lack of humility, obedience, prayer, and your slight mortification, in a word, your little fervor in advancing in the way of perfection. You could change residence, superiors, and brethren, but if you do not change the interior man, you will never do good. And you will everywhere be the same, unless you succeed in being humble, obedient, devout, and mortified in your self-love. This is the only change you should seek. I mean that you should try to change the interior man and lead him back like a servant to God.

Psalm 51

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according in your everlasting love;
according to your great compassion
erase my transgressions.
- ² Wash away all my sinfulness
and cleanse me from my iniquity.
- ³ For I know my sins,
and my trespass is always before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you alone, have I transgressed
and done what is wrong before your eyes;
so you are right in your judgment
and justified when you indict.
- ⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth,
guilty from the time I was conceived in my mother.
- ⁶ Yet you wanted faithfulness even from the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that hidden place.
- ⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Allow me to hear the sound of joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins
and take away all my iniquity.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a faithful spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not take me from your presence

or remove your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and give me a willing spirit, that I may be sustained.

From *The Imitation of Christ*

The saints of God and all devout friends of Christ did not look to what pleases the body nor to the things that are popular from time to time. Their whole hope and aim centered on the everlasting good. Their whole desire pointed upward to the lasting and invisible realm, lest the love of what is visible drag them down to lower things. Do not lose heart, then, my brother, in pursuing your spiritual life. There is yet time, and your hour is not past. Why delay your purpose? Arise! Begin at once and say: "Now is the time to act, now is the time to fight, now is the proper time to amend."

Matthew 18:1-4

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

He called a little child to him, and placed the child in their midst. And he said: “Amen, amen, I tell you, unless you turn and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever becomes lowly as this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Week Seven

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Bearing with Hardships

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Polanco's letter to the Jesuits of Padua conveying St. Ignatius Loyola's comments for them:

I know that with persons who are mindful of their state of life and keep before their eyes Jesus Christ naked on the cross, there is no need for exhortations to accept suffering—particularly since the letter itself shows how well you all accept it if you have some experience of poverty. Nevertheless, by commission of our father in Jesus Christ Master Ignatius, who has a true father's love for you, I will take consolation together with all of you in this grace which his finite Goodness gives us, both here and there, by granting us to experience holy poverty—I do not know how strongly where you are, but very much so here—in keeping with our profession. I call poverty a grace because it is a very special gift from God. Scripture tells us that “poverty and probity are from God”; and how much God loves it has been shown us by his only-begotten Son, who came down from his heavenly seat and chose to be born and brought up in poverty. He loved it not only in life—suffering hunger and thirst, having no place to lay his head—but even in death,

choosing to be stripped of his clothes and deprived of everything, even of water for his thirst.

Romans 8:35-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall difficulty or distress or persecution or hunger or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written:

“For your sake all day we are in danger of death;
we are counted as sheep for the slaughterhouse”

No, in everything we are more than victors through Him who loved us. For I know that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all the universe, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

From *Abandonment to Divine Providence* of Jean Pierre de Caussade

Oh! what delightful peace we enjoy when we have learnt by faith to find God thus in all His creatures! Then is darkness luminous, and bitterness sweet. Faith, while showing us things as they are, changes their ugliness into beauty, and their malice into virtue. Faith is the mother of sweetness, confidence and joy. It cannot help feeling tenderness and compassion for its enemies by whose means it is so immeasurably enriched. The greater the harshness and severity of the creature, the greater by the operation of God, is the advantage to the soul. While the human instrument strives to do harm, the divine Workman in whose hands it is, makes use of its very malice to remove from the soul all that might be prejudicial to it.

Mark 8:34-36

Then Jesus summoned the crowd to Him along with His disciples, and He said to them, “Those who wish to come after Me, must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, but those who lose their life for My sake and for the gospel will save it. What does it profit you to gain the whole world, yet forfeit your soul? Or what can you give in exchange for your soul?”