RETREAT IN DAILY LIFE
TOGETHER

4—The Fourth Week
Society of the Holy Child Jesus, 2021
God raised Jesus from death to new life — to the astonishment of all but Mary, who had trusted completely the promise of the God to whom she had said “yes” . . . .

The gift of resurrection turns us around, makes us view everything differently, pokes at our residual doubt, fear, and attempts to control life . . . .

We discover in the risen Christ a friend who consoles us and never leaves us, but continually invites us to new places in our life’s journey . . . .

Empowered by our experience of the risen Christ, we move as servants of Christ’s mission into a world in need of transformation and change . . . .

Grateful that “all is gift” and confident in God’s power to save, we move on as servants — moment by moment . . . .

Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ & Eugene F. Merz, SJ, *Moment by Moment*, p. 85
Retreat in Daily Life Together
Orientation Notes for the Fourth Week
Adapted from *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed* by Katherine Dykeman, Mary Garvin & Elizabeth Liebert, *The Ignatian Adventure* by Kevin O’Brien, SJ and *Letting God Come Close* by William Barry, SJ, *A Retreat By All Means*, by E.M. Strub, SHCJ

**Resurrection — ‘...we simply contemplate the risen Christ consoling others...’**

We are not contemplating the actual resurrection event, which is a mystery, beyond time and space. Resurrection refers to the event of God’s transformation of life, making all things new, as in a new creation. Resurrection is a conquering of sin and death, once and for all. Instead of being distracted by the mechanics of the Resurrection or what a resurrected body looks like, we simply contemplate the risen Christ consoling others. We notice how his friends recognize and fail to recognize the One they have followed and loved. We marvel at how Jesus in the resurrected life — where his divinity is no longer hidden — does very human things: eating, talking, consoling, teaching, and enjoying the company of others. As with the mystery of the Incarnation, we see in the Resurrection how our divinity and humanity are not opposed but are an integral part of each other. O’Brien, pp. 240-241

‘...engagement of the whole person...’

The Fourth Week process notes continue to stress the engagement of the whole person and to emphasize embodiment, so that the total person experiences the prayer of the resurrection. Concrete suggestions include thinking about things that bring pleasure, happiness and spiritual joy, taking advantage of light and seasonal delights as well as whatever “will help me to rejoice in Christ my Creator and Redeemer.” (SE 229) Dykeman, Garvin and Leibert, pp. 230-231

**The content of the Fourth Week**

The content of the Fourth Week consists in the gospel accounts of the resurrection and subsequent appearances of the risen Jesus inclusive of the ascension. Among these contemplations is the bestowal of the Holy Spirit on Easter Sunday evening. It is Pentecost by anticipation for it might seem strange if Ignatius had failed to celebrate in the Exercises the gift of the Spirit by which the retreatant is to live the rest of life. Ignatius does not spell out the content of each day, presuming that by now we have become adept at following the Spirit’s lead. There is an atmosphere of light, spaciousness and freedom.

‘...finding Christ as he is now...’

The outward events of the appearances offer a context for the retreatant’s reunions with one who in each scene wishes to meet and console us. The model for these meetings is the reunion of Christ with his mother as Ignatius presents it in the first contemplation of the Week. Like Mary, we must become accustomed over time to this new way of perceiving Christ. He is the same familiar presence yet he is now beyond her ordinary categories. Her faith must grow up to him otherwise, trapped in the past, she will be forever blocked from finding Christ as he is now and as he relates to her own time and space.

‘...we beg for joy with Christ in joy...’

Just as we have pleaded for great sorrow and grief with Christ sorrowing and grieving, so now we beg for intense joy with Christ in joy …. This joy becomes a sort of touchstone for ongoing discernment as we leave the retreat. Its intensity may wane, but its quality and taste will remain as the unmistakable marker of God’s presence. Strub pp. 139-141
The Contemplation to Attain Love, taken as it comes — in four points with two preliminary points, a composition of place and a ready-made colloquy — seems to deaden any elevation of spirit you may have enjoyed in the Fourth Week, rather than to quicken it. But, to a certain extent, that is the point. No one can live on a ‘high’ for an extended period without crashing. So Ignatius provides a kind of compression chamber. You are led back to the very world you left behind but however long you were in retreat, but nothing will look the same. What was opaque is now transparent; what was ordinary now bears the stamp of the incarnate Christ in glory. Everything has become sacramentalized by a real presence: the bush is a burning bush, the ground is holy ground, the world is incandescent .... You are told to “look hard at the ordinary sights which surround you until each object yields up its secret which is “Christ among you.” You are to seek Christ where he is to be found, not somewhere in the sky, but in his chosen milieu, which is precisely wherever you happen to be. You are to “lean into” that reality until you reach its true base. It is there that the great interchange of subjectivities which is love will be consummated. It is there that you “work out” the salvation which anticipates each person and each person’s net of interdependencies. Strub, p. 169

Some Suggestions for Prayer — Strub, pp. 170-171
Pick the one which most immediately appeals to you. Or, simply follow your own bent.

- Make a tour of your own body and the intangibles which are concentrated in the space which belongs to you. Can you experience God creating your being, present to all your parts, loving you into being and working to sustain you? Can you let God inhabit your freedom, your memories, all that you know, all that you hope for? Stay within your own space until you belong all to God and God belongs all to you.

- You might like to spend some time thinking about the people you love most. Some you will be seeing soon, others may already have gone to God or, perhaps they are far away. Can you, in imagination, let God come to meet you in your memory of them? Spend a little time communing with God in the depths of these persons. They are a gift to you.

- Or, pick some object of natural beauty or wonder — something within the range of your senses — and look hard at it until it reveals its meaning as love at work for you. Then respond in whatever way seems most natural and authentic. If you dare, do the same thing with something that is ugly.

- If you are in a city, take a walk and notice everything, all addressing you from its depths. Listen to the sounds and the silences, look at the shapes and at the empty spaces between, feel the movement and the stillness. What is the message you receive?
Retreat in Daily Life Together
Fourth Week (1)

THEME:
The risen Lord is with us as He promised, to console us and to give us His gifts, so that we may console others.

GRACE:
I ask for the grace to be glad and to rejoice intensely because of the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord.

SCRIPTURE:
John 20:1-10—*the disciples find the empty tomb*
Jesus appears to his mother, Mary—*see p. 6*
John 20:11-18—*Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene*
Matthew 28:1-10—*Jesus appears to the women*
2 Corinthians 1:3-7—*the God of all consolation*

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:
We now enter into the last movement of the retreat. In the Third Week, we shared in Christ’s sorrow and anguish. Now, in the Fourth Week, we ask to share in the joy and peace of the Risen Christ. This joy, like any grace we pray for, is a gift from God; we cannot earn or force it. We simply try to be open to receiving Easter joy by contemplating Christ as he shares the joy of the Resurrection with others .... The author of 1 Peter 1:8-9 describes an experience akin to living in the Fourth Week:

*Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.* Adapted from Kevin O’Brien, “Introduction to Fourth Week,” *The Ignatian Adventure*, p. 240

SHCJ TRADITION:
The delegate session of the 27th General Chapter of the Society was held in Easter time when the liturgy speaks to us of resurrection and new life and possibilities beyond expectation. The journey to Emmaus revealed to the disciples that the possibilities for encounter with the risen Jesus are limitless. “Be Open to Possibilities,” p. 1 (2016 General Chapter Enactments)
“The writers of the New Testament cannot directly describe the Risen Life, the beginning of the New Creation, any more than we can literally describe the Big Bang, the beginning of the old creation. But it is striking that its reality impinges first of all in an empty tomb, the stone rolled away. Jesus is unconfined or, one might say, uncoffined! Fresh air again! A hole is blown in the chain of events. .... Even now we are beginning to share in the divine fresh air, the escape from confinement, of the Risen Christ .... God makes his home in emptiness. When the Israelites journeyed into the wilderness, Moses was commanded to build a throne for God. It was just an empty space between the wings of the cherubim. It was tiny, just the breadth of a hand. God does not need much space. And when God became flesh, the fertile Spirit entered into the small empty space of Mary’s womb. When that child grew up, he was nailed on a cross and shouted out for his Father, who seemed so absent. This was a vast emptiness waiting to be filled on Easter morning. Then, John tells us, Mary Magdalene, Peter and the beloved disciple found the empty space of the tomb, with two angels on either side, the new throne of mercy of the Risen Lord.” Radcliffe, Alive in God, p. 268

Queen of Heaven, Rejoice, Alleluia! The son whom you merited to bear, Alleluia! is risen as he said, Alleluia!
Pope Francis, speaking to his Jesuit brothers, encouraged them to pray persistently for consolation for themselves. Initially we might respond in surprise at that sort of petitionary prayer. It doesn’t seem very self-less.... So why did he say this? I would like to suggest four key things that Ignatius [and Francis] might tell us about encountering the risen Christ, which offer a possible answer.

+ We encounter Christ in the reality of our lives — “God is in the facts.” + Christ enters into that reality as consoler. + this consolation is how Christ enables people to live lives of discipleship. + Christ calls us to collaborate in that same consoling action of his today.

If these are the case, then they invite a response. By opting for the path of consolation, indeed asking for the grace of consolation, Ignatius, and Pope Francis, are choosing to find and respond to the action of the risen Christ in the world. Adapted from “The Risen Christ, the Consoler,” by Iona Reid-Dalglish, in Thinking Faith, 11 April 2018 — https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/risen-christ-consoler

Listen to: “Alleluia,” from Exultate, Jubilate by W.A. Mozart, performed by Aksel Rykkvin — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwOKhqZ8t1g

Listen to: “I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” from Handel’s Messiah, sung by Lynne Dawson with the Brandenberg Consort — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qU1c5lZf0k

The pandemic and all the injustice it has revealed in our world system have shaken the foundations and at last the truth is seen, offering a tiny glimpse that things could be otherwise. But then, it’s as if the sheer magnitude of the dying, the confusion at the loss of the old order (however unsatisfactory it was), overtakes us. Like the disciples at the tomb, no one knows the way out of this ending; all of us are waiting on events, hanging about in the ruins .... But on Easter morning the liturgical mood shifts and here the usefulness of any parallel between the paschal journey and our world’s crisis seems abruptly to cease. For here is the point at which, against all reason and expectation, the liturgy bursts out with news of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. And this seems an unlikely solution to a pandemic. Certainly, if a church or world leader were to proclaim in the papers today, ‘it’s OK everyone, we just need to sit tight — Jesus is coming to save us,’ we would rightly roll our eyes .... How does news of Jesus risen from the dead connect to anything in the real world, or help to make us real? .... Is our celebration real, or is it just make believe?” Adapted from Bachelard, “The Great Reversal,” 2020
Retreat in Daily Life Together —
Fourth Week (2)

THEME:

Continue to reflect on Christ as consoler, looking for signs of how God has consoled and continues to console me and the people around me in our sadness and discouragement.

GRACE:

I ask to be glad and to rejoice intensely because of the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord.

SCRIPTURE:

Luke 24: 36-49—appearance to apostles
John 20: 19-23—appearance to disciples
Isaiah 65: 17-25—a new creation
2 Corinthians 5: 14-19—Christ's love urges us

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

In contrast to the passion, I should note how much the divinity shines through the person of Jesus in all his appearances. The peace and the joy which he wants to share with me can only be a gift of God. To realize that the role of consoler which Jesus performs in each of his resurrection appearances is the same role he performs now in my life is a faith insight into why I can live my life in a true Christian optimism. David Fleming, SJ, a contemporary reading of SE 223,224

SHCJ TRADITION:

God is faithful, and if we keep faith with God we become a sign of the fruitfulness of the Spirit at work in the world: it is possible to live in joy and to die in hope because we trust in the truth of God's word. Constitutions 21
The Servant Girl at Emmaus (A Painting by Velazquez)
Denise Levertov

She listens, listens, holding
Her breath. Surely that voice
Is his—the one

who had looked at her, once, across the crowd,
as no one ever had looked?

Had seen her? Had spoken as if to her?

Surely those hands were his,
taking the platter of bread from hers just now?

Hands he’d laid on the dying and made them well?

Surely that face—?
The man they’d crucified for sedition and blasphemy.
The man whose body disappeared from its tomb.
The man it was rumored now

some women had seen this morning, alive?

Those who had brought this stranger home to their table
Don’t recognize yet with whom they sit.

But she in the kitchen, absently touching

the wine jug she’s to take in,
a young Black servant intently listening,

swings round and sees

the light around him

and is sure.

Watch: “Sur Les Chemins d’Emmaüs avec Arcabas,” a meditation on the paintings of Christ at Emmaus, by the French artist, Arcabas; narrated in French; an English translation is provided on p. 22 —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLmH93Fi2U

Listen to: “Rockin’ in Jerusalem,” sung by Mahalia Jackson with the Falls-Jones Ensemble — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36h7exr-iFE
Is our celebration real — or is it just make believe? Well, what do you experience? What intuitions have you received? Our world is facing a dark time — we may be just at the beginning of it. Many of us struggle personally — with the loss of those we love, anxiety about the future, fears for health, grief for the planet. Does the proclamation of Jesus’ resurrection touch any of it, really? Does it help us inhabit our days? These are questions the liturgy puts to us today.

For myself, I find I can now answer ‘yes.’ ‘Yes, it does help; yes, it is true.’ It’s taken quite a time to get here — years, in fact …. but now it’s as if, despite everything, in the face of everything, I’ve been touched by an abiding sense of hope, a deep and inexplicable knowing that God remains with us and for the earth, that God’s Word, God’s meaning will in the end hold true. And the difference this makes? Well, it creates courage, and opens into vocation. Bachelard, “The Great Reversal” (continued from p. 7)

Listen to: “You Raise Me Up,” sung by Josh Groban & the African Children’s Choir — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18sLm20M1igc

Our individual life adventures are not separate from the Universe’s adventure but are a part of it. Our individual and personal “on the road” is part of the Universe’s on the road.” We do not journey alone. In fact, it is impossible to journey alone. We journey with everything and everyone that has gone before us and is with us now. Are not our hearts burning? The heart of the mystical constantly burns. Surette, The Divine Dynamic, pp. 29-30

“It was a very clear night, or morning, very still, and then there was such energy in the things transpiring among those trees, like a storm, like travail. I stood there a little out of range, and I thought, it is all still new to me.” Marilynn Robinson, Gilead

What quotation, music, or image might you have chosen to include in Perspectives & Echoes?
 Retreat in Daily Life Together

Fourth Week (3)

THEME:

See how Jesus consoles his friends.

GRACE:

I ask to be glad and to rejoice intensely because of the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord.

SCRIPTURE:

John 20: 24-31—Jesus appears to Thomas
John 21:1-19—Jesus appears to disciples as they fish
1 Peter 1: 3-9—you have not seen him, yet you love him
1 Corinthians 15:51-58—death, where is your victory?
Joel 2:23-28—be glad and rejoice in the Lord

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

“In the contemplations that follow, continue to reflect on the role of Christ as consoler. In your own life, look for signs of how God has consoled and continues to console you and the people around you. Where do I find joy? Who or what gives me joy? We experience various “dyings,” not just with the death of loved ones but also with the loss of friendships, changes in lifestyle or career, physical infirmity, children leaving home, and our own relocations from one city to another. Our God, however, is a God of life. The Resurrection reveals how God is always bringing life from death, hope from despair, love from hate, and light from darkness. So we celebrate the “risings” as well, such as reconciled or new friendships, unexpected opportunities, renewed vigor, and meaningful learning experiences that come from losses. Notice how the risen Christ still bears the marks of the Crucifixion. This itself is a consoling image. Our hurts and limitations are part of who we are. In death, they are not wiped away but are redeemed. God takes us as we are and makes us whole again. A new creation is at work. God wastes nothing and redeems all.” Kevin O’Brien, The Ignatian Adventure, p. 244

SHCJ TRADITION:

It was Easter Friday when Cornelia died [April 18, 1879]. An eyewitness described how, the day before, she had struck her own hand three times repeating each time, “In this flesh I shall see my God.” The Jerusalem Bible has it: “After my awakening he will set me close to him and from my flesh I shall look on God.” (Job 19:26). Though it was Friday, Cornelia was in Easter week; like Job, she was blighted in the flesh, but she believed that in the same flesh she would awaken in glory. She died as she had lived bearing witness to the pivotal mystery of the resurrection ... Strub, letter to SHCJ, April 1978
“As I look back on her life from the vantage point of her death, I have in my mind an image of Cornelia rising again and again — through an endless chain of death-dealing situations and events. It is as if she had an overabundance of that spirit ‘who raised Jesus from the dead.’ I like to think that the ‘awakening’ of the Job passage happened for Cornelia in the midst of life and that the sight of God which she caught set her so close to him that no force could

‘Though you do not see him, you love him, & you rejoice with him with an indescribable & glorious joy!’

1 Peter: 3-9

“His resurrection is like the first eruption of a volcano which shows that in the interior of the world God's fire is already burning, and this will bring everything to blessed ardor in its light.

He has risen to show that this has already begun.”


“When the vessel of his body was shattered in death, Christ was poured out over all the world; he became actually, in his humanity, what he had always been according to his dignity, the heart of the world, the innermost center of creation.”

Karl Rahner, “On the Theology of Death”

Listen to: “All Things Bright & Beautiful,” by the Cambridge Singers & City of London Sinfonia — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXFCZQDqIO8rQYv8EsGSQ

Listen to: “The Deer’s Cry,” performed by Shaun Davey & Rita Connolly — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DONuyLwWPAY

Listen to: “Jerusalem,” the Soweto Gospel Choir — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GMIJpV9g-3A
What would you say if I told you that every day is the third day?

What would you think if I told you that resurrection is happening every day everywhere?

Where are you seeing life and more life? What difference is resurrection making in your life today?

And if you can’t see it and aren’t experiencing it, if it’s not real for you, why not? Are you standing with Peter in the “God forbid it” place?

Michael K. Marsh, interruptingthesilence.com

Listen to: “Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 6, 5th Movement*,” conducted by Paavo Jarvi with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen: “cheerful & thankful feelings after the storm” — [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z16zh55I1dU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z16zh55I1dU)

“Towards the end of the Exercises, Ignatius invites us to, ‘Consider the office of consoler which Christ our Lord carries out, and compare it with the way friends console one another’ — SE224.

* the women ‘filled with awe and great joy’ at hearing the news * the two disciples on the road to Emmaus moving from faces downcast to exclaiming in wonder, ‘did our hearts not burn within us as he talked to us on the road?’ * the disciples going back to Jerusalem full of joy after seeing the risen Christ * Mary standing outside the tomb, weeping, then an instant of recognition and transformation as she hears him say her name, ‘Mary!’ * the shift in the disciples from fear to joy at seeing the Lord.

There is a distinct change in the affective experience of those who knew Jesus when they encounter his risen self: from grief, sorrow, fear and hopelessness at his death, to hope, life, joy and energy to go out and tell others after his resurrection. These do not seem like surprising responses to getting back a loved one who had been lost, but these encounters do tell us something about the way in which the risen Christ acts with people — by rekindling lost hope, bringing joy, easing fear and enabling a lived response of continued discipleship. Ignatius’s firm conviction was that, to this day, encounters with the risen Christ will similarly be typified by experiences of hope, joy and life — in his language, spiritual consolation — even amidst struggles and the darkest times.” Adapted from “The Risen Christ, the Consoler,” by Iona Reid-Dalglish, continued from p. 7.

What quotation, music, or image might you have chosen to include in Perspectives & Echoes?
Retreat in Daily Life Together

Fourth Week (4)

THEME:

The focus of this week is on seeing all creation in light of God’s love, by praying the Contemplation of the Love of God, drawing on the scriptural and other resources in support of your prayer.

GRACE:

I 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. SE233

'S... for God is love ...'

1 John 4:8

SCRIPTURE:

Contemplation of the Love of God (let the Scripture & other resources nourish your prayer of the Contemplation, below)

1 John 4: 7-11  Psalm 139  John 21:1-19 (repetition)
Ephesians 1: 3-14  Psalm 138  Colossians 1: 15-20

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

During our prayer this week you are invited into a Contemplation of the Love of God, for which Ignatius first offers two critical insights: Love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words (SE230), and Love consists in a mutual communication between the two persons (SE231). He then offers four points to guide your consideration:

1 — Thanking God for so many gifts
2 — Finding God in all things ... people ... myself ...
3 — Praising God who constantly labors for me
4 — Praising God, source of all goodness

You can consider these points one at a time, interwoven with any of the above scripture passages, as you wish. This is described more fully on p. 16. Or you can take them all together during a single prayer period. (SE233-237) And be sure to look again at the notes & suggestions offered on p. 4

SHCJ TRADITION:

Give me, O Lord, a love full of action . . .

CC 54:26-27
The Contemplation of the Love of God
Adapted from Kevin O’Brien, SJ, *The Ignatian Adventure*, pp. 250-254

1. Thanking God for so many gifts:

If it’s helpful, include Psalm 138 or 139 in your prayer: I recall the gifts I’ve received — creation, faith, other gifts unique to myself. I ponder how much God has done for me, and given me, and how much God desires to give me God’s very self. I reflect on myself and consider what I may offer in return. I speak as one making an offering with deep affection, and say:

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

What are my particular gifts, talents, and other blessings that I want to offer for the service of God and others?

2. Finding God in all things, people, myself:

I consider how God dwells in creatures — the elements, plants, animals, humans — giving existence, life, sensation, intelligence; and how God dwells in me, created in God’s likeness and image. I reflect on myself using my senses and imagination to find God in all things and all people. Be attentive to the movements of grace within you, and say:

*Take, Lord, and receive* ...

3. Praising God who constantly labors for me:

I consider how God labors and works for me in all creatures, how God acts as one who is laboring in all creation. God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — is dynamic, alive, always stirring, always laboring to bring life to creation. God is love overflowing. In my prayer I consider the activity of God in my life and my world. Can I see and hear God laboring in the world around me? Can I appreciate how God has labored specifically in and through me? Conclude with:

*Take, Lord, and receive* ...

4. Praising God, the source of all goodness:

I consider how all good things and gifts descend from above, just as the rays come down from the sun, or the rains from their source. With my vision sharpened by the Exercises, I try to see in all things the reflection of God’s very self. Can I recall times when I, or someone else, acted with justice, goodness or mercy? Do I appreciate how these actions were like rays come down from the sun, who is God. Conclude with:

*Take, Lord, and receive* ...

Savor the graces of this Contemplation. Let gratitude permeate your prayer. If helpful, revisit John 21: 1-19 to be with the risen Christ who gives the disciples an abundance of gifts, labors for them, and invites them into friendship. He loves them concretely and asks Peter in particular to return that love in very concrete ways for the good of others.
The evolving world of life, all of matter in its endless permutations, will not be left behind but will be transfigured by the resurrecting action of the Creator God … the great hymn in Colossians (1:15-20) … proclaims Christ as “the firstborn of all creation.” The drumbeat of “all things” repeated five times in this short text, coupled with references to “all creation,” “everything,” the encompassing “things visible and invisible,” and “all things whether on earth or in heaven,” drives home the blessing of new life that flows to all creatures from the crucified and risen Christ. Johnson, Creation and the Cross, p. 191

“What if this whole gospel story, this whole journey of the Passion, is showing us something we hadn’t known before about the radically transforming power of God’s love. It’s love that wills to undergo, to share, to bear the beloved’s pain; and it’s love — as it turns out — that can break through the chains of suffering and even of death to create the possibility of real wholeness, forgiveness, all things integrated, all people reconciled. The story of Jesus is the story of how love — the indestructible love of the Godhead — works to liberate and heal ‘outwards from the heart of being.’ Which means it’s the story of a power that acts not to rescue but transform, that does not save us from the time of trial but accompanies us in and through it to create new life.” Bachelard, “Outwards from the Heart of Being,” April 2018
Therefore, it is important to recover the contemplative dimension, that is, looking at the earth, creation as a gift, not as something to exploit for profit: no. When we contemplate, we discover in others and in nature something much greater than their usefulness. Here is the heart of the issue: contemplating is going beyond the usefulness of something. Contemplating the beautiful does not mean exploiting it, no: contemplating. It is free. We discover the intrinsic value of things given to them by God.

As many spiritual masters have taught us, heaven, earth, sea, and every creature have this iconic capacity, or this mystical capacity to bring us back to the Creator and to communion with creation. For example, St Ignatius of Loyola, at the end of his Spiritual Exercises, invites us to carry out ‘Contemplation to come to love,’ that is, to consider how God looks at His creatures and to rejoice with them; to discover God’s presence in His creatures and, with freedom and grace, to love and care for them. Pope Francis, General Audience, September 16, 2020

“*But yet it is in us, at this late date, that the universe has become conscious. We are the first creatures to articulate the motion of the planets. We are the first to discern the commonality of all life. For those of us who believe God is the source from which we all arose, we are the first creatures to say so out loud. God may well prefer the sound of spring peepers, but I have to believe there was joy in heaven when the first human being looked at the sky and said, ‘thank you for all this!’*” Barbara Brown Taylor, “The Dominion of Love”

Listen to: “These Alone Are Enough,” a version of “Take & Receive,” sung by Dan Schutte, SJ — [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWA5zG52eak](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWA5zG52eak)

Listen to: “I Danced in the Morning,” sung by the Cape Town Youth Choir — [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rXoSbAwWH0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rXoSbAwWH0)

Nothing is more practical than finding God ... than falling in love in a quite absolute final way. What you are in love with ... will affect everything — what gets you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings ... your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.

Joseph Whelan, SJ (often attributed to Pedro Arrupe SJ)

“For that is what we lack at the present time — contemplativeness. If one is sitting on a volcano and can be contemplative to boot, this is a superhuman heroism which is itself a contradiction in terms. Nowadays it’s no longer any use appealing to any certainties. Deep down we know that everything is tottering. When the earth quakes, there are only abrupt and disjointed fragments, but no closely woven and harmonious flower carpet.” Carl Jung, Letter to Arnold Kubler, April 10, 1942
Retreat in Daily Life Together

Fourth Week (5)

THEME:

A transitional week for gathering the graces of this retreat as we receive the gift of God’s Spirit which always moves us to continue to grow in faith, hope and love as disciples today.

GRACE:

I ask for a deepening awareness of the presence, power, and movement of the Spirit in my life, as I gather the particular graces of the past months.

SCRIPTURE: to support your prayer of openness to God’s Spirit

Matthew 28: 16-20  Romans 8: 14-27
Acts 3: 1-11  2 Timothy 1: 3-14

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

In one sense, the Holy Spirit is a deeply personal gift, but like love, the Spirit is also shared. The Spirit of God forms us into one body, the church universal. A fruit of the Fourth Week, then, is our willingness and enthusiasm to commit ourselves to a person (Jesus Christ), a people (all of God’s people), and a project (the kingdom of God). O’Brien, p. 256

SHCJ TRADITION:

... growing in all ways into Christ ... being faithful to God’s work in us ... making choices influenced by grace ... walking humbly with the Lord ... advancing in the way of God’s service ... being open to growth ... being apostolic to the end of our lives ... supporting and encouraging one another ... forgiving and being forgiven again and again ... welcoming the purifying events of life in faith and love ... taking a firmer grasp of the hope God’s call holds for us ... laying down our lives in love ...

... These guiding principles appear throughout the SHCJ Constitutions & as “Reflection on Experience” in the Formation Handbook.
As we end this retreat in daily life together, we continue to listen for the breath of God around us everywhere. We opened the retreat with this prayer, which we pray again — for ourselves, for one another, and all God’s people:

Good and gracious God, please open our ears to the words of scripture that herald the inrushing of your Holy Spirit.

Help us listen for you in the cry of a child, in the laughter of a friend, in the sighs of the exhausted, in the simple satisfactions and difficulties of each day.

By the power of your Spirit, please tune our ears to you in the bubbling chaos of the present moment even as it rocks the foundations of our lives. Teach us to recognize your whispers deep within our hearts. May we feel your breath brush past, and let it surround us and enfold us.

Come, Holy Spirit, that we may breathe deeply of God, and know that God sustains us.

We give thanks that God breathes in us, that we might ever and always breathe in God.

Adapted from Meditation for Pentecost 2020 by Michelle Francl-Donnay

We remember that your church was born in wind and fire, not to sweep us heavenward like a presumptuous tower, but to guide us down the dusty roads of this world so that we may lift up the downcast, heal the broken, reconcile what is lost, and bring peace amidst unrest. Garth House, Litanies for All Occasions

Sing, dance your call to God’s Spirit as you watch “African Spirit Song,” arranged by Victor C. Johnson— https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEidu52IBDk
GATHERING THE GRACES

Over the weeks of the retreat, you have learned to follow the lead of the Spirit. With the aid of the Spirit, review the retreat now to discern the key graces you have experienced. Don’t replay the retreat day by day or week by week. Instead, as you would do in the repetition of a prayer period, go back to what is most significant. Remember in gratitude God’s generosity to you, and acknowledge your own generous cooperation with grace. Review your journal. As you do, try to summarize in brief statements the most meaningful insights and movements of the retreat. Here are some questions to consider, and be as concrete as you can in answering them:

- How has my awareness of God’s presence in my life grown or shifted?
- What ways of praying were most meaningful or challenging for me?
- How have I grown in knowledge and love of Christ?
- Where have I experienced greater interior freedom?
- Where is there still disorder or lack of interior freedom in my life?
- How do I most usually experience consolation and desolation?
- How do the good spirit and evil spirit usually operate in my life?

These Scripture suggestions may assist you in gathering the graces of the retreat; use them as they are helpful:

Romans 1: 14-27  Psalm 118: 21-29
Romans 8: 28-39  Psalm 63: 1-8
Ephesians 1: 15-23 John 15: 1-8

Listen to: “Amen” from Handel’s Messiah, sung by the Monteverdi Choir & English Baroque Soloists — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnM-ULNxDus

“Amen! Yes! So be it!”

“Being able to say amen implies being able to trust and be confident and certain that everything is in the hands of God; God has already conquered mistrust and fear, despite everything. The Lord’s prayer has encompassed the whole path of humanity in its drive toward heaven and its rootage in the earth. One finds in it the motif of light and the motif of darkness. And to all of it we say ‘yes, so be it!’ And we can say yes and amen to the threat of evil, to the promptings of temptation, to the insults we receive, and to the onerous quest for bread, only if we retain our certainty that God is our God, that we are consecrated to the divine holy name, that we are confident that God’s reign will come, and that we are sure God’s will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Leonardo Boff, The Lord’s Prayer: The Prayer of Integral Liberation
At Jesus’ gesture but, thoughtful, he watches the face of his companion as he listens to him. Both are still absorbed in what they have experienced, their disappointment, their sorrow, their failure to understand the Passion. Blinded, enclosed in what takes over their thoughts and is of the past, they are not present, they do not see what is happening and cannot yet grasp it, there in the midst of them.

However, it is towards the breaking of bread that our gaze is invited to turn, towards the gold over the hands and chest of Jesus, towards the luminous presence of God thus revealed to our eyes."

Music: “Nada te turbе”

With no words shown on the screen:

“The road is winding and uncertain. How it resembles the disciples, and how we resemble them! Absorbed in going over our past and our projections into the future, we miss out on the present moment. Those disciples at rest … they could be me, Lord. They are like me, bent over under the burden of the world. Yes, the road is winding and uncertain. And yet it is marked out with signs … but reality sends us to follow you, awoken from our numbness and detached from ourselves.

For you are never absent from our encounters, you inhabit all our conversations. Open our eyes to reality, give us your Spirit that we may discern events and delve down into them. Come to give impetus to our lives. Agree to share our lives, our table. We use so many words.

We are hungry for justice and for peace. Renew the signs of your gift and communion. Teach us to receive, to be food for others, to join the community of disciples, to go into the world awaiting us to bring Good News to our time – you go before and await us. Teach us the gestures of forgiveness and mercy. May we become a body of charity in the flesh of our world, thanks to your presence. Be blessed, Lord, for your life given in ransom for the multitude. Deep in our lives, the news of your resurrection constantly dazzles and amazes us.”

Song. Most frequently recurring words:

Que tes oeuvres sont belles, que tes œuvres sont grandes
How beautiful are your works, how great your works

Seigneur, Seigneur, tu nous combles de joie
Lord, Lord, you fill us with joy

Seigneur, Seigneur, tu nous remplis d’amour
Lord, Lord, you fill us with love.

Tout homme est une histoire sacrée, l’homme est a l’image de Dieu

Everyone is a sacred story made in God’s image.
Books, Articles, Poems, Websites and other sources of inspiration


Reid-Dalglish, “the Risen Christ, the Consoler,” in Thinking Faith, 11 April 2018. Online: https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/risen-christ-consoler


Taylor, Barbara Brown. “The Dominion of Love” posted as a PDF document on the website of Ann Street United Methodist Church:

Internal Documents


Strub, Elizabeth Mary SHCJ. *A Retreat By All Means*.


Audio & Video (all accessible July 2021)

“Regina Coeli,” sung by the Gregorian Choir of Mediolanensis, Italy —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kZgxYs9lOw

“Regina Coeli,” W. A. Mozart, Kv 276, Orchestra Filarmonica de Mantova —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hemUGymXXDA

“Allazxia,” from Exultate, Jubilate by W.A. Mozart, performed by Aksel Rykkvin —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwQKhzZS7l6

“I Know that My Redeemer Lives,” from Handel’s *Messiah*, sung by Lynne Dawson with the Brandenberg Consort — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtU1c5JZf0k

“Rockin’ in Jerusalem,” sung by Mahalia Jackson with the Falls-Jones Ensemble —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36h7exr-jFE

“You Raise Me Up,” sung by Josh Groban & the African Children's Choir —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8sLm20Mige

“All Things Bright & Beautiful,” by the Cambridge Singers & City of London Sinfonia —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXgCZQDq1s7rQ7y8EsG3Q

“The Deer’s Cry,” performed by Shaun Davey & Rita Connolly —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DONuyLwWPaY

“Jerusalem,” the Soweto Gospel Choir —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GMJPn9g-3A

“Beethoven’s Symphony No. 6, 5th Movement,” conducted by Paavo Jarvi with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen: “cheerful & thankful feelings after the storm” —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z16zh551dU

“All Good Gifts,” music by Steven Schwartz sung by new Broadway cast —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4yZ15iqSM4

“The Planets: Jupiter” by Gustav Holst, performed by a flashmob of Berklee Contemporary Symphony Orch.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3cpOrB1GW8

“These Alone Are Enough,” a version of “Take & Receive,” sung by Dan Schutte, SJ —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWA5zG52eak
I Danced in the Morning,” sung by the Cape Town Youth Choir —  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rXoSbAwWH0

“African Spirit Song,” arranged by Victor C. Johnson —  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEidu52lBDk

“Amen” from Handel’s Messiah, sung by the Monteverdi Choir & English Baroque Soloists —  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnM-ULNxDus

“Sur Les Chemins d’Emmaüs avec Arcabas,” a meditation on the paintings of Christ at Emmaus, by the French artist, Arcabas; narrated in French; an English translation is provided on p. 22 —  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLmH93Fif2U