

RETREAT IN DAILY LIFE T O G E T H E R



Preparation Days

RETREAT IN DAILY LIFE TOGETHER

July 31, 2021— Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola

The Retreat in Daily Life Together is a resource for prayer originally developed as an integral part of the year-long celebration of the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

Founded in 1846, the Society's special anniversary year extends from October 2020 to October 2021, and the retreat spanned eight months within that year. Holy Child sisters, associates, ministry partners and many friends, from Africa, the Americas and Europe, took part in various ways — individually, in small or large groups, virtually or face-to-face, as well as locally, nationally and internationally, in English and Spanish. All in all, about 400 people engaged in this extended time of prayer within the context of their everyday lives.

The content and dynamic of the retreat is based on the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola — his priceless legacy which continues to transcend the ages as a powerful aid to spiritual growth for people today. In fact, at this very time, the global Ignatian “family” is celebrating the impact of that moment, 500 years ago, when a cannonball shattered Ignatius' leg during combat, plummeting him into a healing process that resulted in his profound transformation into a zealous follower of Christ and man for others.

Essentially, the Ignatian *Exercises* are an invitation and opportunity to deepen our personal relationship with God and our lives of love and service in communion with all that God has created. The spirituality of the *Exercises* is at the heart of the spiritual life of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

NOW, as we enter the final months of the anniversary year, the Society is pleased to make the specially prepared retreat material available beyond this year for ongoing use by past participants and newcomers, both as groups and individuals. There are a few changes in the original documents: time-sensitive references have been removed; the format and packaging is slightly altered, and a comprehensive bibliography has been added.

ALSO, a mini-retreat is planned for October 2021 — for past participants wanting to refresh and renew the experience of last year, and for newcomers interested in sampling the retreat within a short and flexible time-frame. **Watch for a special notice with a link to this webpage in English and Spanish.**

CLICK to access the retreat material on-line, organized under the five headings that describe the movements of the Exercises:

Preparation Days
First Week
Second Week
Third Week
Fourth Week

Some Food for Thought

as you consider re-visiting or beginning a Retreat in Daily Life

In this packet you will find:

- Food for thought on re-visiting or beginning the retreat, p.2
- Ways of doing the retreat, p.3
- Getting started, pp.4-5
- Resources for praying the Preparation Days, pp.6-15
- Timeline, p. 16
- Supportive material for individuals & groups, pp.17-19
- Bibliography & Media Links: Preparation Days, p.20-21

Ignatius intended his Exercises to be adapted to real people in real situations.

Keep in mind that the the prayer resources are flexible in format. You will see that they engage both your intellect and imagination, and contain a variety of options for focusing your prayer. Choose what particularly attracts you; don't even try to pray over every word on every page.

Also, remember that this is a retreat in daily life, and the flow of your whole day is integral to it. As you ponder this introductory material, it would be good to ask yourself how you feel about what you've read. What is it that you seek? Is there anything more you need to know? You might find it helpful to talk to others about it, too.

Prophetic voices from many disciplines, such as science, theology, psychology, ecology, cosmology, the arts and humanities, and more, tell us that the task of personal and collective transformation is multi-faceted that we need communities to hold us, to spark creative compassion and to sustain each other's energies and commitment. We need one another's perspectives and expertise. We need one another.

Today's global context is the air we breathe each day.

The world-changing Covid-19 pandemic is still impacting our lives, and it continues to teach us that we must all learn to do things differently. Regarding the personal and global changes that shape our realities, Pope Francis offers the insight that we are not living in an era of many changes, but humankind is living through the change of an era.

A novelist writing during another time of crisis observed that "Questions without answers must be asked very slowly." We know the *Spiritual Exercises* are designed to help us contemplate such deep issues, to let the future unfold in our hearts and imagination and thus gather our capacity for purposeful effort into the Mystery of God always at work within and among us.

Engaging in the retreat can frame both our personal and communal prayer. May it invite us into God's future with hope and resolve.



Retreat in Daily Life Together — Commitment & Encouragement



The *Retreat in Daily Life Together* is a time of intimate communication between God and you. God, who is light and love, is truly your retreat director (Spiritual Exercises 15).

You, for your part, are committing yourself to —
a time of personal prayer each day following the themes of the retreat; **a time for reflection on the whole day** in light of the grace you are praying for; and **a reflection on the week as a whole**.

— You may already have a spiritual director who can accompany you during this time, but the lack of availability of such a person should not keep you from entering fully into the experience of the retreat.

— You and another retreatant may arrange to meet together every week in order to engage in spiritual conversation about the *Exercises*, to share how God has been leading you in prayer, and be accountable to one another.



— Small groups may arrange to meet regularly so as to share with one another what is happening in their prayer. You may choose a coordinator or leader from among yourselves, or you may invite someone from outside the group to assume that role. Groups should be sure to take time together to consider **Some Guidelines for Group Sharing** on pages 18-19 below.



— Some may prefer to make the *Exercises* privately, setting aside time each week to review the graces of the retreat, and journaling to make note of the experience from week to week.

Your own creativity may suggest some other way to be part of the retreat.

Which of these approaches would be helpful for you?

Remember that technology (e.g., e-mail, Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp, phone, etc.) could be a help in forming a group or connecting with a director.



Retreat in Daily Life Together — Preparation Days: Getting Started

Some questions to ask yourself as you get started

As you prepare to begin the Retreat in Daily Life Together, take time to reflect on the questions below —

- What prompts you to make this retreat?
- What are your feelings about the opportunity to take part in this prayer experience?
- What will be a helpful plan for you to incorporate the retreat process into your life?
- When is the best time for you to pray daily? Where will you pray, and for what length of time?
- As you look at the grace suggested for next week, reflect on how it relates to your current and actual situation.
- Do you foresee any limitations on your participation, e.g., missing a session if you are part of a group, medical need affecting prayer, planned travel or special event?

If you are making the retreat alone, it may be helpful to note your thoughts on the above questions in your journal.

If you are joining with one other person or with a group, it will be important to have an initial session in which you begin sharing on the above questions, review the guidelines on p. 18, and work out practical details

Praying the Preparation Days (adapted from *The Ignatian Adventure* by Kevin O'Brien, SJ, p.38)

During these days we are invited again and again to reflect on God's faithful, unconditional love for each of us. We consider both who we are most fundamentally, and Whose we are as God's beloved son or daughter, which is our core identity.

There are suggested prayer points for each day of the week, but remember that these are simply suggestions to help you enter into the focus of this phase of the retreat. O'Brien reminds us that "adaptability is a hallmark of the Spiritual Exercises." He adds, "Do not feel that you must run through the Scripture passages as if you were completing homework. You may choose to stay with one or two passages all week. Follow the lead of the Spirit ..."

At the beginning of each prayer period there is a suggested grace to pray for; this is to help us touch into what we most desire during this time of prayer. Ignatius believed that recognizing our desires helps us keep grounded in reality, and naming them helps us open ourselves to the gifts God is offering. Here, too, we are advised not to be bound by the wording on the page. "Let your praying for the grace flow from the heart above all else."

The section called **PERSPECTIVES & ECHOES** includes short excerpts from external sources relevant to the theme of each day. These are taken from various disciplines and experiences, e.g. literature, the arts, science, global issues, and more. Once again, follow the lead of the Spirit to use these or not, as they nourish and deepen your prayer.

Overall, there is an abundance of choices for every day of the calendar week but, as O'Brien stresses, "Don't worry about missing something ... God will give you what you need This flexibility is especially important during a retreat in everyday life, when some person, problem, or experience may become the focus of your prayer or when you spend several prayer periods lingering over one meditation or contemplation."

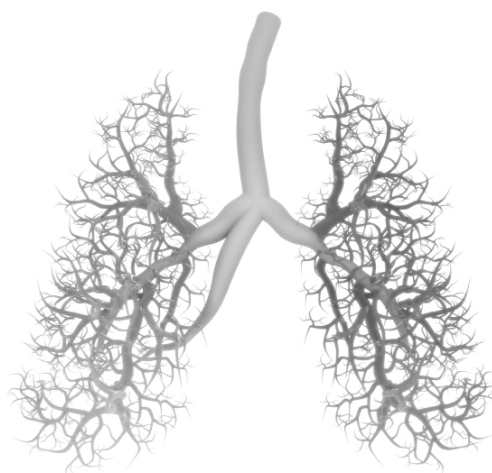
Retreat in Daily Life Together — Preparation Days: Getting Started

Close this time of reflection, whether alone or with others, with prayer to the Holy Spirit for each other, and for all those making this retreat around the world.

As we begin this retreat in daily life together, we listen for the breath of God around us everywhere.

Good and gracious God, please open our ears to the words of scripture that herald the intruding 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.



BREATHE

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 Francé-Donnay*

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>



NOTE: *The prayer resources begin on the next page. It is suggested that retreatants allocate four calendar weeks for the Preparation Days, so the resources are numbered "1, 2, 3, 4." Each of the numbers is intended to be the resource for a whole week.*

Retreat in Daily Life Together —

Preparation Days (1) — *for the first of four calendar weeks allocated to these days*

SCRIPTURE:

Psalms 46:10

1 Samuel 3:1-11

1 Kings 19:4-12

Jeremiah 29:11-14

Luke 19:1-10



SPIRITUAL EXERCISES #5:

The most important quality in persons who enter into these

Exercises is openness and generosity. As retreatants, our one hope and desire is that we can really put ourselves at the disposal of God so that in all ways we seek only to respond to that love which first created us and now wraps us “round with total care and concern.” Adapted from *A Contemporary Reading of the Spiritual Exercises* by David Fleming, SJ

GRACE:

I ask for the generosity and openness I need to let God work (and play) in me.



SHCJ TRADITION:

“Lifelong formation has always been a commitment to renew our love, our hope and our skills, as Cornelia did, keeping ourselves young at heart and ready to begin again. There is no one way to do this ... and yet we need to grow together as a Society We begin by living our covenant in Cornelia’s spirit of deep respect for each other, developing not only our personal relationship with God but also growing in relating to God as an SHCJ extended community. How do we together ‘feel the feelings of God and then feel the world with God’s feelings?’” *SHCJ Handbook: Formation for Mission*; Bernard Lee, *The Beating of Great Wings*

**Zaccheus, hurry and come down!
I must stay at your house today**

PERSPECTIVES & ECHOES:

IN HIS DIFFERENT KINDS OF SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER, (*consideration, meditation, contemplation, repetition, application of the senses*) Ignatius is simply saying: *Don't just glance at God or reasonably weigh the things of God. *Don't just think, or even brood and daydream about God. But let God happen to you, meet you in interpersonal relationship, to increasingly shape and Christify your very emotions and instincts and way of looking at the world. *Be with God, then, over and over again, as a very way of life, and sweep — let God sweep and gather — your entire physical, psycho-sexual reality and energies into God's mystery, into this relationship. Adapted from Joseph Whelan, SJ, "Jesuit Apostolic Prayer," (The Way Supplement 19)

"SOIL, WATER, MOUNTAINS: everything is, as it were a caress of God...." Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (84)

Photo by Dewitt Jones



A clear-voiced cuckoo
sings to me (goodly utterance)
In a grey cloak from bush fortresses.
The Lord is indeed good to me:
Well do I write
beneath a forest of woodland.

This old Irish poem describes the joy of a scribe imagining himself working in a forest surrounded by birdsong and nature. It is found on the margins of a 9th Century *Treatise on Latin Grammar*.



WATCH THE VIDEO: "Praying with Your Body," and try moving in whatever way suits you — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzSGDjP1GV4>



LISTEN TO: *Spiegel im Spiegel* by Arvo Pärt, Estonian Composer who said he wanted his music to express "love for every note" — performed by Jürgen Kruse (piano) and Benjamin Hudson (viola) — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJ6Mzvh3XCc>



"THERE ARE HUNDREDS of ways to kneel and kiss the ground." Rumi

Generosity, generosity, generosity must be the beginning & end of our life.

Cornelia Connolly

Retreat in Daily Life Together —

Preparation Days (2) — *for the second of four calendar weeks allocated to these days*

THEME:

As I enter this time of grace, I want to open myself to experience the loving God in the way God so deeply desires for me.

GRACE:

I ask for a more profound experience of God's love for me, a deeper awareness of how I might respond, and a greater freedom to make this response.

SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 23	Hosea 11: 1-9
Isaiah 55:1-11	Psalm 139: 1-18
Luke 12:22-34	Isaiah 43: 1-7

Repetition: Return to one of the above scripture texts to pray through again. Note how you were moved during the previous prayer. Recall some word, image, desire, insight, feeling, attraction, resistance, or other interior movement that was particularly strong when you first prayed that exercise.



SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

In the Spiritual Exercises which follow, we find ourselves sometimes doing much thinking and reasoning things out. At other times we feel far more the response of our hearts, with little or nothing for the head to be concerned about. It is good to remember that we are always in the context of prayer whether we are thinking or feeling. (SE 2) Adapted from *A Contemporary Reading of the Spiritual Exercises* by David Fleming, SJ

SHCJ TRADITION:

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Oh God of Gods & light of lights & joy of joys, fill my poor soul that I too may love Thee with an everlasting love, that we may all be one in Thee & live and breathe for Thee alone." Cornelia Connelly, *Record of Events*, Epiphany 1865

PERSPECTIVES & ECHOES

A young man terminally ill with cancer holds his long-awaited infant daughter. Knowing he will soon have to leave her, he pours out his love in a letter she'll read some day after he's gone:

"I HAD THOUGHT I COULD LEAVE HER A SERIES OF LETTERS — but what would they say? I don't know what this girl will be like when she is fifteen.... There is perhaps only one thing to say to this infant, who is all future, overlapping briefly with me, whose life, barring the improbable, is all but past.

That message is simple:

When you come to one of the many moments in life where you must give an account of yourself, provide a ledger of what you have been, and done, and meant to the world, do not, I pray, discount that you filled a dying man's days with a sated joy, a joy unknown to me in all my prior years, a joy that does not hunger for more and more but rests, satisfied. In this time, right now, that is an enormous thing." Paul Kalinithi, *When Breath Becomes Air*



"YOU MAY IN FACT BE WONDERING WHAT I EVEN MEAN WHEN I USE THE WORD 'PRAYER.' Prayer is private, even when we pray with others. It is communication from the heart to that which surpasses understanding. Let's say it is communication from one's heart to God to the Good, the force that is beyond our comprehension but that in our pain or supplication or relief we don't need to define or have proof of or any established contact with Or let's say it is a cry from deep within to Life or Love, with capital L's. Nothing could matter less than what we call this force. I know some ironic believers who call God Howard, as in "Our Father, who art in Heaven, Howard be thy name." Anne Lamott, *Help, Thanks, Wow*

"GOD'S LOVE IS THE FUNDAMENTAL MOVING FORCE in all created things.... Every creature is thus the object of the Father's tenderness, who gives it its place in the world. Even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of God's love, and in its few seconds of existence, God unfolds it with affection." Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (77)

ENJOY A WALK IN A GARDEN. Take a virtual tour of *Chanticleer*, one of Earth's loveliest pleasure gardens, (located just ten minutes from the American Province Office) — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNz5sNylg5c>



LISTEN TO: Mozart's *Serenade No. 10 for Winds* (K. 361/370a), "Gran Partita," III Adagio, performed by the London Symphony Orchestra. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NecLh4YOT9M>



LISTEN TO: "Bonse Aba," an African folk song that means "those who sing have the right to be called the children of God," arranged by Victor C. Johnson. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=US_oTqmiEVM

See that I am God. See that I am in everything. See that I do everything. Julian of Norwich

Retreat in Daily Life Together —

Preparation Days (3) — *for the third of four calendar weeks allocated to these days*

THEME:

Spiritual freedom liberates me to accept myself, with my gifts and limitations, and to discern God at work in my life.

GRACE:

To grow in interior freedom, and increased awareness of what blocks that freedom.

SCRIPTURE:

Luke 1:26-38 Psalm 40
Psalm 1 Philippians 3:7-16
Repetition (see note at conclusion of
Scripture texts for week 2)



Sandro Botticelli, Annunciation

Jeremiah 18:1-5 Mark 10:17-27

**Jesus looked at him
and loved him**

Mark 10:21

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES:

The structure of these exercises has the purpose of leading a person to a true spiritual freedom. We attain this goal by gradually bringing an order of values into our lives so that we make no

choice or decisions because we have been influenced by some disordered attachment or love. (SE 21)

Fleming, SJ, *A Contemporary Reading of the Spiritual Exercises*

SHCJ TRADITION:

“Desiring to ‘grow in all ways into Christ’ we learn to recognize and respond freely to the inspirations of the Spirit.”
Constitutions 47

“Freely and irrevocably we surrender ourselves into the hands of God who consecrates us in community for the sake of the kingdom ... we join those in the church who press toward uncompromising acceptance of the gospel.”
Constitutions 13




PERSPECTIVES & ECHOES:

“WE CRUCIFY OURSELVES BY PLACING UPON OURSELVES THE TASK OF CONVERSION. It is a gift. God is not looking to us to transform our affections, to make ourselves sensitive, to increase our faith. It is all God’s work, and it enters our lives by a different path, a gift path. It is all for the asking. The fulfillment of God’s promises in us takes place if we ask for it to happen. The effort path with its focus on the self leads to despair. It is much easier, unfortunately, to believe that God has imposed a heavy burden on us: the task of growing into the Gospel. It is impossible to believe that all is gift, that all is for the asking, yet that is what God invites us to believe.”

William Sampson, SJ, *The Coming of Consolation*



 *Mary’s free response to God’s Spirit has been celebrated in diverse melodies and rhythms through the ages ➡*

“IT IS TRUE TO SAY THAT FOR ME SANCTITY CONSISTS IN BEING myself and for you sanctity consists in being your self, and that, in the last analysis, your sanctity will never be mine and mine will never be yours, except in the communism of charity and grace. For me to be a saint means to be myself. Therefore the problem of sanctity and salvation is in fact the problem of finding out who I am and of discovering my true self.” Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*

LISTEN TO: the 16th C *Ave Maria* of Palestrina sung by the Schola Cantorum Sanctae Caeciliae — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGuUD20Hbgg>. Enjoy the familiar *Ave Maria* of 19th C French composer, Charles Gounod, performed by James Galway & John Birch — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKMad0B_Zro. Hear a new *Ave Maria* sung in the Igbo language by Nigeria’s Nnamdi Azikiwe University Choir — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0Mz_Bwuq4w

“HONESTY, SINCERITY, SIMPLICITY, HUMILITY, PURE GENEROSITY, ABSENCE OF VANITY, READINESS to serve others — qualities which are within easy reach of every soul — are the foundations of one’s spiritual life. At least, if for nothing else, the cell gives you the opportunity to look daily into your entire conduct, to overcome the bad and develop whatever is good in you. Regular meditation, say about 15 minutes a day before you turn in, can be very fruitful in this regard. You may find it difficult at first to pinpoint the negative features in your life, but the 10th attempt may yield rich rewards. Never forget that a saint is a sinner who keeps on trying.” Nelson Mandela, *Conversations with Myself*



Nelson Mandela, in his prison cell at Robben Island, 27 years

“Simplicity is Freedom” by Mary Oliver

When I moved from one house to another
there were many things I had no room
for. What does one do? I rented a storage
space. And filled it. Years passed.
Occasionally I went there and looked in,
but nothing happened, not a single
twinge of the heart.

As I grew older the things I cared
about grew fewer, but were more
important. So one day I undid the lock
and called the trash man. He took
everything.

I felt like the little donkey when
his burden is finally lifted. Things!
Burn them, burn them! Make a beautiful
fire! More room in your heart for love,
for the trees! For the birds who own
nothing – the reason they can fly.



“Stop for one whole day every week, and you will remember what it means to be created in the image of God, who rested on the seventh day not from weariness but from complete freedom. The clear promise is that those who rest like God find themselves free like God, no longer slaves to the thousand compulsions that send others rushing toward their graves.”

Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith, by Barbara Brown Taylor



When the moon rises in my
blood, and suns are born and

Burst in the atoms of my sub-
stance, and I am one body with

the World, a profound joy fills
the wells of my being.
The Passionate Life by Sam Keen

Retreat in Daily Life Together —

Preparation Days (4) — *for the fourth of four calendar weeks allocated to these days*



Victoria Falls, Zambia

THEME:

I am intimately related to God and all of God's creation; I praise God by being who God made me to be and honoring the uniqueness of all other creatures.

GRACE:

A deepening awareness of my fundamental vocation to love and serve God and others; a willingness to embrace who I am before God.

SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 104
John 3:22-30
Repetition

Ephesians 3:14-21
Philippians 4:13

Wisdom 11:21-12:2
Psalm 63

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES #23:

God who loves us, creates us and wants to share life with us forever. Our love response takes shape in our praise, honor and service of God in our life. All the things in this world are also created because of God's love and they become a context of gifts, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we show reverence for all the gifts of creation ... But if we abuse any ... or take them as the center of our lives, we break our relationship with God and hinder our growth as loving persons. We must hold ourselves in balance.

Our only desire and our one choice must be this: I want and choose what better leads to God's deepening life in me. David Fleming, *A Contemporary Reading of the Spiritual Exercises*

SHCJ TRADITION:

[Cornelia made her first Ignatian retreat of three days in Grand Coteau, 1839] "We have Cornelia's own words to tell us that these three days brought about in her a lasting conversion and that all subsequent retreats only completed this one Perhaps it was during this triduum of grace that there was conceived in Cornelia ... that integrated core which was at once her love for God and her passion for action in the interests of God." *Informatio for the Canonization Process*, p. 107

PERSPECTIVES & ECHOES:



LISTEN TO: *Beethoven's Sonata for Violin, #5, Movement 2, called the Spring sonata. In the interplay between violin and piano you may hear an echo of the commentary on #23 of the Spiritual Exercises by David Fleming, SJ: "God who loves us creates us and wants to share life with us forever."* — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVRbxESLArI>

"IN ALL MY STUDIES OF PSYCHOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY, I have found hope for real wholeness only in the human heart's desire for love in the present moment. The experience is utterly simple. It exists before any words or symbols are applied to it, and it is who we are. In one silent breath, the love-force in us gives us our identity and draws us toward our home and destiny. We are created by love, to live in love, for the sake of love We are endlessly diverse and unique in our hues and textures, but we are also all one; love is expressing itself not only through us but as us."

Gerald May, *The Awakened Heart*



Torres del Paine, Patagonia, Chile

"THE MYSTIC'S CRY HAS

sounded through the ages.

This is the cry of the desire of every person who has ever sought God, however unconsciously Often, we do not know this cry within ourselves. We do not recognize it. Therefore, we cannot understand it, recognize it within the context of the desire for God. Much, much more, we cannot understand the cry of the poor, the cry of the earth as the signal that it is. Yet the desire for God is everywhere crying out. The miracle: the contemplative cry of the people of the whole earth community, and it's no longer invisible and silent. It is prophetic and revolutionary. It rings through the universe, and we must not lose the thread of desire from the depths of a disfigured world." Constance Fitzgerald, OCD, "The Desire for God and the Transformative Power of Contemplation"

"THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF OTHER CREATURES IS NOT TO BE FOUND IN US. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us toward a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us." Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (83, 85)

"NO MATTER WHERE WE FOCUS OUR ATTENTION IN THE 13.7 BILLION YEAR UNFOLDING of the Universe, we find the promise of *more*.... The cosmic yearning for more and our individual yearning for more are one yearning. An evolving Universe encourages us to believe and to trust that there is always ... *more*. John Surette, SJ, *The Divine Dynamic*



VIEW: *If This Time* — for a rich audio-visual blend of poetry, music and natural beauty, by Irish-born, Australia-based Kevin McCormack — "... every day is a gift to begin again ... if this time is not wasted ..." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NSar3h68p0>

Retreat in Daily Life Together — Create your Timeline

The material is planned to require a total of about 27 weeks. To time it according to the liturgical calendar, the span from September to May is optimal. Or you may prefer to take a longer time with breaks between the movements. The following allocation of calendar weeks has worked well for many people.

Preparation Days (Dispositions, Principle & Foundation) 4 weeks

Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____

First Week of the Exercises 4 weeks

Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____

Second Week of the Exercises 10 weeks

Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____

Third Week of the Exercises 4 weeks

Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____

Fourth Week of the Exercises 5 weeks

Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____
Week of _____

There's an opportune time to do things, a right time for everything on Earth. Ecclesiastes 3:1

Retreat in Daily Life Together — Preparation Days: Supportive Material

*Those who have opted to make the retreat with one or more companions should arrange an initial session together to review the **Guidelines for Group Sharing** given below (p.18). This is also the time to share your reflection on the questions on p.5 on getting started, and decide on the time and place for your weekly get-together, which may be in person, or by phone or on-line.*



1. Daily Review of Prayer

Ignatius advises (in #77 of the Exercises) that after our time of prayer, we reflect on the experience. Trying to express our experience in words, e.g. by writing in a journal, can help us discern how God is active in our prayer. Journaling can also help us prepare for meetings with a retreat companion, group or director. The questions below may help you with this daily review. Don't feel bound to answer each of these questions every time.

Adapted from *The Ignatian Adventure* by Kevin O'Brien, SJ

- What were the significant interior movements (that is, feelings, reactions, intuitions, desires, emotions, thoughts or insights)?
- What was the prevailing mood of my prayer: peace, agitation, excitement, boredom, confusion, calm?
- Was my prayer more about the head or the heart, or both?
- What word, phrase, image, or memory meant most to me during prayer?
- Is there some unfinished business that I think God is calling me to return to during another time of prayer?
- Is there something happening in my life that is becoming part of my prayer?
- Is there anything that I am doing or not doing that is getting in the way of my listening to God?

Consider this journaling, or whatever means of reflection works best for you, as another way of praying and going deeper to sift through the graces.

2. Weekly Review of Prayer

- Take some time to reflect on your experience: What grace(s) did I seek? What graces did I receive?
- How did I experience encouragement (consolation) or discouragement (desolation)?
- Have I become more deeply aware of anything? More deeply desirous of something?

This reflection can be the substance of what you share with your director, companion, or group.

3. How to access online media links included under “Perspectives & Echoes”

To view a suggested video or listen to music, simply click <https://www.shcj.org/175th-anniversary/retreat-in-daily-life-together/> or copy this link into your browser.

4. Some Guidelines for Group Reflection

What are the benefits of meeting with a group?

An experience like this retreat, which helps us to practice finding God in the midst of our everyday lives, can be greatly enhanced by meeting with a group.

- Sharing what seems to have been most important in a period of time can help us clarify it for ourselves.
- Listening to the ways of God in the lives of others can be a most enriching, encouraging and humbling experience.
- The group can grow into being a source of strong support and encouragement for its members.
- Experience suggests that the helpful size for a meeting of one hour is 3-6 persons.



What happens in these groups?

- The time together begins with a short period of silence and a brief prayer.
- Each person is invited to talk about, naturally and simply, something s/he found important about the past week's experience of doing the Exercises. For example, "I found the (X____) — words of scripture, or picture, or quotation touched me because ..."

The method of *mutual invitation* can be very helpful:

- one person begins by sharing personally or by inviting someone else in the group to do so; after that person has spoken, s/he invites another
- continue until each person in the group has been given the opportunity to speak

(If you are not ready to share yet, say "I pass for now" and you will be invited to speak later. If you don't want to say anything at all on a particular occasion, simply say "pass" and proceed to ask another person).

- take a moment or two of silence after someone has spoken to pray for that person

- the meeting ends in a short time of silence and a prayer of gratitude
- check the time and place of the next gathering.

What are the *rules* for a group like this?

- The meeting should last for no more than one hour and should start and stop on time. This ensures the greatest respect for everyone's time.
- Everyone in the group should agree to share in such a way that each person has an opportunity to speak in the hour. (So, the group should take responsibility to move on, if someone were to talk for more than the 10 minutes or so agreed.)
- Confidentiality is essential, so be careful not to talk in a way that links what was said to a particular person. Of course, sometimes we receive an insight into scripture or life that we want to share with a friend or spiritual director. This can be enriching, as long as we don't reveal what was private to someone else.

NOTE: *It's helpful to keep in mind that the group is not a collective retreat director. Nor is it the place of anyone in the group to offer guidance to another member. Group companions offer one another the gift of listening with great attention and respect, trusting the Holy Spirit to lead each person further and deeper into the retreat. In this kind of group, it's not acceptable to argue, disagree, challenge or negate someone else's experience and sharing.*

HOSTING THE GROUP

It helps for someone to host the group (either the same person each week or taking it in turn). In general, the task of the host is to help every member to speak or not as they choose. Specific responsibilities are described below:

Beginning

- Arrive early – check chairs — centrepiece, candle ...
- Invite all to be present — to themselves, God and each other.
- Create a brief prayer — or invite members to take turns doing that.
- Remind everyone of confidentiality.

Middle

- In a gentle way, keep the time boundaries for sharing.
- Don't rush to break a silence or a moment of emotion.

Ending — *Be sure you give enough time for this!*

Invite the group to take some time of silence in which you reflect on your experience as you listened to others. What might then follow is a brief conversation about what you see emerging as God's invitations and desires.

- Offer a short prayer of gratitude.
- Ensure that the arrangements of time and place for the next meeting are clear.

Meeting by conference call or any other electronic means

The guidelines are much the same but the host, or someone in the group, would need to have the necessary technological skill to help the group connect well, and everyone needs good internet access if you use an on-line application such as Zoom or WhatsApp. If you do opt for video calls it would be good to look into tips for how to look and sound good. These are available on-line, e.g. "Six Tips for Looking Great in a Zoom Meeting — <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2020/04/11/zoom-meetings-go-better-these-6-tips-look-your-best/5125980002/> (copy address into browser). A good article from the Harvard Business Review is "Stop Zoning Out During Zoom Meetings" — <https://hbr.org/2020/05/stop-zoning-out-in-zoom-meetings> Society Communications Director, Samantha Strike, can also be a resource person by e-mail — ssstrike@shcj.org



—REMEMBER—

**"Adaptability is a hallmark of the Spiritual Exercises."
Don't even try to pray over every word on every page. Follow the Spirit's lead.
You may choose to stay with one or two passages of scripture all week.
God's Spirit is guiding you.**

Enjoy your graced time together!

RETREAT IN DAILY LIFE TOGETHER — BIBLIOGRAPHY: Preparation Days

Books, Articles, Poems, Websites and other sources of inspiration

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Audio and Video (all accessible in July 2021)

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

“Praying with Your Body,”—
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzSGDjP1GV4>

Spiegel im Spiegel by Arvo Pärt — performed by Jürgen Kruse (piano) and Benjamin Hudson (viola)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJ6Mzvh3XCc>

Chanticleer, one of Earth’s loveliest pleasure gardens — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNz5sNylg5c>

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Serenade No. 10 for Winds (K. 361/370a), “Gran Partita,” III Adagio, performed by the London Symphony Orchestra. — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NecLh4YOT9M>

“Bonse Aba,” an African folk song that means “those who sing have the right to be called the children of God,” arranged by Victor C. Johnson. — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=US_oTqmiEVM

Ave Maria of Palestrina sung by the Schola Cantorum Sanctae Caeciliae —
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGuUD20Hbgg>

Ave Maria of 19th C French composer, Charles Gounod, performed by James Galway & John Birch
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKMad0B_Zro

Ave Maria sung in the Igbo language by Nigeria’s Nnamdi Azikiwe University Choir —
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0Mz_Bwuq4w

Ludwig Van Beethoven. Sonata for Violin, #5, Movement 2, called the Spring sonata —
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVRbxESLArI>

Kevin McCormack. *If This Time* — for a rich audio-visual blend of poetry, music and natural beauty— “... every day is a gift to begin again ... if this time is not wasted ...” — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N-Sar3h68p0>