Disposition Days (March 2-8)

Sunday, March 2

Welcome to Moved to Greater Love, a nine-week program of prayer and reflection for the Lent and Easter seasons.

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace of openness to whatever gifts God desires to give me during this two-month prayer experience.

Scripture/Reading

From the *De statu Societatis*, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus’ 2012 summary of the state of the Society of Jesus in the world:

Thus, although this may surprise some, I believe that one of the primary challenges facing the Society today is that of recovering the spirit of silence. I am not thinking of disciplinary measures, fixed times of silence, going back to religious houses that look more like monasteries. Rather, I am thinking of the hearts of our men. We all need a place inside ourselves where there is no noise, where the voice of the Spirit of God can speak to us, softly and gently, and direct our discernment. In a very true sense we need the ability to become ourselves — silence, emptiness, an open space that the Word of God can fill, and the Spirit of God can set on fire for the good of others and of the Church. More than ever, every Jesuit should be able to live like a monk in the middle of the noise of the city — as an Orthodox friend of ours once said. That means that our hearts are our monasteries and at the bottom of every activity, every reflection, every decision, there is silence, the kind of silence that one shares only with God.
Reflection Questions

1. As I approach this Lenten experience, am I in consolation or desolation? Do I have a strong sense of God’s loving providence and presence in my life? Or, am I struggling to feel God’s presence? I speak with God about this.


3. As I embark on this Lenten experience, what is my attitude toward it? Am I filled with great desires or am I unenthusiastic about this experience? I speak with God about this.

Reflection

Lingering over God from “The Discerning Heart” by Maureen Conroy:

God’s touch, though taking place in a moment of time, lives on within us forever. When we experience God’s love, God’s self-giving, we are never the same. We may return to some of our old ways of being and acting, but deep down within we are not the same.

We can continue to let an experience of God bear fruit within us by going back to it and lingering over it. Through this remembering, lingering, and reliving process, we open ourselves to God — we allow God to move within us, to touch our hearts again so that our own experiences of God ripple deep within us and can continue to make a difference in our lives.

I weave a silence on my lips,
I weave a silence into my mind,
I weave a silence within my heart,
I close my ears to distractions,
I close my eyes to attentions,
I close my heart to temptations.

Calm me, O Lord, as you stilled the storm,
Still me, O Lord, keep me from harm.
Let all the tumult within me cease,
Enfold me, Lord in your peace.

Traditional Celtic

Photos: Creighton University Online Retreat Photo Gallery
http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/photos.html

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030214.cfm
Monday, March 3

Today’s Grace

I pray for the gift of gratitude for the ways God has been laboring to bring forth life in me.

Scripture/Reading


1 Peter 1:3-9
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet you believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of faith, the salvation of your souls.

Reflection Questions

1. Today, I pray for gratitude. At this very moment, am I grateful? If so, I give thanks and praise. If not, I speak with God about it and ask God to grant me this grace.
2. What, of God’s many gifts to me, am I particularly grateful for today? I give thanks to God for these particular gifts.
3. The young man went away sad, having many possessions. What possessions am I clinging to? How might the grace of gratitude aid me to let these possessions go? I speak with God about this.
Reflection

From the *De statu Societatis*, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus’ 2012 summary of the state of the Society of Jesus in the world:

Let me put it another way. I am convinced that the key for determining the spiritual health of the Society depends on whether Jesuits continue to have the ability to give absolutely everything to the Lord, as Ignatius did and so many after him till the present day. This is the key and Ignatius left some very helpful directions towards this in the consideration on the “Three Degrees of Humility.” We are still amazed at the great service and the daring courage of great Jesuits in the past, who did incredible things in the midst of almost impossible odds. But behind their achievement we always find a passionate dedication to serve God and to help others, a passion that was the real driving and integrating force behind all their work.

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030314.cfm
Tuesday, March 4

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace to trust that God will not be outdone in generosity.

Scripture/Reading

Readings via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website.
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030414.cfm

Reading 1: 1 Peter 1:13-16
Beloved: set your hopes completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Like obedient children, do not act in compliance with the desires of your former ignorance but, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, Be holy because I am holy.

Gospel: Mk 10:28-31
Peter began to say to Jesus, “We have given up everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come. But many that are first will be last, and the last will be first.”
Reflection Questions

1. Reflect on Mark 10:28-31. Has this been true in your life? Have you given up something big for God only to be given a hundredfold back from God? Speak with God about this.
2. Spend a few minutes in quiet praise for the great generosity that God has shown you in your life.
3. The paradox of Christian discipleship is that “the first will be last, and the last will be first.” In order to follow the Lord, we must become childlike, trusting and obedient. How am I being invited during this Lent to take on the attitude of gentle reverence and humility, dependent evermore profoundly in God’s immense love and grace?

Reflection

A Sense of Reverence from “Putting on the Heart of Christ” by Gerald M. Fagin, SJ:

Ignatius believed that anyone who prayerfully considers the basic truth that we are created out of love by a transcendent God of holiness will grow in a sense of reverence. We will have a deepened sense of the sacredness of all things if we think of everything as continually being called and sustained by God. We will stand in awe not just before sunsets and mountains, flowers and trees, but also, and especially, before every person we meet. Reverence is a disposition of heart that allows us to live before the beauty and goodness of every creature and the God who made them. In Ignatian terminology, reverence will enable us to find God in all things.

Music: “Earthen Vessels” by John Foley, SJ: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAZhIw49ULc

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030414.cfm
Ash Wednesday, March 5

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace of an intimate knowledge of God’s presence in my life and an awareness of my own response.

Scripture/Reading

From the First Principle and Foundation of the Spiritual Exercises, based on a paraphrase by David Fleming, SJ:

The goal of our life is to live with God forever. God created us and gave us life because God loves us. Our own response of love allows God’s life to flow into us without limit.

All the things in this world are gifts of God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love to God more readily.

As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God insofar as they help us develop as loving persons. But if any of these gifts become more valuable to us than the goal for which we were created, they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal.

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website.
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030514.cfm

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2

Brothers and sisters:
We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us.
We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Working together, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says:

In an acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.

Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.
Reflection Questions

1. Today, I receive ashes on my forehead. Why do I choose to participate in this very old ritual? What does it mean to me, personally? What recent experiences in my life do I bring to this ritual? What hopes and dreams for this coming Lent do I bring to this ritual?

2. Reflecting on 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2, we read, "Now is a very acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation." Reflecting on the circumstances of my life at this moment, I explore: Now is an acceptable time for what, exactly? I ask God this question. How might now be a "Day of Salvation" for you? I speak with God about this.

Reflection

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030514.cfm
Thursday, March 6

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to choose life in whatever way God offers it to me.

Scripture/Reading

From the First Principle and Foundation of the Spiritual Exercises:

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some obligation. We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, to be considered somebody important or a nobody, a long life or a short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God.

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

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website.
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030614.cfm

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Moses said to the people: “Today I have set before you life and prosperity, death and doom. If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I enjoin on you today, loving him, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and decrees, you will live and grow numerous, and the LORD, your God, will bless you in the land you are entering to occupy. If, however, you turn away your hearts and will not listen, but are led astray and adore and serve other gods, I tell you now that you will certainly perish; you will not have a long life on the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and occupy. I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then,
that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, heeding his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to live on the land that the LORD swore he would give to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Reflection Questions

1. In today's reading, Moses exhorts me to "choose life." Have I chosen life or chosen death, lately? What might choosing life mean for me today? I speak with God about this.

2. Ignatius's Principle and Foundation calls us to be free, to let go of any attachments in my life. What might I be clinging to these days? What might my life be like if I let go of my attachments? I speak with God about this.

3. The paths that Moses set before us today are clear — choosing between life and death, between spiritual freedom and enslavement. Choose life and inherit God's abundant blessings. Where are the darkness and unfreedoms that enslave me? Where are the lights and graces that lead me to life and hope?

Reflection

"God's Grandeur" by Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ

The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil; It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod? Generations have trod, have trod, have trod; And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil; And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod. And for all this, nature is never spent; There lives the dearest freshness deep down things; And though the last lights off the black West went Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs — Because the Holy Ghost over the bent World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030614.cfm
Friday, March 7

Today's Grace

I ask for the grace to imagine a future that excites me and draws me toward it.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website.
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030714.cfm

Reading 1: IS 58:5-9a

Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; Your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!

As you pray over this conclusion to Jesuit Father General Adolfo Nicolás’ Mexico City talk on Higher Education, imagine how these words might challenge your view of your own ministry or apostolate.

I think one of the most, perhaps the most, fundamental ways of dealing with this is to place ourselves in the spiritual space of Ignatius and the first companions and – with their energy, creativity, and freedom – ask their basic question afresh: What are the needs of the Church and our world, where are we needed most, and where and how can we serve best? We are in this together, and that is what we must remember rather than worrying about Jesuit survival. I would invite you, for a few moments, to think of yourselves … as co-founders of a new religious group, discerning God’s call to you as an apostolic body in the Church. In this globalized world, with all its lights and shadows, would – or how would – running all these [institutions] still be the best way we can respond to the mission of the Church and the needs of the
world? Or perhaps, the question should be: What kind of [institutions], with what emphases and what directions, would we run, if we were founding the Society of Jesus in today’s world? I am inviting, in all my visits, all Jesuits to re-create the Society of Jesus, because I think every generation has to re-create the faith, they have to re-create the journey, they have to re-create the institutions. This is not only a good desire. If we lose the ability to re-create, we have lost the spirit.

In the Gospels, we often find “unfinished endings”: the original ending of the Gospel of Mark, with the women not saying a word about the message of the angel at the tomb; the ending of the parable of the prodigal Son, which ends with an unanswered question from the Father to the older brother. These ambiguous endings may be unsettling, and precisely meant to provoke deeper, and more fundamental questioning and responses. I therefore have good precedents to conclude my talk in the open-ended way. I hope I leave you reflecting to what extent the challenges I have offered this morning are about improving our institutions and the mission and ministry to help shape a more humane, just, faith-filled, sustainable world or are calls to, in some sense, re-found what Ignatius called “the universities of the Society.” (From Jesuit Father General Adolfo Nicolás’ talk on “Networking Jesuit Higher Education: Shaping the Future for a Humane, Just, Sustainable Globe” given in Mexico City on April 23, 2010.)

Reflection Questions

1. I reflect on Father Nicolás’ questions: What are the needs of the Church and our world? Where am I needed most? Where and how can I serve best?
2. If we were to re-create the Society of Jesus or its ministries and institutions based on the needs of the Church and the world today, what might that look like? How might we actually go about re-creating the Society of Jesus or its ministries and institutions?
3. What future image of the Society of Jesus excites me and elicits great desires in me? What future image of the Church excites me and elicits great desires in me? I speak with God about this.

Reflection

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030714.cfm
Saturday, March 8

Today’s Grace

I ask for the gift of confidence that God is at work in my life and my future.

Having prayed over the ways that God has been working in my life, how God does not hold my past against me, how God invites us into a future full of life and creativity and promise, I place my life in God’s hands and ask to move forward into this prayer experience with hope and joy.

Scripture/Reading


IS 58:9b-12
Thus says the LORD:
If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech;
If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted;
Then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday;
Then the LORD will guide you always and give you plenty even on the parched land. He will renew your strength, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails.
The ancient ruins shall be rebuilt for your sake, and the foundations from ages past you shall raise up;
“Repairer of the breach,” they shall call you, “Restorer of ruined homesteads.”

Reflection Questions

1. The reading today exhorts me to, “remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech...bestow your bread on the hungry...satisfy the afflicted.” How might I carry out this exhortation in some concrete way at this moment in my life? How might I be called to do this today? I speak with God about this.
2. Do I have confidence that God can do great work in my life? Do I trust God enough to act boldly? I speak with God about this.
Reflection

Music: “A Song of Hope” by John Foley, SJ: https://www.ocp.org/products/10649
(Click on the “Listen” button next to “A Song of Hope”)

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030814.cfm

Moved to Greater Love contributors: