Gratitude (March 9-22)

Sunday, March 9

Today’s Grace

In the previous week we sought the grace of an open and generous spirit to receive the gifts God seeks to shower on us throughout this prayer experience, so that we can respond magnanimously, as Ignatius suggests in the Fifth Annotation of the Spiritual Exercises.

As we move deeper into the experience, we begin with the realization that all is a gift from our loving, gracious and gentle God. The next two weeks will focus on gratitude. The grace we ask for is deep gratitude and a new encounter of God’s love and mercy.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030914.cfm

Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7

The LORD God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.

Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made various trees grow that were delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that the LORD God had made.
The serpent asked the woman, “Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?” The woman answered the serpent: “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman: “You certainly will not die! No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is evil.” The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

From “Prayer of Love and Praise” by Jacqueline Bergan and Sister Marie Schwann, CSJ:

When your love spilled over into creation, you thought of me. I am from love … of love … for love.

**Reflection Questions**

1. Where in creation do I see God’s breath of life?
2. How do I see myself as formed and shaped by God?
3. What does it mean for me, that I and those with whom I live and engage in ministry are “from love … of love … for love?” I talk with God about this.

**Reflection**

Music: “O Breathe on Me, O Breath of God” by Edwin Hatch: [http://www.ocp.org/compositions/30398](http://www.ocp.org/compositions/30398) (Click on the play button to listen)


**Other Resources**

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: [http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030914.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030914.cfm)
Monday, March 10

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace of being surprised with the ever expansive and intimate intricacies of God’s created world.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/psalms/104

Psalms 104: 1-6; 10-18; 24; 30-35

Bless the LORD, my soul! LORD, my God, you are great indeed!
You are clothed with majesty and splendor, robed in light as with a cloak.
You spread out the heavens like a tent;
setting the beams of your chambers upon the waters.
You make the clouds your chariot;
traveling on the wings of the wind.
You make the winds your messengers;
flaming fire, your ministers.

You fixed the earth on its foundation,
so it can never be shaken.
The deeps covered it like a garment;
above the mountains stood the waters.

You made springs flow in wadies
that wind among the mountains.
They give drink to every beast of the field;
here wild asses quench their thirst.
Beside them the birds of heaven nest;
among the branches they sing.
You water the mountains from your chambers;
from the fruit of your labor the earth abounds.
You make the grass grow for the cattle
and plants for people’s work
to bring forth food from the earth,
wine to gladden their hearts,
oil to make their faces shine,
and bread to sustain the human heart.
The trees of the LORD drink their fill,
the cedars of Lebanon, which you planted.
There the birds build their nests;
the stork in the junipers, its home.
The high mountains are for wild goats;
the rocky cliffs, a refuge for badgers.
How varied are your works, LORD!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

Send forth your spirit, they are created
and you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD be glad in his works!
Who looks at the earth and it trembles,
touches the mountains and they smoke!
I will sing to the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God while I live.
May my meditation be pleasing to him;
I will rejoice in the LORD.
May sinners vanish from the earth,
and the wicked be no more.
Bless the LORD, my soul! Hallelujah!

Reflection Questions

Consider taking a slow walk outside and use your senses to experience the beauty and creativity of
God, as one way that God is loving you.

1. What is it in God’s creation that surprises you? Or do you feel too worn out to be surprised?
   I talk with God about this.
2. How does God the Creator, who cares for the tiniest seed to the entire cosmos, enter into
   your prayer?

Reflection

Photo Galleries:
Hubble Telescope Album - http://hubblesite.org/gallery/album/

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031014.cfm
Tuesday, March 11

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace to recall and reverence the beauty in the cities, towns and villages where I have lived and where I am living now.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: [http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031114.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031114.cfm)

Isaiah 55:10-11

Thus says the LORD:

Just as from the heavens
the rain and snow come down
And do not return there
till they have watered the earth,
making it fertile and fruitful,
Giving seed to the one who sows
and bread to the one who eats,
So shall my word be
that goes forth from my mouth;
It shall not return to me void,
but shall do my will,
achieving the end for which I sent it.

Jesuit Father Pedro Arrupe, 28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus, on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima from “Pedro Arrupe: Essential Writings” by Kevin Burke (Orbis Books, 2004):

On the morning of August 6, 1945, something happened to break the monotony of the previous months. At about 7:55 in the morning a B-29 appeared … I was in my room with another priest at 8:15 when suddenly we saw a blinding light, like a flash of magnesium. As I opened the door, which faced the city, we heard a formidable explosion similar to the blast of a hurricane … We climbed a hill to get a better view. From there we could see a ruined city: before us was a decimated Hiroshima…
Since the houses were made of wood, paper and straw and it was at a time when the first meal of the day was being prepared in all the kitchens, the flames contacting the electric current turned the entire city into one enormous lake of fire within two and one half hours...

We did the only thing that could be done in the presence of such mass slaughter; we fell on our knees and prayed for guidance, as we were destitute of all human help ... In spite of the urgency of our work, we had first stopped to celebrate our masses. Assuredly, it is in such moments of tragedy that we felt God most near to us.

Reflection Questions

1. Where is the fertility and the fruit in the places I have lived?
2. How does the Word of God bring these places to life?
3. Where do I find beauty, if I am living now or have lived and ministered in cities where violence, drugs and material poverty are rampant? How does that beauty affect me? I talk 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/031114.cfm
Wednesday, March 12

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace of being filled with wonder and awe at the natural vegetation that surrounds me in the places where I live, pray, serve and rest each day.

Scripture/Reading


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.

“The Place I Want to Get Back To” by Mary Oliver from “Thirst” (Beacon Press, 2006):

is where
   in the pinewoods
in the moments between
the darkness
and the first light
two deer came walking down the hill
and when they saw me

they said to each other, okay,
this one is okay,
let’s see who she is
and why she is sitting
on the ground, like that, 
so quiet, as if 
asleep, or in a dream, 
but, anyway, harmless;

and so they came 
on their slender legs 
and gazed upon me 
not unlike the way

I go out to the dunes and look 
and look and look 
into the faces of the flowers; 
and then one of them leaned forward

and nuzzled my hand, and what can my life 
bring to me that could exceed 
that brief moment?
For twenty years

I have gone every day to the same woods, 
not waiting, exactly, just lingering, 
Such gifts, bestowed, 
can’t be repeated.

If you want to talk about this 
come to visit. I live in the house 
near the corner, which I have named 
Gratitude.

Reflection Questions

1. How do I experience awe in my life? 
2. Where does the beauty of creation most strike my heart? 
3. When I step outside is there an aspect of nature that attracts me and invites me to linger? 
   Or am I in a hurry and rush past the gift God is giving me this day? I talk with God about this.

Reflection

Music: “What About” by Peter Breinholt - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTkkajiL2Guc

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: 
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031214.cfm
Thursday, March 13

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace to realize how God has shown God’s love for me through the Society of Jesus, with all her gifts and challenges.

Scripture/Reading

Address of Benedict XVI to the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus on February 21, 2008:

As my predecessors have often told you, the Church needs you, counts on you, and continues to turn to you with confidence, particularly to reach the geographical and spiritual places where others do not reach or find it difficult to reach. Those words of Paul VI have remained engraved in your hearts: “Wherever in the Church, even in the most difficult and exposed fields, in the crossroads of ideologies, in the social trenches, there has been or is confrontation between the burning exigencies of humanity and the perennial message of the Gospel, there have been and are the Jesuits.” (Paul VI quotation from December 3, 1974, to the 32nd General Congregation)

From the letter “To the Jesuits in Parish Ministry” in Japan by Jesuit Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, 29th Superior General of the Society of Jesus, on August 27, 2005:

Collaboration also means openness to … collaborative ministry with lay people, priests and religious. This new vision of empowerment, delegating, forming for responsibility and teamwork are needed basic attitudes. Working together as a team among ourselves as Jesuits and collaborating in mission with others requires a deep continual conversion. This is true for us, Jesuits, as well as for all those who share our mission. We are called to learn to work together as a team, to discover new styles of leadership, and to share the same mission. Deeply ingrained attitudes from years of living and working alone … truly make this challenge harder.

Reflection Questions

1. How did I experience God’s call to me to the Society, to a Jesuit ministry? What are the gifts I have been given? If I can see the gifts only faintly, or if I am filled with gratitude, I talk with God about this.
2. When have I experienced the gifts and woundedness of being a member or partner of the Society? I talk with God about this.

**Reflection**

How is it that billions of stars can fly the heaven more speedily than light? Because an all-powerful Christ gives them being. Not once for all, but continuously, day after day. How is it that four thousand varieties of roses can grow and perfume our earth? Because an imaginative Christ gives them life. How is it that your long-haired Labrador can look hungrily at you, hear your faintest whistle, lay paws on your shoulders? Because a sensitive Christ gives it senses. How is it that you can shape an idea, construct the Capitol, transplant a human heart? Because a still human Christ gives you intelligence. How can you believe that the Son of God died a bloody death for you, how you can confidently expect to live forever, how can you give yourself unreservedly to God and to your sisters and brothers? Because a living Christ infuses faith in you, fills your flesh with hope, inflames your very bones with a unique love not of this world.

Walter Burghardt, S.J.

Clockwise from topleft:The Jesuit Center in Wernersville, Penn.; Holy Name of Jesus Parish in New Orleans; the Chapel of St. Ignatius at Seattle University; and Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory of Houston.

**Other Resources**

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031314.cfm
Friday, March 14

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace to remember how God has blessed and continues to bless our ministries.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: [http://www.usccb.org/bible/romans/8](http://www.usccb.org/bible/romans/8)

**Romans 8:28-30**

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: [http://www.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/55](http://www.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/55)

**Isaiah 55:8-9**

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways—oracle of the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Reflection Questions

1. What are the fruits of our corporate ministries? I talk with God about them.
2. What fruits are being realized in the places where I have served and am serving now? If I
am unable to see the fruits at this time, I talk with God about that and ask to trust that God is at work in hidden ways.

**Reflection**


**Other Resources**

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: [http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031414.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031414.cfm)
Saturday, March 15

Today’s Grace

In 2014, the Society of Jesus marks an important milestone, the 200th anniversary of its restoration. In 1773, Pope Clement XIV suppressed the Society, causing many Jesuits to renounce their vows and seek exile. After 41 years of suppression, the Society was restored in 1814.

Today I ask for the grace of naming how the restoration of the Society of Jesus was a grace to the Church, the Society and to me.

Scripture/Reading

“Perfect Resignation” by St. Joseph Pignatelli, SJ (1737-1811)

My God, I do not know what must come to me today. But I am certain that nothing can happen to me that you have not foreseen, decreed, and ordained from eternity. That is sufficient for me. I adore your impenetrable and eternal designs, to which I submit with all my heart. I desire, I accept them all, and I unite my sacrifice to that of Jesus Christ, my divine Savior. I ask in his name and through his infinite merits, patience in my trials, and perfect and entire submission to all that comes to me by your good pleasure. Amen.

When Pope Clement XIV suppressed the Society of Jesus on July 21, 1773, Father Joseph Pignatelli, along with 23,000 others, were no longer Jesuits. He, however, continued to live the life of a Jesuit for the next 24 years and kept in contact with his dispersed brothers. In 1797 he, along with Jesuits who had arrived from Russia, renewed his vows as a Jesuit and two years later, with the pope’s approval, opened a novitiate in Colorno, Italy. He became the living bridge between the old and the new Society of Jesus. The Society was restored on August 7, 1814, when Pope Pius VII issued the bull Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum.

Reflection Questions

1. Are there areas of my life where I feel suppressed or silenced? How am I being invited to a renewal of my prayer, my relationships in community and with apostolic partners? I talk with God about this.
2. How am I being restored or re-energized? If I am feeling drained of enthusiasm, what do I need in order to be re-energized? I talk with God about this.
3. What can I learn from St. Joseph Pignatelli abandoning himself to God’s mercy and care?

Reflection

Hymn: “Taizé – Nada te turbe” by St. Teresa of Avila (text) and Jacques Berthier (music) - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=go1-BoDD7CI&list=AL94UKMTqg-9ATaZH_LAlvhwZci74gnRVo

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031514.cfm
**Sunday, March 16**

**Today’s Grace**

I ask for the grace to recall my personal salvation history.

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**Scripture/Reading**

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: [http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031614.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031614.cfm)

**Genesis 12:1-4A**

The LORD said to Abram:

“Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you.

“I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you.”

Abram went as the LORD directed him.

**2 Timothy 1:8B-10**

Beloved: Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.

He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.
Reflection Questions

1. How has the Lord directed my life?
2. How has Jesus saved me and called me to a holy life?
3. Where have I been led to see a new vision of Jesus in the world?

Reflection

Music: “Leyenda” played by Andres Segovia - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICeebWgjrrU

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031614.cfm
Monday, March 17 (Feast of St. Patrick)

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace to remember all the individuals who God has sent me and the places where God has invited me to be with God’s people.

Scripture/Reading

From *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation released on November 24, 2013 [127, 128]:

Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility. It has to do with bringing the Gospel to the people we meet, whether they be our neighbors or complete strangers. This is the informal preaching, which takes place in the middle of a conversation, something along the lines of what a missionary does when visiting a home. Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey.

In this preaching, which is always respectful and gentle, the first step is personal dialogue, when the other person speaks and shares his or her joys, hopes and concerns for loved ones, or so many other heartfelt needs.

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031714.cfm

**Luke 6:36-38**

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged.
Stop condemning and you will not be condemned.
Forgive and you will be forgiven.
Give and gifts will be given to you;
a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing,
will be poured into your lap.
For the measure with which you measure
will in return be measured out to you.”

**Reflection Questions**

1. How has God’s generosity overflowed into my life? The people, the places, the ministries?
2. Where have I resisted this generosity? Condemned the gift? Missed the mercy?
3. Who has been a “missionary” to me, to my brothers and to our partners? I express my
   gratitude to God for their presence in my life.

**Reflection**

Video: Havasupai Indian Waterfall - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYs5zyM9zk8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYs5zyM9zk8)

**Other Resources**

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
[http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031714.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031714.cfm)
Tuesday, March 18 (Feast of St. Cyril of Jerusalem)

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace to cherish all the ways God invites me to a deeper relationship with God’s self.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031814.cfm

John 15:1-9
Jesus said to his disciples:
“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love.”

Reflection Questions

1. What words has the Lord spoken to me to invite me into a deeper relationship?
2. When have I heard those words and responded? When have I failed to hear or resisted those words?
Reflection

Hymn: “Soul of My Savior” (Anima Christi) by William Maher, SJ - http://youtu.be/tO_is6VPn3w

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031814.cfm
Wednesday, March 19 (Feast of St. Joseph)

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace to see all the ways God invites the Society of Jesus and her partners to be co-creators with Christ in this world.

Scripture/Reading

From Decree 2 of the Society of Jesus’ General Congregation 35 (2008):

Our way of proceeding is to trace the footprints of God everywhere, knowing that the Spirit of Christ is at work in all places and situations and in all activities and mediations that seek to make him more present in the world. This mission of attempting “to feel and to taste” (sentir y gustar) the presence and activity of God in all the persons and circumstances of the world places us Jesuits at the centre of a tension pulling us both to God and to the world at the same time…

Being and doing; contemplation and action; prayer and prophetic living; being completely united with Christ and completely inserted into the world with him as an apostolic body: all of these polarities mark deeply the life of a Jesuit and express both its essence and its possibilities. The Gospels show Jesus in deep, loving relationship with his Father and, at the same time, completely given over to his mission among men and women. (GC 35, D. 2, n. 8, 9)


The way of God is the way of weakness. The great news of the Gospel is precisely that God became small and vulnerable, and hence bore fruit among us. The most fruitful life ever lived is the life of Jesus, who did not cling to his divine power but became as we are. Jesus brought us new life in ultimate vulnerability. He came to us as a small child, dependent on the care and protection of others. He lived for us as a poor preacher, without any political, economic, or military power. He died for us nailed to a cross as a useless criminal. It is in this extreme vulnerability that our salvation was won … It is very hard for us to grasp even a little bit of the mystery of God’s vulnerability. Yet, when we have eyes to see and ears to hear we can see it in many ways and in many places … We can see it in the graceful smiles of poor people and in the warm affection of the handicapped. We can see it every time people ask forgiveness and are reconciled.
Reflection Questions

1. How am I living with the polarities of being “completely united with Christ and completely inserted into the world with him”?
2. Are there ways that I am, like St. Joseph whose feast we celebrate today, a “hidden” collaborator with God?
3. What are my weaknesses and those of my community that God may be inviting us to accept? I talk with God about this.

Reflection

Video: “What is a Jesuit Vocation?” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LleNn0dXQ1E

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/031914.cfm
Thursday, March 20

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace of gratitude for God’s mercy and the grace to model it for others.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032014.cfm

Luke 17:11-19
As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voice, saying, “Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!” And when he saw them, he said, “Go show yourselves to the priests.” As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, “Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?” Then he said to him, “Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.”

From the March 2013 letter “With Pope Francis at the Beginning of his Pontificate” by Jesuit Father General Adolfo Nicolás to the whole Society of Jesus:

We are aware that our efforts are limited and that we all carry the burden of a history of sin that we share with all humanity. But we also experience God’s radical call inviting us to consider all things and look to the future in a new way, as Ignatius did in Manresa. This is the time to appropriate the words of mercy and goodness that Pope Francis repeats so convincingly and not allow ourselves to be swept away by distractions from the past, which may paralyze our hearts and lead us to interpret reality with values that are not inspired by the Gospel.
Reflection Questions

1. How do I experience God’s mercy for me?
2. How do I show God’s mercy to those with whom I live, pray, serve and relax?
3. Is there an area of my life where God wants to show me mercy? I talk with God about this.

Reflection

Music: “I’m Alive” by Kenny Chesney - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B56UjiLuWkk

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032014.cfm
Friday, March 21

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace to see how God can work with my weaknesses and failures.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032114.cfm

Luke 19:1-10

At that time, Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town.
Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way.
When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house." And he came down quickly and received him with joy.
When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner."
But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over."
And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost."

Only when we have felt the terror of the matter, can we recognize the incomparable kindness. God comes into the very midst of evil and death, and judges the evil in us and in the world. And by judging us, God cleanses and sanctifies us, comes to us with grace and love … God wants to always be with us, wherever we may be — in our sins, suffering, and death. We are no longer alone; God is with us.

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/philippians/1

**Philippians 1: 3-6**
I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.

**Reflection Questions**

1. How do I experience God using my weaknesses for God’s greater glory? I talk with God about this.
2. When have my failures been a grace for me and for others?

**Reflection**

Hymn: “The King of Love My Shepherd Is” by Henry W. Baker - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cHWMLtF9_8

**Other Resources**

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032114.cfm
Saturday, March 22

Today’s Grace

I ask for the grace to look back on the past two weeks and acknowledge, accept and savor the gifts God has given me.

Scripture/Reading

Quieting myself, I become aware that I am in Your presence, O God. I imagine You looking at me and me looking at You, loving me.

Loving God, open my eyes and ears to see where You have been with me for these past two weeks.

As I reflect on this prayer experience, I realize that everything I have, even myself, is a gift from You.

Let me allow You to bring to my awareness all that You want to show me. For the times that were life-giving, I express my gratitude to You.

I am still learning to grow in Your love. Forgive me for the times when I chose not to respond to Your invitations to love.

With gratitude to You, I ask for what I really want and need as I move into the next phase of this prayer experience. Amen.

Reflection Questions

1. When does gratitude come easily in my life? What evoked it for me over the past two weeks?
2. When is gratitude difficult in my life? When did I sense resistance over the past two weeks?
3. Can I ask for the grace to approach God and others with a greater sense of gratitude in the future?

Reflection

Music: “At The Ivy Gate” by Brian Crain - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIzGnV65Sg
Music: “Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major” by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart -
www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2uYb6bMKyl

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032214.cfm

Moved to Greater Love contributors: