

Week I  
First Exercise

1. Enter into God's presence. Pray: "My Lord, please give me your help so that all my thoughts, intentions, words and actions will be directed solely towards loving and serving You."

2. Grace: I seek the gift of **feeling *ashamed and confused* as I consider the effects of sin which so offend my all-loving God, especially as I consider the effects of even *one* serious sin compared to all the sins I have committed.**

3. Place: *In general, one should use the imagination to see the physical place wherein happen the actions I wish to contemplate or meditate. For example, if one is praying over the birth of Jesus, one would imagine the stable, Mary & Joseph, the manger, etc. etc.* So, in the case of 4.1 below, imagine the war in heaven; in 4.2 below, imagine the Garden of Eden & then the desert.

4. Sin 1: The Rebellion of the Angels

God created the angels before he created us. Angels are creatures of pure spirit: they cannot die. Angels have greater powers than do humans and greater knowledge. For some reason, the greatest of the angels, Lucifer, led a rebellion against God, refusing God's free gift of love. These angels used their freedom and opposed God, instead of loving and serving God. As a consequence of this, these angels were cast out of heaven and into hell.

*Call to mind* this act of rebellion and its consequences: imagine it. Then, *think about it*, considering that **for one single sin**, these angels condemned themselves to eternal separation from God. Then think about the many sins which you have committed. Finally, *allow your feelings to arise* about the fact that one sin doomed these angels and you have committed many sins.

Sin 2: The Sin of Adam and Eve

God placed Adam and Eve in a perfect environment. They talked to Him directly, ate food without working for it, lived at peace with each other and the animals. They were not doomed to die. Yet, Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, eating a fruit which they believed would make them like God. As a consequence of this disobedience and this pride, they were cast out of Eden: they were doomed to suffer pain and eventually to die. They started quarreling with each other and their former unity was broken. And these consequences were passed down to all their descendants.

*Call to mind* this **single act of rebellion** and its consequences; imagine it. Then, *think about it*, considering how, for one single sin, all these unpleasant consequences have come upon the human race. Consider if one sin could cause all these consequences, what must have been the consequences of all your sins? Finally, *allow your feelings to arise* about this.

Sin 3: Consider the situation of a person who has through his actions said a definite "No" to God's love and continued in this until death. Instead of using his/her freedom to love and serve God and to treat other people as as worthy as him/herself, s/he has chosen selfishness and therefore has *condemned him/herself* to the everlasting death of hell. Consider that you have many times turned your back on God's love and treated other people as mere means to serve your purposes.

*Call to mind* how much how much we owe God and what a terrible thing it is to reject God who is Life and Love. Then, *think about* how such a person who has rejected Infinite Goodness is justly condemned to eternal separation from Love. Then, think about where you might be if you had died sometime right after you had acted in a similar way. Finally, *allow your feelings to arise* about this.

#### 5. Colloquy:

Using your imagination, place yourself standing at the foot of Jesus on the Cross.

First, I consider how as God Eternal, the Second Person of the Trinity, he chose to become a human being and so accepted to live in poverty, to work to live and eventually to be betrayed by a friend, abandoned by other friends, be whipped, nailed to a cross and suffer unspeakable agonies...***and all this for me.***

I talk to Jesus, as a friend would talk to a friend, or as a child to a parent, asking help, asking for a favor, blaming oneself for a misdeed or asking advice. I listen to Jesus.

I look at myself and carefully ask myself each of these questions, letting the question sink deeply into me:

**What have I done in the past to respond to Jesus's love for me?**

**What am I doing now to respond to him?**

**What response should I make?**

As I look upon Jesus on the cross, I consider whatever God brings to my attention.

I allow my feelings to arise.

Conclude with an Our Father.

As usual, take some time to review what has happened during this prayer period. Then, write some notes in your journal. Do this for all of the five exercises as you do each one.

Week 1

Second Exercise

1. Enter into God's presence. Pray: "My Lord, please give me your help so that all my thoughts, intentions, words and actions will be directed solely towards loving and serving You."

2. **Grace: I ask for deep and intense sorrow for all my sins, even to the point of crying.**

3. Place: I imagine myself before a God who loves me, surrounded by all the wonderful things and people in life. But I am myself cut off from these, trapped inside a sort of glass bubble, helpless to get out. And this bubble is solely the result of my own sins, totally of my own making.

4.

First Point

For two or three minutes, I call to mind all the sins I have committed throughout my life, from my childhood to now. Then, I allow myself to feel the bad effects which I have caused to others because of my sins.

Second Point

I consider myself as one human being among 6 billion people. I feel my smallness and insignificance. I note how much evil, malice, nastiness and selfishness have come out of me. I see myself as like a disease carrier infecting others, as a sewer pouring into a crystal lake, as a bacteria rotting good food.

#### Third Point

I consider myself before God and contrast my sinful self with God. God is the source and sustainer of all life while I have been so often the cause of diminishing the life of others. God is all-powerful while I cannot seem to control even my own evil impulses. God knows everything while I often even refuse to know and own up to my own sins. God is totally just and fair while I am so often selfish and petty. God is love when I so often have been a source of discord and strife.

#### Fourth Point

I look at my parents and other caregivers who have loved me and cared for me selflessly even when I was not particularly lovable.

I look at all creation, the air I breathe, the water I drink, the food I eat, the beauty I see, all of which has sustained me in life.

I consider the angels who have watched over me, all the saints in heaven who pray for me, especially Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

AND I WONDER: *how is it that the very ground has not opened and swallowed me up because of all the evil that I have been the source of?*

### 5. Colloquy

I speak with God the Father, giving him thanks, wondering at his great mercy, that in spite of all the evil I have done, he still loves me passionately, showers his grace upon me and still gives me life. I beg God that he give me the help I need to reform my life.

### 6. Our Father...

Reflection and journal as usual.

## Week I

### Third Exercise

1. Enter into God's presence. Pray: "My Lord, please give me your help so that all my thoughts, intentions, words and actions will be directed solely towards loving and serving You."

2. **Grace: I ask for deep and intense sorrow for all my sins, even to the point of crying my eyes out.**

3. Place: I imagine myself in a dark place with a single candle burning five or six metres from me.

4. Here I do a repetition of the previous two exercises. I remember that the point of a repetition is to go back to those moments of *greatest intensity* and "pick more fruit" from that bush. I especially look to those moments when I received the grace I had been asking for: *intense sorrow, confusion and even tears over my sins*. It does not matter if I consider even only one of these. I move on only when I feel that I have plucked all the fruit available to me at this time.

## 5. Colloquy

(a) I imagine myself standing before Mary, the Mother of Jesus and Our Mother. I ask her to seek from Jesus, her Son and my Lord three gifts:

First, *a deep understanding* of how much evil I have caused during my life and a strong desire to cause no more.

Second, *a deep awareness* that I am mixed up, that I am somehow “out of order” because of my sins and sinful tendencies and that I have a desire to want to get healthy.

Third, that I might recognize those things in the world and even some of the people around me which are opposed to Jesus and that I might have a desire to detach myself from anything or anyone which would lead me away from Jesus.

(b) Then, taking Mary’s hand, I ask her to lead me to Jesus. In Jesus’s presence, I ask him to obtain these same three gifts for me from the Father. I say the prayer “Soul of Christ.”

(Below)

(c) Then, taking the hands of Mary and Jesus, I am led into the presence of the Father. There, I ask the Father for the three gifts.

Conclude by saying an Our Father. Then, reflection and journal as usual.

A Prayer Recommended During the First Week of the Exercises:

### THE PRAYER “SOUL OF CHRIST” (Anima Christi)

Jesus, may all that is you flow into me.  
May your body and blood be my food and drink.  
May your passion and death be my strength and life  
Jesus, with you by my side, enough has been given.  
May the shelter I seek be the shadow of your cross.  
Let me not run from the love you offer,  
But hold me safe from the forces of evil.  
On each of my dyings, shed your light and your love.  
Keep calling me until that day comes  
when, with your saints. I may praise you forever.  
(Fleming, p. 3)

First Week

Fourth Exercise

1. Enter into God’s presence. Pray: “My Lord, please give me your help so that all my thoughts, intentions, words and actions will be directed solely towards loving and serving You.”

**2. Grace: I ask for deep and intense sorrow for all my sins, even to the point of crying my**

**eyes out.**

3. Place: I imagine myself in a dark place with a single candle burning five or six metres from me.

4. Here I do a repetition of the previous three exercises. I remember that the point of a repetition is to go back to those moments of *greatest intensity* and “pick more fruit” from that bush. I especially look to those moments when I received the grace I had been asking for: *intense sorrow, confusion and even tears over my sins*. It does not matter if I consider even only one of these. I move on only when I feel that I have plucked all the fruit available to me at this time.

5. Colloquy

(a) I imagine myself standing before Mary, the Mother of Jesus and Our Mother. I ask her to seek from Jesus, her Son and my Lord three gifts:

First, *deep understanding* of how much evil I have caused during my life and a strong desire to cause no more.

Second, *a deep awareness* that I am mixed up, that I am somehow “out of order” because of my sins and sinful tendencies and that I have a desire to want to get healthy.

Third, that I might recognize those things in the world and even some of the people around me which are opposed to Jesus and a desire to detach myself from anything or anyone which would lead me away from Jesus.

(b) Then, taking Mary’s hand, I ask her to lead me to Jesus. In Jesus’s presence, I ask him to obtain these same three gifts for me from the Father. I say the prayer “Soul of Christ.”

(Below)

(c) Then, taking the hands of Mary and Jesus, I am led into the presence of the Father. There, I ask the Father for the three gifts.

Conclude by saying an Our Father. Then, reflection and journal as usual,.

THE PRAYER “SOUL OF CHRIST” (Anima Christi)

Jesus, may all that is you flow into me.

May your body and blood be my food and drink.

May your passion and death be my strength and life

Jesus, with you by my side, enough has been given.

May the shelter I seek be the shadow of your cross.

Let me not run from the love you offer,

But hold me safe from the forces of evil.

On each of my dyings, shed your light and your love.

Keep calling me until that day comes

when, with your saints. I may praise you forever.

(Fleming, p. 3)

Week 1

Exercise 5

Before you begin this exercise, go to ourcourse on the website and click on the link [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder\\_of\\_James\\_Bulger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_James_Bulger). Read this material. Then do the exercise below.

1. Enter into God's presence. Pray: "My Lord, please give me your help so that all my thoughts, intentions, words and actions will be directed solely towards loving and serving You."

2. Grace: I ask to experience in my imagination the anguish, isolation, hopelessness and remorse which is felt in Hell, so that even if for a moment I forget God's love for me, at least the fear of this fate would keep me from sin.

3. Place: Take a look at the two links on the SPHS website for this course under the section WEEK 1 on the murder of James Bulger. Consider how much evil, pain, anger, hatred and horror which has come into the lives of people touched by this frightening story. Then, imagine what a place would be like where ONLY this sort of event happened...all the time....**forever**.

4. Then, consider Hell:

(a) Imagine yourself on Judgement Day in a crowd facing Jesus from his left side. See him turn to you and say, "Depart from me, you accursed ones, to the place prepared for the Devil and his angels." And imagine yourself falling into Hell.

(b) Imagine yourself in a place where everyone is fighting everyone else, clawing to get food, stepping on people to get water, fighting about everything, all the time, *forever*.

(c) Imagine yourself in a place where all you hear is people crying and wailing...about how they suffer, how much they have been hurt by others, how much they are misunderstood...where none listens to the other but only whines about him/herself all the time, *forever*.

(d) Imagine yourself in a place where all you smell and taste is filthy, rank and rotten: garbage, polluted water, week-old diapers, rotted meat, foul outhouse.

(e) Imagine yourself in a place where everything is pointless and meaningless: people jabber wildly at each other; people spend their lives digging a hole then filling it up; people buy all sorts of things which then dissolve before their eyes, so they buy more & these dissolve; people seek to be noticed, to stand out...and nobody cares...and this goes on all the time, *forever*.

(f) Imagine yourself in a place where no one EVER touches another person: except to hurt or exploit that person.

(f) Imagine yourself participating in all this. What would you feel: what anger? what regret? what bitter anguish? what frustration? what loneliness?

5. Turn to Jesus Christ. Imagine him crowned with thorns standing before you. Feel wonder and amazement that, in spite of all the sins you have committed and all the evil which has spread because of you, he has allowed you to come, alive, to this very moment. *With amazement*, consider that he has continued to love you and forgive you even when you have hurt so many other people. With utter sincerity, ask the Lord Jesus to help you fear more than anything else to lose him and his love and to resolve never to do anything that would cause you to lose him.

6. End with an Our Father. Then, reflection and journal as usual.