

Religion 41G Called to Love, Called to Serve: The Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life  
COURSE OUTLINE 2010-11

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**The Nature of the Program**

St. Ignatius of Loyola, out of his personal experience, developed a method of prayer and a content for prayer suited to helping Christian people (1) to make important decisions and/or (2) to grow in depth of relationship with God. Broadly, the Exercises are organized around the history of salvation, that is, the time before the coming of Jesus, the life of Jesus, Jesus's passion and death, Jesus's resurrection and ascension and the time of the Holy Spirit in which we live today. The person making the Exercises (the retreatant) commits to regular prayer and to regular meeting with someone experienced in the Exercises, called the director, who guides and assists the retreatant.

Each retreatant commits to a regular daily period of prayer while he is making the Exercises. During this prayer period, the retreatant prays according to the instructions given to him by his director. Typically, the prayer period would be about 45 minutes. It could be any time during the day when the retreatant can set aside the time and can have a quiet place free from distractions.

**The Student's Commitment**

Once every cycle, the retreatant will meet with his director. During this meeting, the retreatant will tell his director about his prayer experiences and the director will offer guidance and suggestions.

In choosing this program, you will be making a commitment (1) to pray every day (2) to meet regularly with your director (about once per cycle) (3) to follow the Exercises as your director asks you to do so. (4) to be open and honest with your director. The director commits to giving the retreatant the same confidentiality as a student gets from his counsellor.

**The Goals of the Exercises**

The Exercises serve a number of purposes. (1) They help the retreatant to know who he is and to become a more fully integrated person. (2) They provide a framework for sorting out conflicting values and desires. (3) They are designed to help the retreatant make major decisions. (4) Most importantly, they offer the opportunity to deepen one's relationship with God through learning to know Jesus more fully, love him more completely and follow him more closely.

**Important Dates**

September 13 to October 1: We will be developing some skills you will need to do the Exercises well. This will be done in the Chapel during the regular religion periods on Day 5 Period 4: Sep. 13, 21 and 29.

**Oct. 7 Group Meeting**

Oct. 2-Oct. 12: Each student will start working with individually with his director. This time period is given over to what St. Ignatius called "Disposition."

**Nov 3 Group Meetings**

**Dec. 8 Group Meeting**

**Jan. 17 Group Meeting**

**Feb. 10 Group Meeting**

**Mar. 25 Group Meeting**

**Apr. 25 Day 6 Per. 4 Group Meeting**

**May 16 Evaluation**

**May 25 Final Mass**

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 Called to Love–Called to Serve: The Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life  
 2010-11

**Student Evaluation**

The purpose of the Spiritual Exercises is to facilitate the retreatant’s growth in knowing, loving and serving Christ and thereby allowing him to more closely conform his life to the Father’s will for him by attending and responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Since this program is a school course for credit, the student must be given a grade. In Manitoba, students are graded based upon their demonstrated mastery of knowledge and skills. While the student will have the chance to acquire certain demonstrable cognitive knowledge and skills, much of what will happen to the faithful student is interior, affective, attitudinal, and personal, all of which are not readily amenable to objective verification by the teacher/director. Yet, since it is assumed that the student/retreatant will be honest about his experience, it is possible to obtain outcomes verified by the student himself. Frequently, though not always, the instructor will be able to see fruits which will tend either to confirm or deny the student’s reported outcomes.

In this course, the approach to evaluation is divergent: a number of measures are taken of various indicators. Some measures are taken by the instructor (I) , some by the student (S).

**Please note that faithful attendance to meetings–group meetings and meetings with spiritual directors– is mandatory. If for some serious reason the student cannot attend a meeting, the student must get in touch with the director in person, by phone or by e-mail–to make alternate arrangements.**

Area/Evaluator	Criteria	Value
Journal (I)	completeness, regularity, conformity to method	10
Prayer Time (S)	faithfulness to daily prayer periods	20
Meetings (I)	faithfulness to regular meetings	25
Essay (I)	a term paper based upon demonstrable cognitive knowledge about the Spiritual Exercises	15
Subjective Evaluation (S)	co-operation with God, personal openness, courage	15
Subjective Evaluation (I)	evidence of: application, generosity, openness, fruitfulness of Exercises	15

**A BRIEF AWARENESS EXERCISE**

Ignatius has a five step process. I will follow his steps and attempt to bring forth the connection with our experience of the universal community of life. First, Ignatius begins with gratitude, as he does all prayer. Second, a special prayer to the Holy Spirit for light. Third, the activity of awareness. Fourth, an appreciation of what has been given. Fifth, a resolve for the future.

### **1. GRATITUDE,**

Normally, I begin by placing myself in the presence of God. I try to become aware of God **beholding** me, as their beloved In this approach to life I realize that I experience the love of God as inclusive in the development of the universal community of life. I enter into this great mystery of my existence with all the other creatures of the universe and I thank God for including me in their great evolving love that brought about the universe.

### **2. PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR LIGHT**

At this moment I ask for what I seek and desire. With the Spirit leading me, I try to get in touch with what has been happening in and through me today. I ask the Spirit for an **interior** knowledge of God's presence coming to me today through the various aspects of the universal community of life, that is, through ordinary material things, the animate beings, through other human being.

### **3. ACTIVITY OF AWARENESS**

I go through my day looking for occasions of this presence of God in all things and in my interior life. I also look for occasions of my lack of response to this presence.

- where have I experienced the creative, sustaining activity of God in the material events of my day from the time of rising until now?
- what material things have caused joy or frustration in my being today?
- what various personal energies have dominated my mind and heart today?
- experiences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work.
- experiences of interpersonal relationship with others, whether of love or rejection.
- where have been inattentive to the sense of oneness, beauty, truth, and goodies of the rest of creation?
- where have I failed to respond to the cry of plants, animals and humans today?
- where do I experience regret about this day.
- for what am I most grateful to God in this day.
- as I contemplate my day in communion with the rest of creation what experiences of intimacy with God, whether of consolation or of desolation, were given to me.

### **4. APPRECIATION OF THE DAY**

With my new awareness I have a dialogue with God

- I speak to God seeking understanding and meaning of these experiences as well as the ability to recognize God's constant companionship with myself in the universal community of life.
- I make further responses to God of gratitude or sorrow.

### **5. RESOLVE FOR THE FUTURE**

In the final step I look toward the future.

- I recall the great hymn to Jesus Christ as Creator in Colossians, "The Father ... has transferred us to the kingdom of the Son that he loves .... He is the image of the unseen God the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and one earth." (Col 1:12-16) I make sentiments of awe and amazement that I am part of the universal community of life brought into existence in and through Jesus Christ.
- I ask, "What return can I make for all God's goodness to me?" (Ps 116:12) I ask for what I need as I continue my journey.

- I close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

### **COMPRESSED:**

## 1. Act of Presence and Gratitude to God

I begin by placing myself in the presence of God. I try to become aware of God **beholding** me, as their beloved ... (Pause) I thank God for my being and for God's constant presence with me.

## 2. I Ask For What I Seek and Desire

With the Spirit leading me, I try to get in touch with what has been happening in and through me today. I ask the Spirit for an **interior** knowledge of God's presence to me today. (Pause)

## 3. Awareness

I go through my day.

- events from time of rising until now.
- what has been dominating my mind and heart today?
- experiences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work.
- experiences of interpersonal relationship with others, whether of love or rejection.
- for what am I most grateful to God about in this day.
- where do I experience regret about this day.
- interior experiences took place of intimacy with God, of consolation or of desolation.

## 4. Dialogue with God

With My New Awareness

- I speak to God seeking understanding and meaning of these experiences as well as the ability to recognize God's constant companionship with me.
- I make further responses to God of gratitude or sorrow.

## 5. Looking Toward the Future

"What return can I make for all God's goodness to me?" (Ps 116:12) I ask for what I need as I continue my journey.

I close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

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**Learning to Pray**

See handout "Outline of Prayer Exercise"

“It is good to remember that we are always in the context of prayer...We should always try to maintain a deep reverence before God....” (*Spiritual Exercises* 3)

It is recommended that you spend 15 or 20 minutes each day, not including the Disposition time. But be certain to decide how much time you will spend and then stick to it! If you are tempted to shorten your prayer period, *lengthen* it by two minutes!

DESIRE (GRACE SOUGHT): To become more attentive to God’s presence and action in my daily life.

Sep. 13	Isaiah 55: 1-13
Sep. 14	Jeremiah 29:11-14
Sep. 15	Luke 19: 1-10
Sep. 16	1 Corinthians 1: 4-9
Sep. 17	1 Samuel 3: 1-11
Sep. 18	1 Kings 19: 4-12
Sep. 19	Sundays are for communal worship and family
Sep. 20	Psalms 37: 7
Sep. 21	Psalms 23: 1-4

#### AIDS TO DISCERNMENT

You may have trouble deciding what to write in your journal. Probably the most important thing to note are the changes which occur in you while you pray. When you do your reflection after your prayer period, notice the changes in thought, feeling and mood which occur in you.

“We [need to be] aware...of our temptations and fears, the consolations and lights given to us by God, and the various movements that happen within us.” (*Spiritual Exercises*, 17)

#### QUESTIONS

These questions might be worth pondering. Your responses could provide material for your journal.

As I begin to pray, what desires and hopes do I notice rising in me?

What do I hope for as a result of doing this retreat program?

What people, places, events and experiences in my life have been special instruments of grace in leading me to desire a more intimate relationship with God?

Have I noticed any stumbling blocks that prevent my attentiveness to God’s place in my life journey? Perhaps a character trait, a desire, an attitude, a friend, or a circumstance in your life.

Adapted from *Moment by Moment*, Carol Ann Smith SHCJ and Eugene F. Metz, SJ. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1993. Pp.16-17

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Learning to Pray:

Desire (Grace Sought): To be more open to the word which God speaks in my daily life

“At each stage of the retreat, we need to work as if our whole response to God is found in the

material at hand.” (*Spiritual Exercises* 11)

(Use these until the day you first meet with your individual director.)

Sep. 22 Psalm 95: 7-8  
Sep. 23 Revelation 3: 20  
Sep. 24 Luke 8: 4-15  
Sep. 25 Repetition  
Sep. 26 Sundays are for communal worship and family  
Sep. 27 Hebrews 4: 12-13  
Sep. 28 Deuteronomy 30: 11-40  
Sep. 29 Repetition  
Sep. 30 Psalm 62  
Oct. 1 Psalm 46:10 and Psalm 63:1

#### AIDS TO DISCERNMENT

Take a look at how you listen to other people. How do you listen to your dad... if he's on your back...if you want something from him....if you're in a real jam and need help? How do you listen to people... you are angry with?...you are good friends with?...you love? When you're arguing with someone, do you really try to hear the other's point of view?...or, when the person is speaking, are you just preparing your counter-arguments? Usually, the way we listen to other people mirrors the way we listen to God.

“For a good relationship to develop...and for the greater progress of the retreat, a mutual respect is very necessary [between the retreatant and director]...Every good Christian adopts a positive acceptance of someone's statement rather than rejecting it out of hand. And a favorable interpretation should always be given to the other's statement.” (*Spiritual Exercises*, 22)

#### QUESTIONS

What happens to me when I listen attentively to others?

What helps me notice the presence and action of God all around me?

When I do the relaxation exercises, what does the miracle of my existence say about God's love for me?

Adapted from *Moment by Moment*, Carol Ann Smith SHCJ and Eugene F. Metz, SJ. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1993. Pp. 18-19

From October 21 to October 8, students will begin meeting with their individual directors. Use the following passages until you meet with your director who will start you on new material.

Oct. 2 Repetition  
Oct. 3 Sundays are for communal worship and family  
Oct. 4 John 4: 1-30  
Oct. 5 Repetition  
Oct. 6 Isaiah 55:2-3  
Oct. 7 Repetition  
Oct. 8 Hosea 6: 1-6  
Oct. 9 Repetition

Oct. 10Sundays are for communal worship and family  
Oct. 11Jn 2: 13-22  
Oct. 12Mat. 5: 13-16

#### AIDS TO DISCERNMENT

As you deepen your awareness of your own desire and need for God, what do you notice happens to your faith and hope? How does this affect your relationship with others?

“[Spiritual consolation may be defined as moments]...when we find our life of faith, hope and love so strengthened and emboldened that the joy of serving God is foremost in our life. More simply said, consolation can be identified with any increase of our faith, hope and love .”  
(*Spiritual Exercises*, 316c)

#### QUESTIONS

What does my longing for God reveal to me about the core of my being?  
What do I notice about myself and my thirst for God when I take time to “be still” and listen?  
Have I had the experiences of: not wanting to pray...of finding prayer tedious...of not getting anything out of prayer? How do I respond in faith to these experiences?  
How has my hunger for God’s presence been made known to me?

Adapted from *Moment by Moment*, Carol Ann Smith SHCJ and Eugene F. Metz, SJ. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1993. Pp. 20-21

### OUTLINE OF EACH PRAYER EXERCISE

#### **Disposition for Prayer**

Enter into the place of prayer reverently and quietly. Take some time to relax, to suspend the day’s cares and worries.

**Preparatory Prayer:**

In each prayer period begin with an acknowledgement that one is in the Trinity's presence. Then simple prayer of offering all the actions of your mind, heart and body of this time or prayer to the glory and service of God.

**Compose yourself for prayer:**

This is an imaginative effort to put oneself into the situation suggested by the grace needed and the scriptural or other context for prayer.

**Grace (The Desire of My heart):**

Depending on the purpose and context of the prayer materials I ask for what I deeply want and desire from God.

**Points (*Ways of disposing oneself for the grace sought*):**

This is the material from scripture or from our life experience with which we meditate or contemplate in order to obtain the grace we desire.

**Dialogue with one or all the Persons of the Trinity:**

During the prayer but especially at the end of a prayer period it is important to speak with the persons of the Trinity. Here are Ignatius' words: "The [dialogue] is made by speaking exactly as friends speak to one another, or as servants speak to the ones over them, [or, perhaps, as a student speaking with a favorite teacher!] now asking for a favour, now blaming themselves for some misdeed, now making known their affairs and seeking advice about them" (*Sp Exx* [54]).

A very common pattern is to speak first to Jesus, then in his company ask the Holy Spirit for help and strength and then go before the Father.

**The Lord's Prayer:**

End each prayer period with the prayer Jesus taught us, i.e., the Our Father..

**Review of Prayer:**

After each prayer period look back over the experience of prayer to see how it went with you. (See the notes on the Review of Prayer.)

**PRAYING FOR A GRACE**

Another word for **grace** is gift. In the spiritual life the basic gift we are praying for is the gift of deep relationship with the Holy Trinity, a sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

We pray for a grace, the desire of our heart, because we have not got what we want and desire and we realize that we cannot achieve it by our own effort.

Someone has said the longest journey in this world is that from the head to the heart. Our intellect may tell us about our faith and what we want but the deep-felt believe, knowledge and conviction of our faith may not be present. And so we pray to the God who can give this to us.

Another reason we need to pray for a grace is because God wishes us to truly desire what only what God can give you.

**REVIEW OF PRAYER**

After the formal prayer period is over I should change my position and place from that of my prayer and do a *Review of Prayer* over what happened during that time. This review helps

me reflect upon interior movements of consolation, desolation, fear, anxiety, boredom, and so on—perhaps even something about my distractions, especially if they were deep or disturbing. *It helps me notice my interior experiences rather than my ideas.* Did I receive the grace I sought, e.g., shame and confusion, sorrow and tears for sin? The prayer may be distressing or satisfying, dismal or inviting, probing or insightful. Whatever it is, I may wish to return to gain more knowledge of myself or of God's love for me. Thus, it enables me to be spontaneous during the actual prayer time and to go with the flow of experience. If I were to monitor myself during the period of prayer, I would be interfering with the God's communication. I let happen what is happening during the prayer time; afterwards I look back on my prayer to see what God is saying to me in all this.

Questions like the following may help:

- What went on during the period of prayer?
- What impressed me?
- How did I feel about what went on?
- What was my mood, changes in mood?
- What did the prayer show me?
- Is there some point I should return to in my next prayer?
- If I was distracted, what was the distraction?
- I thank God for favours granted and ask pardon for my own negligence.

It is helpful during this review to jot down a few reflections that strike me so that I can more easily prepare for my next period of prayer. From this review you can learn what is important for you through the day and for the next prayer period. God may be inviting me to go back to a point where I was moved. St. Ignatius says, "I should remain quietly meditating upon a point *until* I have been satisfied," i.e., until the movement has been completed (the insight completed; the struggle resolved; the consolation ended; the meaningfulness finished, etc., for now). Jotting down my reflections during the review may also assist me at the weekly sharing.

## SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

A spiritual journal is a form of record. It is a way of **recording spiritual experiences of one's day**. The spiritual experiences can occur at the time of formal prayer or at any other time during the day and in any situation. Any bound book of blank paper may be used.

A simple way to keep such a journal is to use one or both of two spiritual awareness exercises: the *Daily Awareness Exercise* and the *Review of Prayer*. At this point in the retreat jot down a brief account of the *Review of Prayer* and a few notes about your *Awareness Exercise* for your journal..

Also you may record experiences of the presence of God you may have had with a companion, family, friend or while working or driving home. You may record experiences of dryness or joy or special insights given to you about Jesus or yourself in prayer. Sometimes you may have experienced anguish over a decision or action. Perhaps you have been seriously tempted to do something wrong. Notes about experiences of this sort make up the spiritual journal.

As you grow in awareness of the interior life, you will find more and more experiences to write. Then choose the more significant ones and write them briefly by means of a word, a phrase, or a sentence.

**The Spiritual Journal is decidedly NOT a diary.** Recording every detail, every nuance of feeling is not the idea. Rather, **you are invited to discern what have been the most significant experiences you have had and, objectively, to write a little about them. This writing is primarily an aid to memory and a way of appropriating the experiences. You are writing for YOU, not for an audience.**

Your journal is yours. However, your director will need to see it from time to time in order to give a mark for it. The director will NOT be reading it in detail. Rather s/he will be looking for evidence that in keeping the journal you have met the evaluation criteria, i.e., “completeness, regularity, conformity to method.” You will always be free to keep absolutely to yourself anything you write in your journal. When the time comes to show your journal to your director, you can cover sections with a paper cover, place a post-it note over anything confidential or simply write “CONFIDENTIAL” beside anything you wish to keep completely to yourself.

## **IMAGES OF GOD**

Our images of God are important because they express the personality of God to us and how we sense God relates to each one of us, humanity and the universe. As there is a development of doctrine (expressions of our faith in the mystery of God) so there can be a development of our images of God.

### **OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE IMAGES OF GOD**

#### **Objective, impersonal images of God:**

The images that we have of God determine a large amount of our spiritual life. It is easy for us to image God as one who relates to us impersonally as objects and on our side, we do the same. In this case there are many inappropriate images of God. Among these are: God as a magician, as business person, as demanding law giver, as vengeful police person or judge, as puppeteer, as Santa Claus, etc. With these images we tend to take on a contract arrangement with God, somewhat as the pharisees did. We miss the covenant relationship with God. We can see God as a punisher for sins or a rewarder of good acts. We miss that sin carries its own punishment and good acts their own reward. God does not perform a separate act of punishment and reward.

#### **Subjective, personal images of God:**

These images flow basically from the teachings of Jesus. The basic image that Jesus presents is that of a loving, compassionate, kind and forgiving Father (Lk 6:...). Jesus sees the Father as the initiator of good, the loving creator, the one who is free and constantly calling us to take responsibility for our lives. In this instance responsibility indicates that we are to respond to the love of the Father calling us into the future. Jesus also tells us about the three person in God, the Trinity.

Jesus himself is the image of the invisible God. He gives us countervailing images of God that we might otherwise not know. Among these are weakness versus power, vulnerability versus strength, companion with humans rather than superior to them. Thus it is that we become

co-creators with the Father and co-redeemers with Jesus. In the interpersonal relationship we have with the Trinity we are instruments of the Father's love, justice and peace for our world. There is also the resurrection of Jesus that tells us about the Trinity's desire that we are to be with them forever. Our own resurrection tells us of the potential of our future life with the Trinity.

### **Implications of image of God as a community of persons, the Trinity:**

The teaching of Jesus that he is part of a trinity of persons is an image of God that implies many things for us. An obvious one is that of community. In itself the Trinity is an expression of love that is communal. This calls us to realize that our relationship to God is not a one-to-one affair. We are to approach our spiritual and whole life as communal. We see this in the life of Jesus who was open and loving to everyone and constantly calling them to a sense of community.

### **Reflection:**

It might be helpful for you to reflect on your own present basic image of God. You might consider how this image developed in you through your childhood, adolescence and adult years. What is the basis for your belief in the your present image of God? How are you "exercising" concerning the interior acceptance of this image, e.g., concerning sin and judgement, or your call to responsibility for our world.

## **Consolation and Desolation**

These are movements of our spirits. They are like emotions except that they are not based in the body but rather in the soul.

"These Ignatian terms need explanation. In the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, the terms are used in a nuanced way. Those who delight in selfishness experience consolation when they get the opportunity to live selfishly. But those who are trying to be free from their selfishness experience desolation as they struggle against those habits that give pleasure but are not liberating. The terms are used this way for people oriented towards their own interests. They are used differently, however, for those people whose orientation is away from selfishness and towards any form of self-transcendence, such as care for others and the betterment of the community. One experiences consolation when one moves to the good, but desolation when one rejects the greater good. Consolation and desolation are not feelings. They are indicators of the direction in which we are pointed based on our underlying attitude. If we are basically selfish, looking at the greater good causes desolation; if we are basically caring, then looking at the greater good causes consolation. "

*(Finding God in the Dark: Taking the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius to the Movies, John Pungente, SJ and Monty Williams SJ, Toronto: Novalis, 2004, p. 17)*

As the opening quotation suggests, the experience of consolation and desolation are signposts to the person's basic orientation in life: is s/he basically self-centred or is s/he basically other-oriented

Because we humans are weak creatures and especially because we are both spirit and matter, we often have trouble with confusing our physical sensations with our spiritual

sensations. Especially as we are new to the spiritual life and desire to become other-oriented rather than self-centred, we can experience godly things as desolation sometimes and as consolation other times. As we grow in depth of relationship with God and in knowing, loving and serving Christ, we find our consolation in godly things and are desolate when we sin.

## **SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION IN SMALL GROUPS**

### **Context:**

"Those who feared God spoke with one another, and God listened attentively". (Malachi 3:16).

This conversation is deeply rooted in faith - humble, poor, open, and willing to learn or to teach, to forgive and to be forgiven, to be loved and to love.

### **Some Reminders:**

1. The major activity of any small group sharing is grateful listening.
2. Every person is an expert on his/her own experience.
3. Participation in a small group is not a communal performance. Share what you can, not what you can't. Listening is an important form of participation.
4. Describe your experience, views, concerns, questions, etc., in a brief, clear, manner.
5. This is not the place to homilize, moralize, monopolize, for extended discussions, solving problems, rescuing, deciding, debating, interfering with another's contribution.

### **Brief Reflection:**

- What happened to me as I prayed?
- As I look over my prayer, where and how did I experience God's presence most deeply?
- What feelings does this arouse in me?
- What will I share and how will I express myself briefly?

### **Share:**

Share by going around the group expressing and listening to each other.

### **Second Round of Sharing**

After the persons in the group have gone around and shared the experience of the results of their prayer it is helpful for those sharing and for a sense of community that a second round of sharing take place. After a few moments of reflecting on the following questions share briefly:

1. Where did I experience affective union and concurrence with the others as they shared?
2. What new insights was I given about myself and the group?

## REPETITION

Repetition is an important aspect in prayer life. It is important to know what *Repetition* means and what it does not mean.

### Repetition does NOT mean:

1. the repeating of the prayer material as one repeats a study assignment for more thorough understanding.
2. a return to the same matter for prayer in order to dig for something new or different.
3. a return to all the material of the last prayer period.

### Repetition means:

that I return to those points where I have experienced "greater consolation, desolation or great spiritual appreciation" (*Sp.Exx.* #62). Another way of looking at this is returning to those points which have most affected me emotionally. Hence, I use the discoveries I made in the *Review of Prayer* to assist me in focussing on the experiences of greater consolation or desolation. This allows me to enter more deeply into the Trinity's revelations to me.

### Some Examples:

1. I have prayed over the scripture account of the Last Supper. In my review I notice that I have spent much time absorbed in the adoration of the sacrament; I also notice that I had a struggle reflecting upon the persons present at the Last Supper. In the following prayer period I return to both the Real Presence and to the various persons present.
2. I have used my imagination in praying over the Baptism at the Jordan. In my review after the period of prayer I notice that I was with Jesus but his back was to me and I had a feeling of sadness. So in the next period of prayer I return to the place where Jesus was turned away from me and where the experience of sadness occurred.
3. I have prayed over the hidden life of Jesus. In the review I notice that I could not get settled; that I was filled with distractions and anxiousness. So in the next period of prayer I return to the same material.
4. I have prayed over my sin history requesting from the Trinity a deeper awareness of the effects of sin on my life. I received some of this. In my review I have a sense that the

Trinity desires to show me more. So I return to the experiences of insights on the effects of my sin..

### **The reasons for making repetitions:**

1. *Repetition allows spiritual movements to develop:* This facilitates discernment of interior movements, one of the goals of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Scampering from one scripture passage to another even within the same theme tends to cut off such interior movements.
2. *Repetition is a help to notice interior movements:* Since many of our interior reactions at prayer happen without our noticing them, repetition gives the time for the interior reaction to be experienced more deeply.
3. *Repetition is the way we can respect the Trinity's communication:* Just because a prayer period has ended, we should not suppose that God has nothing more to say to us through the particular passage we have been using. Repetition respects God's communication and so we keep returning to the experiences of consolation or desolation until we sense that God wants us to move on.
4. *Repetition may be the occasion for desolation to become consolation:* As stated above, one moment for repetition is an experience of struggle, distraction, discomfort, ennui. Often these latter experiences indicate that the Trinity is trying to communicate with us at a deeper level and we are resisting God's approach. When we return to those points which were experienced 'negatively' we often discover that the Trinity overcomes our barriers and then desolation gives way to consolation; darkness to light; struggle to surrender.
5. *Finally, repetition helps one to experience the Trinity's mystery more deeply:* When Ignatius writes: "I will remain quietly meditating upon the point in which I have found what I desire without any eagerness to go on till I have been satisfied," he means not only **within** the one period of prayer, but also **over** several periods of prayer, and even days of prayer. Through repetition we allow the Trinity's mystery to touch our mystery at deeper levels of our being. Often, through repetition a kind of simplification of our own activity takes place as we become more and more passively receptive to the Trinity's activity. Often, what starts off as meditation, through the use of repetition, subsequently becomes contemplation and stillness.

### **PRAYER AS DIVINE READING OF SACRED SCRIPTURE**

1. Determine the matter you wish to pray about from Scripture or St Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises or another sources. Read through the materials sometime before actually beginning the prayer period.
2. Choose a place where you will be undisturbed and able to be attentive to God. Realizing that harmony of body and spirit is important, take a peaceful, relaxed meaningful position and proceed, now kneeling, now sitting, now standing whatever is helpful at the time.
3. Spend a few moments quieting yourself. Bring yourself into the presence of the Trinity

- through a short prayer or gesture of recognition or humility (e.g., genuflection, bow, kneel). Focus on that which you are seeking from the Trinity and pray for that grace.
4. Begin to work slowly through the materials you are considering. Do not be anxious to cover everything. Reread phrases. Repeat the grace to yourself. Try not to think or figure things out *on your own*, but let the Spirit pray through you (Rm 8:26-27). Pause, ponder and savour wherever you feel drawn or moved by the Trinity as Mary did. Respond from your heart. The intellect has little role here: you are not trying to understand but rather to feel or taste.
  5. Close the time of prayer by speaking to one or all of the Persons of the Trinity, Our Lady or a Saint as you are moved. End with the prayer Jesus taught us, i.e., the *Our Father*..
  6. Sometime in the day recall your prayer period and what you were given. Consider: "How will I bring the fruit of this prayer into my day and to my next prayer period?"