

Retreat in Daily Life

by

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**A Research Project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
Spiritual Directors' Training Programme of Spiritual Growth Ministries**

Introduction

My interest in Retreat in Daily Life has evolved over the years as a participant at various times in my spiritual walk and in my training as a spiritual director. I have noticed my own as well as my directees' individual hunger to learn to pray, read the scriptures, draw closer to God, and to know ourselves better within the demands of a busy life. There is an expectation to be able to attend to work, relationships, family responsibilities, community, health, and environment issues without losing the plot. However, reality tells us that in our harried pace to keep up with the rest of the world, we become lost, get entangled in the mess and don't know how to get out of it.

There is a hunger to find "the way out" of a messy, confusing and noisy world. A greater longing to make connections with God, or make meaning out of one's life after being disconnected from our 'source of life.'¹ This study is an attempt to explore one adaptation of Retreat in Daily Life, and how it can help people integrate their spirituality in their own life context. Retreat in Daily Life is one of the many ways that one can connect with God and make meaning of one's life. Data will be collated from books, websites, interviews (see questionnaire: Appendix A), and this writer's experience. This essay explains one adaptation of Retreat in Daily Life including the process, how to participate in a Retreat in Daily Life, what to pay attention to, the daily spiritual direction, role of scripture, importance of Retreat in Daily Life, benefits to both facilitator and directee, and the inter-relation of Retreat in Daily Life with Spiritual Direction.

Overview of Retreat in Daily Life

Every moment of our lives is filled by the loving and gracious presence of God, but we miss out on these "God moments" due to our busyness and lack of awareness that they exist. We fail to notice because we don't know how God aches over our preoccupation and remoteness and constantly invites each one of us to come home to His heart; a heart deeply yearning for intimacy with us.² One of the ways to notice God's invitation is by way of retreat. A retreat is a place or time for prayer to encounter God.

Retreat in Daily Life is one of many retreats which facilitates this time and place of encounter.³ Retreat in Daily Life or RDL is 'a week of personally guided prayer done in the directee's (the person being directed) life context.'⁴ The RDL is an adaptation of "the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola," a sixteenth century text containing a compilation of various prayers, based on his life experience to help men and women

¹ Jeannette Bakke. *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction* (Kindle version), location 135, retrieved from <http://www.Amazon.com>

² Richard Foster. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (London: Hodder & Stroughton Ltd, 1992), p. 1-2

³ www.cenacle.org.nz/

⁴ spiritual director 2. Interview by author. Tape recording. Waikanae October 11, 2012.

deepen their faith journey in the midst of their work and family life.⁵ The directee with the support of a spiritual director/guide for the week is accompanied through the process of prayer-reflection-sharing in a non-judgmental and impartial spiritual direction session.⁶ The structure of the RDL is such that RDL gives the directee the opportunity to pray over issues or events in an in-depth manner. Directees receive from their spiritual director suggestions for prayer, how to go deeper in prayer, and what to focus on and disregard during the week.⁷ As it is scripture based, RDL aims to bring the Gospels to life when integrated into ones daily life.⁸

How to make a Retreat in Daily Life

In this paper, I describe the retreats offered by the Wellington Catholic Archdiocese. Other groups such as SGM teams also offer RDL. The retreats are promoted by way of invitation on a yearly basis. Once an invitation is accepted, flyers are given out near the date as speakers who have done the retreat promote the RDL at church services. Depending on the number of participants, a team of about 4-5 trained spiritual directors/guides gives the retreats in the parish for a week.⁹ RDL is also offered in schools and to couples as per invitation.

The retreat commences on a Sunday evening with a group opening orientation session. In this session, everyone starts with a guided prayer experience (Ignatian contemplation) using the same scripture story. A description and sample of this is found in the Appendix B. As directees come with either some prior or no experience praying with scriptures, handouts on tips for prayer (See Appendix C), other prayers (Appendix D), and opening and closing sessions are given (Appendix E). During the evening, spiritual directors talk briefly on the method of praying with scripture, as well as who Ignatius was, and how he started the exercises.¹⁰

For the succeeding days, Monday through Friday, each directee commits to a half hour of prayer daily and another half hour to talk with a spiritual director/guide.¹¹ If a directee is new to RDL, at the beginning of the week, the spiritual director/guide briefly discusses the importance of reflection, review of prayer, and documenting the prayer experience through journaling, painting, or bringing an object that speaks for them (in NZ culture, people are not used to talking about their feelings). In addition, the topics of

⁵ David L. Fleming, *A Contemporary Reading of the Spiritual Exercises: A Companion to St. Ignatius' Text* (St.Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1980),p. ix Retreat in Daily Life or RDL in this essay is also referred to as "At Home Retreats" or "Nineteenth Annotation Retreats (Spiritual Exercises, [19])"

⁶ spiritual director 1. Interview by author. Tape recording. Paraparaumu. August 20, 2012

⁷ directee 1. 22 August 2012, interview. Raumati.

⁸ Carol Ann Smith ,SHCJ & Eugene E. Merz, SJ. *Moment by Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life* (Indiana: Ave Maria Press), 2000

⁹ spiritual director 1. Interview by author. Tape recording. Paraparaumu. August 20, 2012.

¹⁰ spiritual director 2. Interview by author. Tape recording. Waikanae. October 11, 2012.

¹¹ spiritual director 1. Interview by author. Tape recording. Paraparaumu. August 20, 2012.

discernment and awareness exercise are explained.¹² These topics will be explained further in the next section including why they are important. The retreat ends with a group closing session on a Friday evening. In this session, participants share what fruits they have gained from the retreat.

What do we discuss in the daily meeting?

At the orientation night, each participant is asked “what is your desire?” “what is it that brought you here?” It is important to begin working where the person is. This will give the directee a good start in the retreat. For each day of the retreat, the directee is offered a scripture or something similar (e.g. poem, praying with creation, meditating on a word/words), which the directee takes with them to meditate on during their next prayer period.¹³ However, the directee is encouraged to freely choose for his/her prayer material from previous days, and not be limited by what was suggested for that day. Opening up the breadth of choice for the directee allows for the Spirit’s movement while providing the spiritual director greater insight into the directee’s spiritual life.¹⁴

During the daily meeting, the focus is on the directee’s sharing of what happened in their prayer and how this connected to their daily life context.¹⁵ At this meeting, spiritual directors listen, support and encourage their directees as they both listen for the presence and movement of God’s Spirit in the directee’s life. Spiritual direction processes often influence the directee’s point of view, as the spiritual director at times will ask questions that will encourage exploration of a particular scripture, issue, or way of praying.¹⁶ Directee 1 confirms this in her spiritual direction experience during RDL where her guide says, “I heard you say such and such, it would be helpful for you to dwell on that thing.”¹⁷ Directee 1 believes that the role of the SD/guide “is to listen and discern with you, where you are at, and what you should be looking for.”¹⁸

Ways in which Spiritual direction relates with RDL

Spiritual direction is at the heart of Retreat in Daily Life as it facilitates an encounter with God and deeper companionship through prayer. Spiritual direction and RDL interrelate to each other. As spiritual directors, we offer the gift and space of hospitality to the weary, lost and vulnerable traveller (directee) desiring of our gifts of listening, presence, humility, and love. We act as channels of the Holy Spirit’s (the true spiritual director) wisdom and action to intervene in their lives.¹⁹ Through spiritual direction, a

¹² spiritual director 2. Interview by author. Tape recording. Waikanae. October 11, 2012.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Phelim McGowan, SJ., and Louis Taylor, *Fitness for Life: The Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life* (Wimbledon: Sacred Heart Parish, 1990), p.1

¹⁵ www.cenacle.org.nz

¹⁶ Jeannette Bakke. *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction* (Kindle version), location 112, retrieved from <http://www.Amazon.com>

¹⁷ directee 1. Interview by author. Tape recording. Paraparaumu. August 22, 2012.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Phelim McGowan, SJ., and Louis Taylor, *Fitness for Life: The Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life* (Wimbledon: Sacred Heart Parish, 1990), p.1

director helps the directee by showing him/her ways of praying, use of scripture and other sources that will deepen ones sense of God.²⁰ Directee 2 shares that her spiritual direction journey was “initially scary, as in our culture we often avoid ourselves, and each other. It is a huge journey to learn the skills in SD, but takes a lot of vulnerability and trust in order to grow in knowing oneself and God.”²¹ Spiritual direction and RDL are complementary, both contributing to the growth of one who is desirous of encountering God.²²

The role of scripture in our Christian growth

Scripture is at the heart of Retreat in daily life as it aims to reveal the transforming power of the Gospels particularly when integrated into daily life. By opening ourselves to God’s word, we come to know God deeper and hopefully into a conversion of heart so that we may follow Christ with greater love, hope, and freedom.²³ Bakke notes that praying with scripture moves a directee from a place of self-centeredness to a place of new insight into who God really is and how God thinks/feels about them.²⁴ Directee 1 shares that “It is always a journey towards God, whether we have been at different points at different times, and that scripture speaks to us differently each time even if we have read it and reflected on it before.”²⁵

As people read and meditate on the scriptures, they build on an awareness that God is relational, concerned with our individual needs and is after our salvation and redemption. Spiritual directors note that people usually come to RDL with their set ways of interacting with scriptures.²⁶ And so, during spiritual direction, prayer guides introduce different ways of praying scripture to open directees to varied experiences that will facilitate their growth in praying with scripture. Some ways to pray with scripture are:

1. *lectio divina* – “divine studying” by reading the passage several times until a word/phrase stands out, which is explored and reflected on. In prayer, one shares about ones thoughts on God, self, and response, and contemplating while resting in the presence of God.²⁷
2. *Ignatian Contemplation* – meditation using our imagination, one chooses to enter a particular mystery from the Gospels by being oneself or one of the persons in the story. By engaging all our senses, one interacts with the people,

²⁰ Margaret Guenther. *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction* (London:Darton, Logman and Todd Ltd), p.6-41.

²¹ directee 2. Interview by author. Tape recording. Newlands. September 11, 2012.

²² spiritual director 1. Interview by author. Tape recording. Paraparaumu. August 20, 2012.

²³ Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ & Eugene E. Merz., SJ. *Moment by Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life* (Indiana: Ave Maria Press), 2000.

²⁴ Jeannette Bakke. *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction* (Kindle version), location 125, retrieved from <http://www.Amazon.com>

²⁵ directee 1. Interview by author. Tape recording. Raumati. August 22, 2012.

²⁶ Sue Pickering, *Spiritual Direction: A Practical Introduction* (London:Canterbury Press Norwich), p. 56-57.

²⁷ Ibid.

listens and engages in conversation to help us experience a new way of noticing Jesus, ourselves, our neighbor and nature. We end with a dialogue with Jesus.²⁸

3. *Augustinian prayer* – somewhat similar to the Ignatian prayer but transferring the key features of the Gospels into ones current setting.

In addition, questions such as “What did the scripture passage mean to you? How did it make you feel? ... What did you say to God?”²⁹ are helpful for directees to notice their own impressions of God and how they have reacted to God during prayer.

What do directees pay attention to in prayer?

As directees begin their prayer, they are encouraged to refer to the 5 P’s (place, posture, presence, petition, and ponder) in preparation for prayer. Refer to Appendix C. One of the graces that directees ask as they begin their prayer is that of openness and generosity, as we can only listen to God’s voice in our stillness, and the spirit works on whatever matter we are willing to bring into spiritual direction.³⁰ As spiritual direction seeks a deeper encounter with God, the way that this can be achieved is “to give caring attention to our relationship with God – attention that is focused on life’s foundations underneath ordinary busyness.”³¹ This process of giving caring attention to our inner and outer experiences by sifting through and determining their origin is *Ignatian discernment* (see Appendix F).

In discernment, one begins to notice and attend to direct and subtle movements and countermovements that lead to God or away from God, and how one responds to these movements.³² The aim of discernment is to help us accept and respond to movements that lead us to God (life-giving, energy) and reject movements that draw us away from Him (disturbing, draining, leads to death). Ignatian discernment also invites us to seek God’s wisdom with the ‘grace of indifference,’ while gathering evidence, confirming, and evaluating a decision/action. The grace of indifference is important in discernment as it facilitates freedom to choose after one has let go. Letting go and letting God shows a deep sense of trust in a loving and faithful God who only desires the best for us.³³ To develop a discerning heart, through the *Awareness exercise*, one grows in daily awareness of Christ’s presence and action in the various situations, events, and persons in ones life, and own response to this presence.³⁴ This increasing awareness of the

²⁸ John A. Veltri, SJ, *Orientations Vol.2, Part B: For those who accompany others on the inward journey* (Ontario, Canada: Guelph Centre of Spirituality), p.298-300.

²⁹ William A. Barry, SJ, & William J. Connolly, SJ, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009), p.72

³⁰ Ibid,p.67-83.

³¹ Jeannette Bakke. *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction* (Kindle version), location 151, retrieved from <http://www.Amazon.com>

³² Benner, David G. *Desiring God's Will: Aligning our hearts with the heart of God* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005),p. 114.

³³ John A. Veltri, SJ, *Orientations Vol.1: Collection of helps for prayer* (Ontario, Canada: Guelph Centre of Spirituality), p.149-150.

³⁴ Carruthers SJ, Gregory H. “*Awareness Exercise.*” *Orientations for Spiritual Growth.* retrieved May 21, 2012 from <http://www.jesuits.ca/orientations/carruthers.html>

presence and movement of God in all things leads to an attitude of active contemplation.³⁵

The importance of RDL in today's world

Retreat in Daily Life is a necessary and precious experience for people in today's world to have as the more we live busy and complex lives, we also need tools (one of which is RDL) to help us sift through our layers of experience and to find a purpose through our connection with God. The structure of RDL makes it possible for busy people to integrate their spirituality with their work/home life. Through this integration, one develops the attitude of active contemplation so that Jesus becomes more present and alive in ones life; a product of 'finding God in all things.' Directee 1 notes that RDL experience 'reminds her of how much Jesus really loves and cares for us, how much God yearns to help and meet us daily.'³⁶ In her years of experience guiding people in spiritual direction, Spiritual director 2 has noticed a hunger to meet God in the everyday. Often, people try to make sense or resolve something in their life after noticing that something has gone missing, or gone wrong, even without saying the word God, but being able to do this in a safe way. For some people who are not connected with a church, this is an opportunity to seek connection with their spirit. In the Catholic parish context, people who have not felt nourished as a result of the lack of previously present church groups and activities have found new source of 'life.'³⁷

Benefits for directees/facilitator

Directee 1 shares that it is an 'opportunity for deepening in one's life and to be guided by a director in discerning, seeing patterns in the midst of daily life.'³⁸ Directee 2 notes 'I found I heard God more clearly. I grew in trust, became more loveable and relaxed with everyone as I felt God's love more clearly and how this was relating to me during the day.'³⁹ This writer also shares, 'coming out of a RDL experience transformed the way I think about myself, God and others. I am blown away by the Jesus that I meet in scriptures who has become so real to me in my own context.' And spiritual director 2 shares some of the things she has noticed in people after the retreat. 'People's lives change after the retreat, desires evolve, a time of attending to ones tiredness, connecting with oneself; a way for people to get started with praying (e.g. poetry, see Appendix G), people become more apostolic, and transformation in a person's life also overflows into their work and family including transformation of the faith community.'⁴⁰

As facilitator, 'I am always inspired by the people I accompany; inspired and grateful for the experience of journeying with people, receiving their trust and openness, a real

³⁵ Smith, Carol Ann.,SHCJ & Merz, Eugene E., SJ. *Moment by Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life* (Indiana: Ave Maria Press), 2000.

³⁶ directee 1. Interview by author. Tape recording. Raumati. August 22, 2012.

³⁷ spiritual director 2. Interview by author. Tape recording. Waikanae. October 11, 2012.

³⁸ directee 1. Interview by author. Tape recording. Raumati. August 22, 2012.

³⁹ directee 2. Interview by author. Tape recording. Newlands. September 11, 2012.

⁴⁰ spiritual director 2. Interview by author. Tape recording. Waikanae. October 11, 2012.

privilege.’⁴¹ Spiritual director 1 adds that ‘each retreat questions her own faith dimension and be accountable for her own faith journey.’⁴²

Recommendations

The initiative of God to always draw us near is a gift and it only takes our openness and generosity to let God do the work in us according to His plans and purpose. In making a Retreat in Daily Life, the best place to begin is with the directee’s desire, as this is the point where the Holy Spirit often moves. The next is to work with what the directee is familiar with (e.g. style of prayer, scripture). As a guide, be prepared to provide materials, other sources and instruction that will facilitate the directee’s learning about spiritual direction, discernment, awareness, and prayer, as this takes time. However, a lack of experience should not deter a directee from making the retreat. After all in the end it is about the grace that we beg for during the retreat, and the Holy Spirit acts as the real director. Directee 2 notes that ‘It takes a lot of trust and vulnerability for a directee to be open and generous in sharing ones most intimate thoughts and feelings in a one to one session as some come from other cultures that don’t practice this norm.’⁴³

Conclusion

This paper has set out to study one adaptation of Retreat in Daily Life and its significance to people today who struggle finding ways to integrate their spirituality in their own life context. Various aspects of the retreat have been discussed with suggestions for spiritual directors and directees as they seek to bring themselves or others into greater relationship with God. The gift that RDL brings into people’s lives is that participants who commit and make every effort to fit in and work out their daily prayer and daily direction meeting during their ‘special week with God’ receive a similar depth and substance as if they were on a residential retreat. RDL also is a good opportunity for people to learn praying with scripture, other prayer styles, one on one spiritual direction, and to grow in awareness of the presence/absence of Jesus in ones life through the skill of discernment and awareness. As Pickering notes, through the Holy Spirit, contemplation in action helps and guides our thoughts to explore directees’ experiences of God in everyday life, as they grow in love and dependence on God with their life.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² spiritual director 1. Interview by author. Tape recording. Paraparaumu. August 20, 2012.

⁴³ directee 2. Interview by author. Tape recording. Newlands. September 11, 2012.

⁴⁴ Sue Pickering, *Spiritual Direction: A Practical Introduction* (London:Canterbury Press Norwich), p. 30

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- _____ *Orientations Vol.2, Part B: For those who accompany others on the inward journey*. Ontario, Canada: Guelph Centre of Spirituality, 1996.

Websites

- <http://www.jesuit.org.uk/spirituality/spiritualexercises.htm>
<http://www.cenacle.org.nz>
<http://www.jesuits.ca/orientations/accompany.html>

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for Retreat in Daily Life

Facilitator Questions

1. What is Retreat in Daily Life (RDL)?
2. How is RDL given?
3. Can you tell me why do you think people make the Retreat in Daily Life?
4. What are the fruits you have seen in your directee/s as a result of attending the RDL?
5. What are the benefits of RDL to you as a facilitator?
6. How do RDL and Spiritual Direction relate to each other?
7. What is the significance of RDL in today's world, if any?

Directee Questions

1. When did you attend the Retreat in Daily Life (RDL)?
2. What was your experience like?
3. In what ways did the RDL deepen your relationship with God?
4. What were your reasons for attending the RDL?
5. What was your experience like before attending the RDL in terms of reading/praying scriptures?
6. Has anything changed with your reading/praying with scriptures after attending the RDL?
7. What were the benefits to you for attending the RDL?
8. Would you recommend it to your family and friends? Why?

* for Appendices B-G, see PDF attachment pp.11-17. Used with permission from the Cenacle New Zealand (Retreat in Daily Life 2012).

PRAYER NOTES

...in the world, relationships, the state of the environment, financial concerns.

You have four companions who help you get to Jesus through the crowd. They take you onto the roof and they dig through the tiles to open up a way to Jesus. What are the signs that keep you from getting close to Jesus?

Think your friend lower you to where Jesus is - and Jesus sees you and speaks to you.

The crowd is you with love and says you are forgiven.

The crowd is Jesus, love and forgiveness is any part of you that are beautiful.

Take it far about any other you have. Some Jesus say to you. "That is you, the old and new."

Get up, pick up your mat and walk out in front of everyone. Be sure it is your mat.

...

...the story you are drawn to.

...the story you are drawn to.

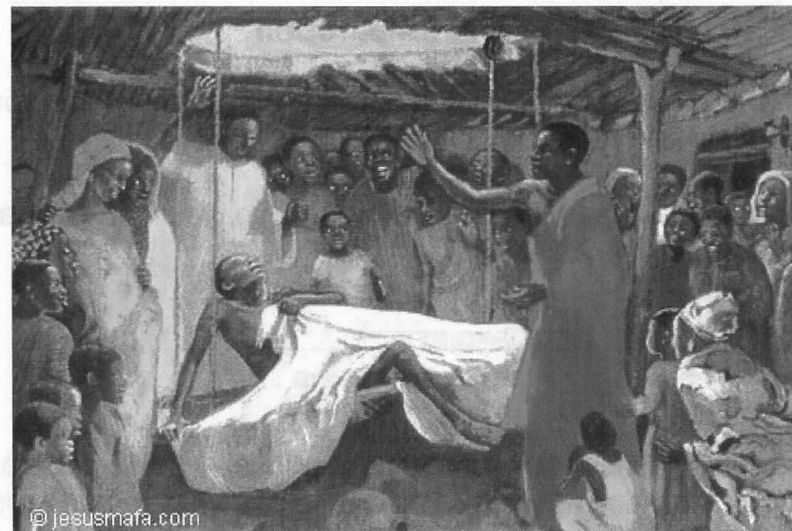
...

...

...make a few notes of what has been important for you, your thoughts and feelings.

...find the time to pray with a moment in prayer.

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Mark 2:1-12

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." so he said to the man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Prayer Preparation

Phone off, comfortable supportive chair, place where you won't be interrupted.

Read the Scripture passage through so you are familiar with it. **(Mark 2:1-12)**

Prayer Begins

Relax your body with some deep breaths. Whatever helps you to slow down, use it. For example, shut your eyes and listen to the sounds around you, let the sounds be a background for your prayer time, or focus on a candle or the trees outside. Use whatever helps you to relax.



Invite the Spirit to be with you as you step into your prayer today. The Spirit will gift you with openness and bring the Word to life in you.



Now you are invited to use your imagination to be part of this Gospel scene. Let your imagination be a gateway into prayer and relationship with Jesus.

Imagine Jesus is at home and there are crowds of people there.

You want to go to Jesus but you need help, you can't move by yourself.

Get in touch with anything that paralyzes you as you meet Jesus -

situations in the world, relationships, the state of the environment, financial concerns.

You have four companions who help you get to Jesus through the crowds. They take you onto the roof and they dig through the layers to open up a way to Jesus. What are the layers that keep you from getting close to Jesus?

Now your friends lower you to where Jesus is - and Jesus sees you, and speaks to you.

He speaks to you with love and says you are forgiven.

Be aware of Jesus' love and forgiveness in any parts of you that are paralyzed.

Talk to him about any doubts you have. Sense Jesus say to you, "Pick up your mat and go home."

Get up, pick up your mat and walk out in front of everyone, be aware of everyone's amazement.



Spend the rest of your prayer time with whatever part of the story you are drawn to.

Talk with Jesus. Be with Jesus.

Prayer Ends

Make a few notes of what has been important for you, your feelings and thoughts.

End this time of prayer with a moment of gratitude.

Appendix C: Tips for Prayer

P lace	Find a suitable place
P osture	Realise the harmony of body and spirit is important
P resence	Spend a few moments quieting yourself, become aware that you are placing yourself in the presence of God in a special way
P etition	Ask for the grace you most desire
P onder	Read slowly the Scripture passage (or proceed with whatever method you have chosen for prayer)...

Another way of praying: is Lectio Divina

We read (lectio)
under the eye of God (meditatio)
until the heart is touched (oratio)
and leaps to flame (contemplatio)

Thelma Hall, Cenacle Sister

In a quiet place

- ◇ Read the passage slowly
- ◇ Reflect on the word that touched you
- ◇ Respond to God about what you have heard in the Scripture
- ◇ Sit quietly in the presence of the One who loves you.

After your period of prayer is over, it is helpful to make a review for a few minutes. You might use one or other of these questions to help you reflect on your experience.

- ◇ What passage did I choose?
- ◇ Where was the Lord working and how did I respond?
- ◇ What were my reactions - changes in mood, thoughts? in other words, what touched me?
- ◇ How did I feel about what touched me - comforted, despondent, challenged, angry, hope filled, excited?
- ◇ What grace did I ask for? Did I receive this grace?
- ◇ Is there something I should return to in my next period of prayer?

Appendix D: Other Prayers

Mark 2:1-12 Revised Standard Version

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.

AT HOME

Jesus is at home today!
Let us take you to visit him.
How can you do that?
I'm too sick, too heavy, too....

But Jesus is at home today!
We are invited.
You are invited.
I don't want to take up his time

Jesus is at home for you today
Let us go with you
We can carry you
I don't want to be a nuisance.....

Jesus is at home,
Today
For you
I am used to being sick
Others are worse than me.....

Jesus is at home.
Trust him.
Have the courage to meet him.
Perhaps I can try.

Jesus is at home.
The crowd is large.
The door is blocked.
My friends let me down through the roof.

Jesus is at home for me
He tells me to take up my bed and walk
And I do.
Now I am at home for you.

Margaret Butler OP 2012

Appendix E: Closing Session

Closing Session

Kia Ora, Welcome.....

Song.....

Spirit of the Living God

Spirit of the living God,
Fall afresh on me
Spirit of the living God,
Fall afresh on me
Melt me
Mould me
Fill me
Use me,
Spirit of the living God
Fall afresh on me.

Sharing.....

In your own way, share in confidence anything you wish from your experience of the retreat, in so far as you feel comfortable. As a help to your sharing, perhaps call to mind:

- ⌘ your desire as you began your week of retreat
- ⌘ what you have received this week
- ⌘ what has changed for you
- ⌘ what meaning this special week has held for you

There may be some specific ways in which you feel attracted to continue to deepen your relationship with God experienced in your retreat and the invitation to discover God's presence in your everyday life.

Let us Pray.....

Gracious God,
I catch a glimpse of you
when I am talking with my friends
and feel myself to be heard and understood.

I catch a glimpse of you
when hearts are softened with tears
because someone said a loving word.

I catch a glimpse of you
in communion around a table
when loving friends meet and talk and eat together.

I catch a glimpse of you
for a second in a suffering world.

I get a sense of you
when someone holds me in my anguish.

I get a sense of you
when others help me to celebrate my joy
and my cup is overflowing.

I get a sense of you
in deepest stillness
when my lamp burns low in darkness.

Be with me now, this day, as I end this retreat
and all days to come.

Amen

Trisha Watts & Gabrielle Lord

Speak aloud a phrase or a word from the poem which attracts you.

Appendix F: Ignatian Discernment and Awareness

Ignatian Discernment and Awareness

by Mary J. Kay

Discernment can be described as a sifting through interior experiences in order to determine their origin and to discover which movements are from God and which movements lead away from God. These 'movements' may be experiences from within or outside of us. A way of describing these movements is:

what renews us, gives us energy ---- leads to life

what disturbs, distracts, drains us ---- leads to death.

Our task, with God's gift, is to 'diagnose', to recognise these movements, reject those not from God, to say 'yes' to God and act accordingly.

Discernment is more than prudential judgement. Sometimes in faith we make decisions that are not just the prudent choice but which follow a deeper 'sense' of responding to God.

In brief, Ignatian discernment involves:

- Prayer for wisdom, openness to first seek the grace of 'indifference'.
- The gathering of evidence from all possible sources to clarify the situation to be discerned.
- Seeking confirmation of a particular course of action.
- Reflection and evaluating the 'fruit' of the decision.

To enter into a discernment, Ignatius presupposes the *dispositions of openness, reverence and large hearted generosity*.

The Spiritual Exercises emphasise the necessity of seeking the grace of 'indifference'. This can be misunderstood. It is not about not caring; in fact we may be passionate about a choice. It is about being able to let go, about being free to choose. It can be compared to holding a very delicate flower in our hands. If we hold it too tightly it will be bruised and die.

Sometimes we receive the gift of discernment by a long and careful approach and other times more spontaneously from our God of surprises! Sometimes we have the 'aha' moments and other times discernment is slow and unclear until all the steps have been worked through. We need to believe that God desires the best for us. Daily we need the gift of fidelity and creativity and freedom to live a discerning life.

The quote below describes how God communicates with us through all our senses and invites us to be aware of the presence of God in all things:

"Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace."

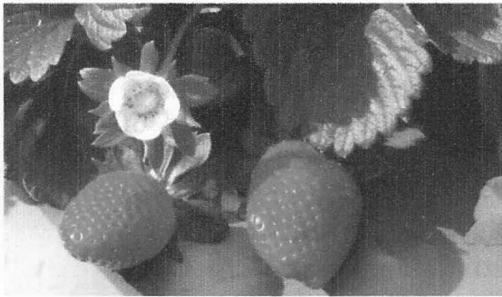
F. Buechner

My own thoughts on discernment are

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.....

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Going deeper.....

Appendix G: poem

Going deeper

Go down
down
down
to the place in you
where fire and silence dwell ~
the place of power.

Go down
down
down
to that pool in you
of weedless water ~
the place of knowing.

Go down
down
down
the moss bright path
to your Grandmother's house ~
the place of song.

Go down
down
down
to the last strawberry ~
freshness of God.

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