



GUIDES

Living in the Spirit

Fernando Manresa

Publisher: CRISTIANISME I JUSTÍCIA
Roger de Llúria, 13
08010 Barcelona (Spain)
+34 93 317 23 38
info@fespinal.com
www.cristianismeijusticia.net

ISSN: 2014-6558
February 2022
Editor: Santi Torres Rocaginé
Translated by David Brooks
Layout: Pilar Rubio Tugas

Living in the Spirit
Eight Days of Spiritual Exercises
Fernando Manresa

Foreword	5
Introduction: Entering into the Exercises	6
Principle and Foundation	9
First Week	13
Second Week	18
Third Week	30
Fourth Week	36

Fernando Manresa. Jesuit with a doctorate in theology, Fernando taught for many years in the Theology Faculty of Catalonia. He was very involved in spiritual formation and accompaniment both in Catalonia and in Bolivia, where he lived for long stretches. Despite all his teaching and pastoral activity, he published little; he used to tear up his writings once he had used them for his classes because he considered God and theology to be living realities that could not be captured in any manual. In 1986 he wrote *Dietrich Bonhoeffer als 40 de la seva execució* [D. Bonhoeffer at the 40th Anniversary of His Execution] for the collection of *Cristianisme i Justícia Cuadernos*, no 14. In 1989 the publisher Sal Terrae released his work, *Una larga marcha. Aprendizaje de la vida religiosa* [A Long Hike: Learning about Religious Life]. Finally, the EIDES collection published his spiritual reflection, *La oración. «Con el sentimiento de una presencia»* [Prayer: "With the Sense of a Presence"] (EIDES no. 18). Fernando left us in April 2020.

Foreword

The text we have before us is an adaptation of the thirty-day course of Spiritual Exercises that Jesuit theologian Fernando Manresa gave in personalized form to a religious sister in Cochabamba (Bolivia) in 1997. At the time someone asked him for a copy of the points he gave, which he then typed out. That was how they arrived in the hands of Edil Calero, a Bolivian Jesuit who was then a scholastic and is now master of novices in Ecuador. I am profoundly grateful to him for having passed them on to me. My job has been simply to adapt that immense amount of material so that it would fit into the reduced space of this booklet. In so doing I have converted it into an eight-day course of Spiritual Exercises; I have sought to respect the integrity of the original text while making some syntactical corrections. Our hope is that this booklet will help both exercitants and directors to enter into a personal encounter with the God who is “always greater.”

On 6 April 2020 Fernando left us. Perhaps now he is looking down on this attempt with a tender smile. In any case, this work seeks to be a sincere act of gratitude to him, who during his life accompanied so many persons along the paths of the Spirit with great existential wisdom, helping them to follow the One who is way, truth, and life toward the God who is always greater, a God whose incomprehensibility has drawn close to us so that we can travel together in a growing process of communion.

I close by reciting the prayer with which Fernando, as Josep Maria Rambla reminds us in his beautiful obituary, so often concluded his reflections and tasks: “Grant, O Lord, that in the end this effort becomes unrecognizably lost—like a drop of water in the sea—in the fabric of a social and ecclesial life that is more true, more just, and more hopeful.”

Carles Marcet, sj.

Introduction: Entering into the Exercises

1. I should ask myself at the beginning of the Exercises “what I seek and what I hope for” at this stage of life in which I find myself, after having lived all these years. I should consider all that I have learned, think of all that I have yet to learn, and always keep before me my decision to follow Jesus.
2. The Exercises are a path and a practical method for making a global decision about my life, one that takes me to where the Spirit wants to move me. To be effective, this method requires of me “great spirit and generosity” [SpEx 5]; that means personal availability inflamed with hope.
3. The Exercises therefore suppose a period of time in which I make an earnest effort just to listen, convinced that the Spirit is “knocking at the door” to tell me something. I therefore take some distance from everyday affairs; I go out into the desert so that I can listen for the call. During the Exercises this listening takes place in the midst of doubts, shadows, lights, and movements. The desert is a place for becoming aware of the call and of temptation. It is a privileged time for listening, obeying, deciding, and giving thanks for that Voice that has always been calling me in different ways at different moments
4. Interior silence is a basic condition for being able to listen and at the same time a practical effect of actually listening. The more I listen, the less I speak, and the less I scatter my attention, the more I listen. The silence is dense if it is full of hope (of hearing the Voice), and that hope is born of patience (the stubborn ability to hear the Voice).

5. Some dispositions can help you while making the Exercises:

- a) First, it is good to recall what Ignatius means by “exercise”: it is “any means of preparing and disposing our soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections and then, after their removal, of seeking and finding God’s will in the order of our life” [SpEx 11]. Thus, the point of the Exercises is to open up a space within your heart so that the Voice can resound within it and proceed to prepare and dispose it. In this way the Voice gives meaning to your life so that you, by living the paschal mystery, are blessed.
- b) Second, consider that the point of the Exercises is not to think, analyze, study, etc., but to ponder and savor whatever gives substance, soul, vigor, and warmth to your heart: “What fills and satisfies the heart consists not in knowing much but in our understanding the realities profoundly and in savoring them interiorly” [SpEx 2].
- c) Third, you should enter the Exercises with passion. The point is to “engage in an encounter with the Lord” who has already communicated with me in other moments of my life. Recall those moments of encounter. Recall how such an encounter shakes us, centers us, and frees us. It is the source of joy and uncommon hope. It inspires gratitude in the midst of the darkness, the impotence, and the stress that may continue to beset your life after that encounter.
- d) Fourth, you should enter the Exercises with generosity because when the Lord calls, he inspires in you a commitment that is more concrete, more coherent, more unconditional, and less concerned about successes or failures.
- e) Finally, it helps if you enter the Exercises with the desire to overcome particular attitudes, such as rationalizing (deceiving yourself and others), calculating (satisfying only your own personal interests), or furtive doubting (going through the Exercises without placing any hope in them).

6. To begin to pray tonight, you might let your inner and outer imagination be flooded by a human model you can contemplate:

- Luke 1,26-38: Mary at the Annunciation. She reacts, she listens, she questions, she commits herself, she abandons herself with confidence

to the future announced to her. She knows not what it will bring, but she has “heard the Voice.”

- Exodus 3,1-6: Moses. The desert is the place of his encounter with the Voice and also with the fire, which is God’s way of making himself present: for he burns and is not consumed. And the encounter is the origin of his vocation, a task of historical liberation: “Go and free my people!”
- 1Samuel 3,1-19: Samuel. “Here I am, for you have called me. ... Speak, for I am listening.”
- The prophets: Isaiah 6,1-10 (“Here I am, send me...”) and Jeremiah 20,1-7 (“You have seduced me, and I let myself be seduced”).

7. Some practical advice:

- a) Organize your daily schedule in a reasonable way: arrange times for prayer, for walks, for rest, ...
- b) Try to find the place and the manner of praying that “most help you to attain what you are seeking.”
- c) Do each thing (whatever it is) with all your heart, as if everything depended on it, as if that thing was the last thing to be done, and there was nothing following it.
- d) Keep taking brief notes so you can remember how you feel the Spirit is moving you, and so you can reflect later on what you felt yesterday or the day before.
- e) Share with the person who is accompanying you everything that you think is significant and moving for you.
- f) Measure your strength; go little by little; don’t wear yourself out in the first few days. Remember that your only job is to dispose yourself to listen. The Spirit speaks when and how she wishes, so don’t be inwardly tense.
- g) Keeping this in mind, you should reasonably spend four hours a day in formal prayer.

Principle and Foundation

First Moment: the Signs of God's Action in Your Life

1. A genuine, lasting experience is something more than a thought, a feeling, a desire, or a collection of images. An experience is not simply subjective! Your experience of the God who keeps calling you includes your long, stubborn response, no matter how erratic it has been. It is a concrete response to his persistent call. When the Lord calls and you try to respond to him, your whole person, your situation, your history, your projects, your relations—they are all brought into play. Your lived experience of God reveals that the Lord, in calling you, has come close to you, has acted in your history with others, and has established a personal relationship with you.
2. So I propose that you pray about events you have already experienced, as have so many other witnesses who “kept all these things—the events experienced—in their hearts.” These events are like footprints that the Lord’s passing leaves in your life. Thus, you should try to find the traces of the Lord in the paths you have followed. Feel him present in your recent past so that you can open yourself up more and more as you move forward.

Disposing yourself for that means “taking to heart” your experience so that you can glimpse God’s “real but obscure Presence” in your history. In this way you will be able to discover little by little—thanks to the intensity of God’s Presence, enhanced by memory—what he is now asking of you.

3. Here is a concrete itinerary for your prayer. You should pick out a particular time in your history, one that is sufficiently rich but not too extensive. In a general overview, choose some of the most noteworthy events

of that period. Relive those events; recreate them within you, “as if they were really present before you.” Spend a long while quietly considering these memories, not trying to analyze their meaning for you but simply “embracing the reality just as it was then and just as it continues before you.” Don’t bend it or twist it or obscure it. Just give thanks and enjoy it. Embrace your own history as a gift from the Lord. Only by gratefully accepting what we have received can we offer gifts to others!

4. Here are some helpful texts. The most important part of this exercise is discovering in “the text” of your own life the ways in which you have been inspired and guided by the Spirit, but perhaps some of these scriptural texts can help you in your prayer: Romans 8,31-39; Matt 5,38ff.; Exodus 3,1-15; 1 John 4,7-5,4; Pss 103, 116, 118; 1 John 3,13-17.
5. In all this, the point is to understand how the Lord has been leading you all through your life. God is like a school teacher, patiently teaching us to recognize his passage through our lives. As God passes through our lives and we come to know his ways, we are gripped by a deep-seated conviction, and little by little we realize we cannot live otherwise. We then become totally convinced that the Lord will continue to guide our lives, teaching us to follow him in diverse circumstances, but leading us all in basically the same direction.
6. If it helps, you can also ask yourself some questions like these: What feelings do the revived memories of my past experiences produce in me? Does there appear to be something “constant” in the midst of all my different experiences? Do I feel some difficulty in remembering my experiences? Why do I feel that difficulty? As I narrate my life (by recalling it), do I find that its meaning is becoming little by little more apparent to me? That is to say, am I aware of the *soul* that has inspired my life?

Second Moment: Affirming with Your Life the “God Who Is for Us and with Us”

1. Experiencing God is a form of “active passivity.” To be able to affirm that “I have experienced God in my history,” I must let myself be reached by God (passivity). And of course, to let myself be reached by God, I have to

move (activity) toward where God is, opening wide my heart. Trying to manipulate God has always been our great temptation; that is, “making him come to where I am.” But God’s “coming to me” is not a projection of my best desires, ideas, intentions, or images. That is why work (activity) is necessary if we really (not just ideally) want to find God “with” us and “for us,” and it must be the honest work of merciful fidelity to reality.

2. God comes to meet us as “God with us,” as Emmanuel, the simple reality of Jesus. The following points sum up what is fundamental for actually encountering God:
 - a) Realize that God cannot be manipulated. Hearing his voice means letting God be God in your life, letting him take the initiative. The attitude by which we let God be God in our lives is called availability. Genuine availability gives us, in practice, complete freedom with regard to all that is not God (that is, with regard to social image, human relations, and so many other things highly valued by others).
 - b) Realize that God is not remote. God is “with us” and reveals himself to us as liberator and reconciler. God is not only “for you” but “in you for others.” In this way availability becomes helpfulness. Living more for God means letting a sense of solidarity with others grow ever stronger in yourself.
3. You are to seek the “glory of God in your life.” The glory of God (our praise, reverence, and service) is what Jesus revealed by carrying out the mission that God gave him: giving life and giving it in abundance (John 10,10; 15,14-15). There can be no better way of carrying out the mission than giving one’s life for one’s friends (John 15,13). The Father’s glory, which Jesus shared with his friends, is that “they be one as we are one” (John 17,22). Thus, practicing solidarity among ourselves and giving our lives is the “fullness of grace and truth” (John 1.14). That is what we, as followers of Jesus, are called to mirror as we are “being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor 3,17-18). Ultimately, the glory of God is the glory of Jesus crucified, the strength of God, (1 Cor 1,25; 2 Cor 4,7) for thus he made known his personal availability before God and his total solidarity with the victims of history.

4. The thermometer for measuring the truth of our following of Jesus is this: the more availability, the more solidarity, and the more solidarity, the more availability! This is the principle and foundation of our life according to the Gospel. It is more a question of progressive movement than of a fixed law. At first we do not usually experience such movement in our lives because we find both internal and external resistance to it. For that reason, it is helpful not only to affirm that principle and foundation but also to model our life in accord with it. In other words, we should make ourselves indifferent to all that prevents us from living as followers of Jesus; we should be moved by the desire to live that way more than anything else. We then need to discover what the obstacles are that prevent us from living that way, and we should discover them on the basis of that preference.

5. For prayer, some of these texts may be of help to you: Matthew 6; John 17; 2 Cor 3,7-18; 2 Cor 10,25-42. You might also be helped by meditating on the following text, which is simply an adaptation of what in the Exercises is called the “Principle and Foundation”:

“I am called to be for others what the Lord is for them: servant! My service is an offering, a progressive dispossession of myself. It is a response to the call of the (servant) Lord who continues to die ‘without human semblance’ in those who have been thrown into the trash bin of history. That is where I can discover—if I am alert!—the true ‘humbled glory’ of the ‘Servant,’ which is the authentic meaning and the evangelical energy of my life. To discover these, I must allow myself to be drawn, and to do that I must ‘conquer myself’ and struggle against the instincts of concealment, seduction, and domination that are now blocking my freedom.”

First Week

First Moment: God Comes Forth to Meet Me As Mercy

1. You may possibly have discovered in these days that God comes forth to meet you when, where, and how he wishes. You live, therefore, enveloped in the initiative of the Lord's merciful love. That initiative comes up against the heavy weight that obstructs your history. That is why God's love is always liberating, saving, forgiving, and reconciling, no matter the weight you are carrying! There is no real experience of God without experience of mercy. And all experience of mercy involves awareness of evil and sin (Rom 7,24-25a). Without this awareness, we trivialize the reality of mercy.
2. Awareness of sin bursts forth as we stand in God's presence. When we take stock of ourselves, either we seek to justify ourselves (and thus become Pharisees), or we declare ourselves totally guilty (and so extinguish ourselves). But God is greater, and his mercy frees us from those dangers. God's mercy is revealed for us in Jesus crucified. It is before Jesus that we discover the evil we do that gets embodied in sinful realities (objective sin). Before him we discover the depths of the human heart that is capable of trampling, exploiting, excluding, oppressing, and crucifying others (subjective sin). And in Jesus we discover God himself wounded by that evil we do, and despite it, capable of infinite mercy (mystery of sin and of Love).
3. The thick web of evil. Evil acts in the world and in us through three "threads" that are woven together—while we are hardly aware of it—into the "mystery of iniquity" in which we are entangled. The three threads are:

- a) The evil that we do deliberately and freely: injustices, defamation, carelessness in prayer, irresponsibility, apostolic arbitrariness, and a long etcetera.
 - b) Those attitudes which, while not being anti-evangelical, are not fully faithful to the Gospel and so betray and mislead us: individualism, fear, naiveté, laziness, rashness, half-truths, etc.
 - c) The whole set of unevangelical valuations that circulate freely around the world and in the contexts in which we move, even if they do not always influence us consciously. They are ideas like: “The weak always lose”; “You have to have influence”; “Efficiency is important, even if it requires underhanded means”; “Judge people by their natural qualities”; “Spiritualism”; “Befriending without telling the truth”; etc.
4. Given such a situation, what can we do? In the case of the evil we do deliberately, we have to confront it with generosity. With regard to the other matters, we must expose our hidden depths because we are dealing with what is personally and socially unconscious. Consequently, we need not only generosity but lucidity.
5. Some suggestions for prayer:
- Do not tire of asking for that which you seek: inner awareness of the reality of sin, shame and confusion, desire to change, horror at your own sins and those of others [cfr. SpEx 48, 55, 63, 65].
 - Apply the parable of the sower (Mark 4,1-20) to your own life, and ask for insight to know what the birds, the thorns, etc. are that stymie the life of God in you.
 - Meditate on Psalm 139, and as you do so, ask for the light that sweeps away all darkness.

Second Moment: Ambiguities and Contradictions of Our Lives

1. Our sinfulness tends to be a situation or a state, rather than specific acts. We experience the situation or state as a power that controls us. It results from various processes (that is, small decisions and grand justifications) that gradually establish it over the course of time. We should become aware that there is actually alive within us a power that is imperceptible

because it is so familiar and ordinary that it seems to us natural. We should try to accept that both goodness and evil dwell in the innermost recesses of our being and are at war with one another in each of us.

2. This becomes manifest with great clarity only in the death of Jesus: his cross helps us see the depths of the evil that inhabits us. Before Jesus crucified are revealed the terrible contradictions that tear us apart:
 - We are beings of desire who tend to take possession of what we desire, but we are called to be totally gratuitous lovers. That is why we experience love as a form of “death.” On the one hand, we experience love as what is most true to ourselves (it is what we truly feel), and on the other, we feel utterly incapable of practicing that love naturally and unfailingly.
 - We project, we dream, we try to do good, ... but we always fall short of what we project or dream or try to do. We are called to the frontiers, but we always remain close to home. We communicate but never reveal everything; we decide, but then we doubt; we don’t want to dominate others, but so often we do...
 - We feel our age, our past, our failures, our resistances, the ruptures we’ve had in our lives. All this makes us waver on many occasions, and when we try not to waver, we end up going beyond the strength that we have.
3. We do well to consider some of the ways we are affected whenever we let these contradictions get the best of us.
 - We feel progressively incapable of loving concretely, so that our following of Jesus loses its soul, which is precisely the “ability to love concretely.”
 - We tend to remain in a state that produces “soulless actions,” with the result that we find ourselves living by pure appearances.
 - We tend to view reality in a way that is sad, cynical, resentful, one-sided, and fanatical, with the result that we also view our neighbors differently and end up expecting nothing from them.
 - We feel increasingly alone and abandoned by others. We reject hope; our life becomes somber and insecure; we feel incapable of relating to

others with generosity. As a result, we no longer understand that the true meaning of our life is other people.

- We do not persevere in our respect for reality; we end up believing that there is no use in doing the little we are capable of doing, and so we do not appreciate that hope is a path with many twists and turns.

4. It is only in the figure of Christ who handed himself over for us that we find a way to deal with our contradictions. It is only in him that we find revealed our reality, our contradictions, and our truth. Only in him do we grasp that truth we are called to live by and before which we feel impotent. It is only in him that we come to understand that the final word—which proceeds not from our life but from the humbled love of Jesus—is hope, the virtue that makes it possible for to accept ourselves as at once both “righteous and sinful.”
5. Some of the following texts may help you to pray: Romans 12,1-2 (not conforming oneself to the present world); Romans 7,14-25 (I do not do the good that I want to do); 2 Cor 12,1-10 (my grace is enough for you); Rom 2,18-32 (handed over and left to ourselves); Luke 18,9-14 (the foolishness of considering oneself just); Luke 12,13-21 (storing up riches for oneself).

Third Moment: “Recapitulation”

Engage now in Ignatian repetition and review [SpEx 62-64], and keep asking the Lord to show you your truth, the truth to which he calls you, the truth that you are. The following steps will help:

1. First step: How do you experience hope? Do you desire to love and be loved? Do you desire to be free? Review the history of your important and not so important decisions: where have they been leading you? Review your wounds: how do you grow in mercy? Perhaps you will be helped by Isaiah 54: “With everlasting love I have loved you.”
2. Second step: What has been your experience of the God who is “always greater”? Have you felt that he is different, that his ways are not your ways? How has God encountered you? How has he made himself present

to you and given you strength? What has he asked you to renounce? What companionship and presence has he provided you?

3. Third step: Review your ability to relativize things (which is not the same as offhandedness). How have you grown, knowing that, trusting in God, the future and the present do not upset you (Philippians 3,4-14)? How do you feel about having “God and the poor” as the most important realities in your life?
4. Fourth step: What really are your absolutes? What are your real preferences?
5. Fifth step: What is your experience of being free and available? When have you felt most genuinely free and available, and how? What do you say about “your Lord”? What does your Lord say about you? You may be helped in prayer by Psalm 139.

Second Week

1. Your aim now is to learn how to “be transformed into the style of Jesus.” To do that, the petition in all the days that follow should be “interior knowledge of Jesus Christ in order to love him more dearly and follow him more closely.” Your intention should be that he keeps growing in you, like “yeast in the dough,” so that you become less and less centered on self.
2. Knowing Jesus interiorly means taking his Spirit within you. That is why contemplating the life of Jesus “before you” gradually produces a change “within you.” Since such change encounters resistance, it is good to practice a double exercise throughout the week: on the one hand, contemplate the life of Jesus so that you feel his attractiveness, and on the other, interiorize that attraction so that you are renewed little by little, overcoming any resistance that the attraction finds in you.
3. Daily contemplation of the life of Jesus gradually deposits in your heart the “dark light” of a great truth: “life comes only by giving life.” The light is dark because it comes up against our resistance, doubt, perplexity, inertia, etc. It is a light that little by little reveals and penetrates everything. You respond to this process of revelation and penetration by means of discernment, which is nothing more than letting yourself be moved by the Spirit of Jesus (as contemplated in the life of Jesus), who little by little restores your freedom. The more you are moved, the freer you will be, and the freer you are, the more you’ll able to be drawn by the Spirit’s movement. Discernment becomes fully mature when the same Spirit of Jesus, who moves you in this way, makes it quite clear to you what your place and your mission are in the world. That is when choosing is the same as “being chosen.”

4. Accordingly, you would do well to move on two different levels: that of knowledge of Jesus and his Kingdom (the Christological level) and that of determining your place in the world so that you can live for others in the Spirit of Jesus (the historical level). To that end, it will help to maintain two basic attitudes: be openly receptive during the contemplations of the life of Jesus, and be actively accepting of what those contemplations inspire in your heart.

First Moment: the Kingdom of God

1. It would be good, first of all, for you to look honestly and sincerely at the situation of the Kingdom of God in the place where you live: the condition of the Church and your congregation, the challenges they present to you, the model figures you find there. Then take a look at the situation of the country: the forces attacking the Kingdom of God there, the problems facing those to whom the Kingdom of God is preferentially addressed, your own role in continuing to proclaim the Good News to them, etc. All these things are part of the historical setting for what the Lord is offering you here and now in your life.
2. In this context appears now the offer of Jesus. It is still undefined, but it can ask of you what you right now cannot even suspect. It is a call to live your life within the same horizon Jesus did, despite having meager means and relying on your own ambiguity and weakness. It is an offer that has nothing directly to do with the strength of your will; it depends completely on the strength of his Spirit. It is an offer that demands full-time commitment and therefore a wholehearted response.
3. This call of Jesus, addressed personally to you, asks you to respond by “offering yourself”
 - a) freely (“I choose”),
 - b) passionately (“I desire”), and
 - c) effectively (“I want”).

But you have to “ask for” such a response, because the call surpasses your ability, and what you ask for is “to be placed” in a life that corresponds to that call.

4. For this contemplation, the following aids may help you:
 - a) Consider images of well-known witnesses whose lives give you an idea of the offer the Lord is making to you. It is not a matter of comparing yourself with others but of letting yourself be moved.
 - b) Do a meditative reading of Matthew 5, which invites you to draw inspiration from Jesus’ way of life and so go beyond what to most people seems reasonable. Be convinced that living as Jesus did, by the pure grace of God, is the only thing that makes sense.
 - c) Luke 4,16–23 narrates the offer of Jesus in bold language. Does it attract you?
 - d) If you don’t feel it’s too difficult, make your own the prayer that is found in no. 98 of the Exercises. It is a prayer that expresses your desire to offer yourself to be chosen for such a life.

Second Moment: Incarnation, Birth, and Hidden Life

1. First steps. We enter into the long, slow process of the incarnation of the Word (the Son) *in* and *for* the life of humankind. The Incarnation in itself is not a momentary event; it is the whole process of Jesus’ life... until his death! Likewise, your own incarnation is a long, slow process of giving your life *in* and *for* others. It is not a single point in your life but a horizon, a dynamism for the whole of your life. Thus, the petition that may accompany you during these contemplations is “interior knowledge” of the One who lived in this way: becoming incarnate *in*, *among*, and *for* others... until death. To the extent that you keep giving consent to this way of living, you keep being born to new Life!
2. First part. Try to imagine how the Father gazes upon the “whole orb of the earth” (with all its people), and how in his mercy (“God is love”) he decides that the Son should become incarnate to save humankind [SpEx 102,106,107]. Let God’s gaze penetrate into you so that you gradually learn to “see the world as God sees it” and to “make the choices that God

makes.” In this way you will learn to love people as God loves them; going a little further, you will try to feel the heartbeat of God (that is, his mercy). You may even want to ask for the same sentiments that Christ Jesus felt (Philippians 2,5-11).

3. Second part: the Annunciation (Luke 1,26-38). Slowly read the text several times, letting yourself be touched by different words or phrases. Take note of how God’s incarnation in our history seeks your consent; others will find the loving God in you only by your consent. Note also that God chooses the simplicity of a woman; he is going to let himself be formed by a humble woman. The God who is “always greater” reveals himself by taking on flesh in fragility. There is always something paradoxical about the incarnate presence of God in history: the sterile woman gives birth, the woman who does not know man will have a son... Note too how Mary responds to what is humanly impossible: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word.” See how everything is aimed at becoming intimately united to the movement of the Mercy of God—which is his incarnation—in order to become an ever wider channel of mercy.
4. Third part: contemplation of the birth of Jesus (Luke 2)
 - a) Contemplating means discovering a hidden mystery that becomes manifest. To do so, you have to observe and let yourself be observed, so that you feel so intensely that you will never be able to forget how you felt. That way you will remember it easily. Contemplation is keen sensitivity and provocative intuition of union. Contemplation therefore requires that the senses be brought into play, so that what is contemplated become interiorized little by little, and *what is felt* gradually becomes *what is embraced*. Contemplation is “letting what is contemplated take on life within you.” Since it is a slow process, you have to repeat the contemplations so that what is essential, that which nourishes you most, becomes ever more integrated within you.
 - b) This is how you should try to approach the birth of Jesus. Take note of the conditions (anonymity, marginality) that speak of the Mystery of there not being any place for God in the world. Notice that the announcement is made to simple shepherds, not to the powerful, and that the signs they are to look for are a child, a manger, some animals,

some swaddling cloths...; all these speak of the Mystery of the glory of God made manifest in weakness, nakedness, and poverty.

5. Fourth part: the hidden life of Jesus

- a) There is mystery also in the lack of information we have for so many years in the life of Jesus: living in God requires a tough apprenticeship, slow growth and maturing, gradual development of “what is new within you,” learning to walk at the pace of God. In the course of all those years Jesus was learning to live mercifully, to hunger for justice, to have a pure heart, to weep with those who weep, and to work for peace. In other words, he slowly learned to follow a way of life that he later proposed in the beatitudes.
- b) With the help of your imagination you can be present to the places where the people of Jesus’ time lived and worked (fields, shops, neighborhoods, streets and plazas, temple and synagogues). You can see the people in all kinds of activities and situations (manual labor, human relations, public life, weddings, funerals, feasts, family prayer, worship in the synagogue). You can be with Jesus in his intimate moments with God the Father, in his reading of the scriptures, etc. Jesus’ familiarity with all these things is reflected indirectly in his parables, which illustrate the way he lived his day-to-day life and his deeply felt experience of the pain and poverty of his people. You can gain insight into the mystery of Jesus’ humanity by considering how naturally and closely he shared his life with others. The mystery by which he lived is revealed in his ordinariness!
- c) Let yourself be inspired by the way Jesus learned to live his life. It was a life of receptivity: he cared about the things life offered him; he was attentive to all around him; he accepted life as it came to him; and he spoke to us of God as our Father! It was a life of vulnerability: he let himself be affected by others; he not only “treasured things in his heart” but also meditated on them in his prayer; in this way he learned to give and receive, to teach and to learn, to love and to be loved. His life taught him to sustain the blows of life with stubborn confidence but without seeking false or precipitous solutions

Third Moment: the Baptism and Temptations of Jesus

1. The object of this contemplation is the important “decision” Jesus made: he decided to make his way forward in life “in the form of a servant.” But this decision is nothing more than his “accepting to the end” the Father’s decision for him! Jesus chooses what the Father has chosen for him!
2. What you will ask for here is interior knowledge of Jesus Christ so that you can follow him in his “docility” and in his ability to use the historical mediations that life brings him.
3. In the contemplation of the baptism (Matt 3,13-17), you can ponder the desire Jesus felt to be baptized, that is, to express publicly what he sincerely believes! By letting himself be baptized, he makes it clear how seriously he takes living in solidarity with others. His solidarity is what gives weight to his life. The presence of God is made manifest to Jesus with special intensity when he is called “the Son.” Jesus becomes keenly conscious of what his mission is as the envoy of the Father, but he still does not completely know the historical circumstances in which he will live out his vocation. He will have to keep discerning what it means concretely to be “the Son” in the midst of the people, what it means to work for the Kingdom. Jesus begins by adopting the “form of a servant” in order to undertake his mission. He is ready to “be with and be for all those who are lost,” assuming responsibility for them, bearing with them, and accepting their fate. In this way he will live “before God and among the people” and so be accepted by the Father. The baptism is in essence an “anticipation of his destiny,” a “matrix of his style,” and the “source of his preferences.” But that will also be the core of his temptation, because a great vocation is always accompanied by a great temptation. For you, then—as for anybody—following Jesus is a choice that needs to be reaffirmed continually since circumstances are always changing.
4. As you contemplate the temptations of Jesus (Matt 3,14-4,11), consider that they are basically the same ones that we ourselves experience. They challenge us to give our lives a different meaning and orientation. They are the temptations that always prey on our fragile hope, our limited freedom, our feelings of loneliness, and our impotence overwhelmed by routine.

- a) First temptation: hoping that our needs will be met by an intervention of God, and so evading our duty to work for others. It is our attempt to escape the weight and the consistency of things and the rhythm they set for us. Response: We must trust that God speaks to us through life as it happens, as we identify with other people in their lives, assuming responsibility for them and bearing with them and their fate, as Jesus did.
- b) Second temptation: demanding something that assures us completely that “God is with us.” We fear living in unending ambiguity; we want to be sure of our mission and not run any risk at all. In this way we avoid living and acting in the only way that is capable of reaching the most intimate depths of others, those “fonts of gratuitousness” that spring forth in the human heart only in the presence of “weak and vulnerable love.” Response: only completely disarmed love is capable of arousing the desire for solidarity, for truth, and for peace.
- c) Third temptation: desiring and seeking success by the furtive use of power. When we yield to this temptation, we no longer rely on the power of the love that will bond us with others. We no longer assume responsibility for others and bear with them and their fate, as God did in becoming incarnate and binding himself to our destiny. Response: “Go, sell all that you have, and come, follow me.”

Fourth Moment: Follow Me!

1. Now it is time to consider how Jesus calls you personally, in order to make you a channel of God’s mercy in the world. You can make your gratitude concrete by offering to follow Jesus in faithful service. Take note that you are being called, not by a program or a project, but by a person, Jesus the Christ, God’s path toward you and your path toward God. Ask yourself who Jesus is for you, what he means for you, and what traits in him you find most attractive. You may be helped in this exercise by contemplation some of these scenes: Mark 1,16-20; John 1,38ff.; Luke 5,1-11; Mark 3,13-19; Mark 8,27-35.
2. It is important to enter into the contemplation of these scenes as calmly and simply as possible, so that you sink into them little by little. In this way you will be able to recognize the thread by which the Spirit is leading you.

3. Here are some final considerations that may help you:

- Jesus calls you to collaborate in his work by taking on the conflict that such work involves. As you do so, you will feel that mysterious hope that never wears out despite the lack of tangible results.
- Jesus calls you to be a “channel of mercy” wherever there is death. That means breaking free of those attitudes and situations that prevent you from being faithful to the call in practice.
- Jesus calls you to collaborate “in his way,” by being close to the poor, unconcerned about your image, and unafraid of confrontation.

Fifth Moment: Following Jesus Requires Constant Movement

1. Both the New Testament and our own experience reveal to us that in the course of our lives we meet up with opposing forces that can be expressed in different ways: light-darkness, life-death, rock-sand, world-kingdom, day-night, above-below, spirit-flesh, etc. In the Christian tradition we also hear of two paths, two cities, two kingdoms, two banners, etc. We can also express the alternatives in this way: either we ground ourselves and become rooted in God (in his love, in his Word, in his Spirit), or else we ground ourselves and become rooted apart from God (in other forces, powers, or pretensions). The first path leads personally and collectively to fullness of life; the second leads to emptiness.
2. The two paths are not static realities; they are dynamic forces or seductions that are constantly operating in our lives. That is why opting for one of them is always experienced as a struggle. Moreover, if at some moment we are unaware of this conflict, that would indicate that our lives are deceptive, debilitated, and soulless.
3. The two paths, depending on which we follow, manifest themselves in processes that may be described thus:
 - a) On the path of emptiness we seek security (because of fear) and attachment to whatever gives us security (social image, material goods, etc.); we seek false praise as a natural consequence of founding our personal worth and the meaning of our lives on status and security (being valued

and considered important); and we end up in the isolation of self-sufficiency, aware of a growing separation between appearance and reality.

b) On the path of fullness we seek detachment and calmness; we do not fear losing privileges or renouncing things; we prefer the anonymity of the humblest places; we place no hope in being highly esteemed; we feel no need to be indispensable or to be always consulted; we are increasingly capable of being forgotten and discounted; we seek humility, living the vocation to which we have been called in truth and freedom.

4. The two paths gradually create two different lifestyles. The path toward emptiness leads to sophisms, false motivations, justifications, and loss of simplicity. And these in turn lead to personal distress (fear, confusion, chronic inner weariness, etc.). In contrast, the path toward fullness leads to greater clarity. It enables us to speak the truth without wounding, to face adversity with serenity, and to live without fear of losing anything because there is nothing to lose. It empowers us to infect others with a serene peace and a deep inner joy.

5. Here are some texts that may help you to pray: Luke 1,46-55; Luke 6,20-26; Eph 6,10-17; Ps 26; 1Cor 1,18-25.

6. A final warning: when considering these two paths, it is good to recall, without tormenting yourself, how you have experienced these processes, even if not in a chemically pure form. You should do this, not with an urge to scrutinize or theorize, but with a light heart that desires and asks to be received on the path toward fullness.

Sixth Moment: Three Types of Persons

1. During these days of Exercises, as you contemplate the mysteries of the life of Jesus, you should pay attention to what the Spirit is telling you, so that his voice and his passage leave within you a seal that will orient your life by anticipation and mobilize your energy in accord with his voice and his passage. You should try to be attentive to whatever the Spirit may want to communicate. You should concentrate your attention on the Spirit and strive to respond to him freely. In order to focus your attention affectively

and effectively, you may be helped by “imagining” three types of persons, even as you continue to ask the Lord to make you as available as possible.

2. The three types of persons

- a) First type [SpEx 153]: the rich young man (Mark 10,17ff.). The first type of person sees clearly what he should do, but he draws back, saying, “Not now!” When the sense of being “made for the truth” is alive within us, it stimulates us and urges us on. We don’t dare to deny it outright; we would feel bad if we did. So we prefer to anesthetize it to justify ourselves: “I have to do this. I have to choose this. But not now! Later.” But that “later” keeps getting put off so that we go on living an objective untruth. Everything continues the same outside, but not within ourselves because we have missed an opportunity.
- b) Second type: those who want to follow but with conditions [SpEx 154] (Luke 9,59ff.). Such persons also see clearly what they should choose, but they say, “No, not that way! Perhaps there’s another way to resolve the situation. There’s no need to take such a radical approach, which may not even work.” Thus they end up in a foggy state of endless vacillation and irresolution. Though they are made for clarity, they resort to subterfuges and become more and more trapped in deceit. As a result, they become less and less sensitive to the passage of the Spirit of the Lord through their lives. They get separated from others and lose the authenticity that thrives on the small options that gradually and opportunely make the fundamental option concrete.... All this steadily disappears from their horizon.
- c) Third type: Mary [SpEx 155] (Luke 1,26-38). What ultimately situates the third type of person in the truth is not any particular thing; rather, it is their living openly and unconditionally before the Spirit who calls them and draws them. This is what interests them, and nothing else. They are interested in the “now” and not the “later” because their desire and their sense of urgency are concerned only with doing God’s will, which is revealed to them “in this way” and “now.”

3. Final note. At this moment of the Exercises, it is good to return to one of the earlier contemplations in which you felt most intensely that something was moving within you. Or you might recall some moment during the Exercises—even if it was outside the time of prayer—when you felt

the passage of the Lord in a special way. Or you might go over the notes you have been taking in the previous days to see what the Spirit seems to be telling you up to this point.

Seventh Moment: Recapitulation

1. The point now is to “repeat” in different ways your key moments during this second week. You should seek and desire to recognize what things you experienced interiorly and intensely, just as Saint John recalled in his gospel (John 1,35-39) that he first met Jesus when “it was four o’clock in the afternoon.” What did you have similar experiences this week?

2. Three ways of being humble [SpEx 164-168]. These are three paths toward the depths of evangelical life. They are not three states; they are “three ways of walking through the desert; they are “three ways of hoping and resisting”; and they vary according to our capacity for loving, according to where our heart finds its treasure.
 - a) The first way of being humble is when we respond to the Lord’s call but do so with great effort, that is, in a way that stresses the hard labor and the personal detachment involved, rather than the grace that such a call represents for us. Thus, we may follow Jesus readily, but also somewhat voluntaristically. We “work hard” at following Jesus, but we vacillate now and then, recalling all the things we have left behind. We follow Jesus with many qualifications or we do so half-heartedly, as if inwardly divided in two. Even while following Jesus, we continue to be the protagonists of our lives: always contemplating ourselves, hoping to be well thought of, satisfied with our achievements, and saddened by our failures. In a word, we place ourselves before Jesus.
 - b) The second way of being humble is when we feel that our readiness to follow Jesus complicates our lives. We stress the personal sacrifice that following Jesus involves. When we are at this degree of readiness, the following of Jesus is more a moral chore than a donation that is free and gratuitous. In such a situation we have difficulty affirming that we joyfully commit ourselves to his mission, or that our joy comes from being humiliated as he was. We respond by looking outward, but such a response does not create in us a new sensibility because it doesn’t come

from within ourselves. Everything continues to depend basically on our own capabilities and strength.

- c) The third way of being humble is when we finally realize that all that we do is out of proportion to what we can and should do. What we do is simply receive with gratitude the gift that has been offered us, and in this way we live freely. “Always something more” is not merely an abstract desire; it becomes concrete in all that we receive and all that we share with others. Our response appears to be complete folly, but we feel we are receiving the gift of freedom which makes living a joy. Thus, a new sensibility and a warm, humanizing love grows within us.
3. The following texts may help with prayer: Matt 5; Matt 6,19-21; Matt 9,10-13; Matt 10,34-42; Matt 11,16-19; Matt 11,25-30; Luke 9,56; Gal 2,20. Don't forget to ask for that which you desire: interior knowledge of Jesus Christ so that you can let yourself be carried forward by his call.

Third Week

1. This third week of the Exercises is about learning the real meaning of “dying with” Christ in order to be able to “die with” and for others, day by day, all during life. Dying with Christ simply means living what we have called the “third way of being humble.” Contemplating the passion and death of Jesus—which is what we will do this week—is a way of somehow anticipating the ultimate meaning of your life in the future according to the Spirit. As the saying goes, “If you believe in the Risen One, live like the Crucified One!”
2. Contemplating the passion of Jesus means, among other things, learning to live in between and amid emptiness and fullness, meaning and absurdity, light and darkness, vocation and temptation, poverty and hope. It means you will have to take your fundamental option in your hands, time and time again, until the end! Therefore, in the landscape that keeps opening up before you (the passion of Jesus), you would do well to keep committing yourself to live as “the Spirit has inspired you” ... in between and amid,
3. It would also be good to learn to feel that something is lacking in the passion of Jesus—that he continues to suffer today. “Feel” doesn’t mean that you vibrate interiorly. There will probably be many moments when you don’t feel anything, but that “not feeling anything now” is an anticipation of what will often be for you the bread of almost every day in the future. Feel that ...
 - “the divinity hides itself” [SpEx 196]. That means that in your future life you will most probably feel how the divine is concealed from you.

Now is the time to cordially accept this destiny because it was also the destiny of Jesus.

- “Jesus suffers this for us” [SpEx 197]. This means that everything you do when living this way—with fidelity and freedom—is liberating for others. In this way your life not only passes to a second level, but it also has an essential component of “secret pain and loneliness.” And this secret pain and loneliness can have only one explanation: they burst forth from what sustains them because “I know in whom I have trusted.”

4. You should contemplate the passion of Jesus not only as something that happened to him during the last hours of his life, but as the basis of what he was experiencing already in what went before. Jesus lived his whole life with passion! As you behold the passion of Jesus, let it provoke in you the passion of your own life, in both senses of the word: following Jesus with a passion and, as a result of that, living the passion that following him requires. In other words, try to learn to live in a paschal manner.
5. Finally, realize that you may come to doubt the things you feel in these days (and in the days prior to the Exercises). Realize also that possibilities will open up for you that would never have occurred to you until now.

First Moment: Eucharist and Gethsemane

1. The Eucharist is the anticipation of the passion of Jesus in sacramental form and as a way of life. As a way of life, it can inspire your whole life and everything in your life. You live your life in a social context where the desire to possess and dominate prevail, where all the people who neither possess nor dominate are subjugated, and where all the sentiments valued in the private sphere but not in the social sphere (friendliness, gratitude, sympathy, tenderness, patience, etc.) are relegated to irrelevance. In such a social context, selfishness reigns in many human relationships, producing victims of all types.
2. Most people do not thrive in such a situation; they merely survive. The Eucharist teaches us that thriving is something more than surviving: “I am the bread of life,” said Jesus (John 6,35-48). Well, this “bread” be-

comes food and sacrament of life for you because (as sacrament) it reveals in the midst of our life domination, death, suffering, love, fear, and grief—and because (as food) it empowers you to accept them.

3. The Eucharist empowers you to accept them all: death, suffering, and love.
 - First, death: it brings the death of others into your life. It lets the death of others enter your life so that your life does not become mere surviving (that is, living without solidarity). The Eucharist teaches you that what robs you of life is your distancing yourself from the death of others, your fear of living the death of others. We try to forget and ignore the death of others because we fear it. When that happens, human relations begin to shut down, or they get concentrated to a point where they are only appearances. Thus, little by little we reproduce lifeless relationships.
 - Second, suffering: a life nourished by this “bread of life” will bring you into close contact with suffering and with those who suffer; it will make the sorrow of others visible and sacramental so that it becomes your sorrow. Because what alienates is not the suffering of others but your evading it and not letting it enter into your heart. The “bread of life” does not hide the sufferings of others but rather makes you a “co-sufferer.” This bread makes visible the invisible sufferings of your brothers and sisters so that you, by participating in their suffering, pass from death to life! It enables you to see yourself with the eyes of so many victims.
 - Third, love: the bread of life initiates you into love in the midst of a life of domination. It helps you see that loving evangelically is not the same as loving in a dominant, condescending way, a way that subordinates others. This bread keeps teaching you, a thousand and one times in life, to “break, share, and give of self.” Finally, always keep in mind that other people will often see this form of loving as something strange.
4. Some texts that may help you to pray are these: John 13; Luke 22,14-27; 1 Cor 12,23-34; John 6,48-69.
5. You can also accompany Jesus as he prays in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26,36-46; Mark 14,26-34; Luke 22, 39-46). The point here is not to create artificial emotion, but rather to review your internal passivities in

the light of Jesus' suffering and to see how the Lord passes through them. Your internal passivities show you what you have no control over; they reveal your insecurity, your impotence, and your sense of abandonment.

6. In other words, you want to accompany Jesus closely and consider his feelings. Jesus is sad, and that is a situation in which you may often find myself without knowing why. You feel lifeless, with your soul weighted down. You don't know where you are going or why you're doing what you're doing. Jesus experiences fear of something that has not yet happened but is sure to come. You also may occasionally fear something in the future, as you face a global situation you cannot control. Jesus feels weary of life with all its problems, and you also may often feel that your life makes no sense: you feel blocked, unmotivated, unstimulated, incapable of making a decision or acting. Jesus' prayer is agonized, exhausting, and dry; he is trying to understand what cannot be understood. You also at times may feel that God is distant; you cannot explain to him what is happening to you; you feel alone facing life with its weight and its pain.
7. In the end you are left with no explanation. Evil is an enigma, but you can still glimpse some meaning in it: Jesus becomes like us in every way in order to become a "channel of mercy" (Heb 2,17). Taking suffering upon himself, he purifies and humanizes it. Opening us to the pain of others, he takes that pain upon himself and accompanies those who suffer, because pain is, when all is said and done, the place where we follow him.

Second Moment: The Journey of Jesus Through the Passion

1. I propose now that you contemplate the external passivities in the Jesus' journey through his passion. These are the passivities you suffer that come from others. They are what you suffer when you feel that others are unjust, abusive, or malevolent. They are what you suffer when you feel manipulated, criticized, deceived, or frustrated. They are what you suffer when you feel you're being influenced by conditions that lead you along paths neither wanted nor foreseen by you. The goal is to convert those insuperable circumstances into occasions for "deepening your following of Jesus."

2. Consider the stages of the journey of Jesus through the passion.

a) First stage: the Sanhedrin (John 18,12-14), the tribunal of envy

The tribunal meets hurriedly in order to prevent Jesus from speaking and acting. They have no esteem for him and slander him crudely. Perhaps something similar can happen to you. That's the way we are: we rub shoulders, and in doing so we wound one another; we awaken the envy of others, even without wanting to do so.

b) Second stage: the apostles (Mark 14,66-71), the tribunal of loneliness

Jesus is left on his own, abandoned by his closest companions. They keep their distance. Peter follows Jesus, but from afar. Jesus feels deserted; his group scatters; those he has gathered become separated; what was full becomes empty. Fidelity turns into abandonment and betrayal. You may have experienced something similar at some moment of your life. Little by little you became aware that you were left alone.

c) Third stage: Pilate (John 18,28-40), the tribunal of egotism

He is not a bad person. He is fearful. He puts his own interests before those of Jesus. It's egotism. The same may happen to you once in a while, someone taking advantage of your work, or jeopardizing your mission, or triumphing at your expense, or profiting from what is really yours.

d) Fourth stage: Herod (Luke 23,8-12), the tribunal of frivolity

Herod wants to amuse himself at Jesus' expense. When the integrity of your own life is viewed by people like Herod, you feel condemned to silence. You have nothing to say: Jesus keeps silence! Your life dedicated to others is taken as a joke. It is of interest to no one. No one takes you seriously.

e) Fifth stage: the people (John 19,12-16), the tribunal of ingratitude

Those who were cured by Jesus now prefer someone else. People forget about you, and it's not their fault! Life is that way. You pass on, and no one

remembers you. You get left behind. Smiling, they tell you that separation is best. You gave your all in what you were doing, and now you are pained that no one has thanked you for what you did.

3. Envy, loneliness, egotism, frivolity, ingratitude—such is the bundle of external passivities amid which you must live. It is not in your power to control them or avoid them. When you try to avoid them, you still feel overwhelmed by them. What to do? Pretend to ignore them? Fight tooth and nail against them? Make yourself insensitive and invulnerable? Indiscriminately blame all those who provoke such passivities in you? These things all happen so frequently that you don't know what to do or how to react, and so you lose a fine occasion to accept yourself as vulnerable. You must learn to let yourself be carried by life, just as Jesus was. His strength in the face of such passivities was rooted in his confidence in the Father.

Fourth Week

1. The objective of the fourth week is to confirm the meaning for your life of that Voice that has come ever closer to you, calling for your effective response. You must therefore follow that Voice to the end.
2. The Voice speaks, saying this: “Let yourself be carried by Jesus’ manner of believing, loving, and hoping, as succinctly expressed in this statement: If the grain of wheat does not fall into the ground and die, it will produce no fruit.” This logic—difficult to understand and live—is the human translation of the logic of God that is revealed to us in the life of Jesus. By serving unto death, Jesus revealed who it is that inspires such a way of life: it is the Father. And living this way, in the concrete circumstances of his life, Jesus showed clearly that it was precisely there, in those circumstances, that the Spirit secretly lives, the Spirit who renews all things. Your aim should be to contemplate how the Spirit has emerged in your own “concrete circumstances,” which you should live as Jesus would live them, so that you become a contagious force for the service of others.
3. More concretely, the felt memory of the risen Lord’s presence among his disciples, in the midst of their activities, should bring out your own creativity. Don’t let it remain a memory of the past. Let it help you imagine and long for the future, so that you are able to find new life in the midst of your problems. In your time of prayer, then, let your imagination dream of the utopia of what has been offered to you, just as Jesus did in his own life.
4. It is not just a question of your individual creativity. It is historical creativity that involves all those around you in performing the task that awaits you, in the circumstances that condition you, etc. The Spirit is the

source of this creativity. The Spirit is the consoler and the source of peace, joy, gratitude, vigor, strength, generosity, etc. In a word, the Spirit is the source of Freedom.

First Moment: "It Is the Lord!"

1. The narratives that speak of the appearances of the risen Lord to his disciples make the same announcement to us, but in a different way. I offer here a matrix that you may find useful as you contemplate these stories of the resurrection.
2. The elements that make up what I have called a "matrix" are these:
 - a) Those who encounter the Risen One have been following Jesus for years. If we want to encounter him, we also must be following him in some way.
 - b) Those who encounter him have suffered a crisis of sadness, disillusionment, and futility. They were hoping... And nothing! In order to experience the appearance of the Spirit of Jesus in your life, you have to have descended—in some sense—down into your own personal death.
 - c) Despite the crisis, those who encounter the risen Lord preserve unforgettable memories of the time they spent with Jesus. It is possible that you feel that Jesus has left you alone, but you keep faith with him despite your feelings.
 - d) Those who encounter the risen Lord draw close to the place of his death (the sepulcher, the wounds, ...). It is out of the death of Jesus that new life dawns. To the extent that you draw close to the historical places where Jesus is still dying today, you will be able to experience the full force of the Risen One.
 - e) Those who encounter Jesus don't recognize him at first because he doesn't have the same appearance as before, but gradually they recognize him through his characteristic gestures. Jesus is to be found in others, but not in an obvious manner. You have to have known him before in order to recognize him in his gestures.
 - f) When we encounter Jesus, we discover him in a special way: we discover him from within, and that frees us up, so that the problematic reality

in the midst of which we previously struggled with him is no longer an obstacle.

- g) Those who encounter Jesus lose all their fears; they feel renewed. Their lives are changed, and that gift becomes for them a mission. Thus, they completely commit their lives to sharing with others (mission) everything they have received (appearance of Jesus). This is what Saint Ignatius calls the “gift of consoling” (SpEx 224).

3. Some final considerations:

- You can pray by recalling something similar to an appearance of Jesus that you’ve already had (that is, an experience of consolation). The appearances of Jesus in our lives are usually not spectacular but discreet. We often become aware that the Lord has passed through our lives because he has left an indelible trace in our souls.
- Life in the Spirit is something similar to walking along the narrow ridge of a mountain, trying to keep your balance. Life in the Spirit has its decisive moments (the appearances) and also its more ordinary stretches, when we walk with less risk. During those decisive moments we run the risk of being lifted above our proper stature, but it is the experience of those moments that nourishes our daily hikes through the ordinary stretches. The extraordinary experiences (almost always private) give us strength to live our ordinary life (almost always public).
- In this way you will learn to live as though you can see what is invisible (the decisive moments, the appearances), and that will help you know how to deal with the visible world.

4. In your prayer you can ask for interior knowledge of the Spirit of the Risen One so that you will remember his appearances in your past life and so be able to recognize them with ever greater depth in the future. A text that may help you to pray is John 20,11–18, or you may choose some other Resurrection appearance that appeals to you.

Second Moment: The Holiness of Joy

1. “Follow me” is the first word you heard, and “Follow me” is the last word of Jesus that you will always hear. Now, as you contemplate the mysteries

of his risen life, you should hear that word again! That can be your petition for today's prayer: being receptive so that you again hear Jesus' call.

2. Here are some points you can consider:

- a) God's action in giving Jesus the fullness of life in response to the action of those who killed a just and innocent man. Reflect that it is the same life that God offers to us to make our joy complete. The holiness of joy therefore consists in handing over all we have received.
- b) You have been given the possibility of experiencing your history as one who has been resurrected with others and for others. You can turn your history irretrievably over to God without asking anything in return. Gratitude as the soul of your life is the holiness of joy.
- c) You will always have to keep learning to mold your life into ever greater conformity with that of Jesus. This is another aspect of the holiness of joy: living so simply that you always have to keep learning.
- d) The victory of the Risen One over death means that you live with a hope that never dies, but you live in a difficult freedom because it is put to the test by every form of servitude, whether self-imposed or imposed by others. You live with a basic sense of hope, freedom, and confidence that overcome all sadness, whatever your state. This is the meaning of the holiness of joy.
- e) Think of the joy we feel when we find the pearl of great price or the hidden treasure. What is opposed to joy is not suffering but sadness. Living with joy is living with the ability to be thankful and to celebrate being for others and with others. This is what the holiness of joy means.

3. Living this way presupposes that you have already encountered the Risen One, and it also leads to that encounter (1 Cor 15,28). Letting yourself be encountered by the Risen Jesus means trusting completely in him and recognizing that he is beyond all manipulation. Confidence and obedience are basic dispositions for living the holiness of joy on our journey. Trust is the attitude that helps you live for others as Jesus did. You encounter the Risen One on the road when you let his Spirit inspire your life, when you respond to him (contemplate him), and when you act as he acted. None of this can be programmed. It is a freely given experience, but you can prepare yourself for it.

4. Here are some texts that may help you in your prayer: Luke 1,46-55; Luke 6,27-35; Rom 15,1-7; 2 Cor 4,7-15; Eph 1,15-21; Rom 8; Pss 18; 26; 65; 104.

Third Moment: "To Seek and Find God in All Things"

1. We conclude the process with a transitional exercise between the Spiritual Exercises and daily life. The idea is to develop an attitude in the face of life and its circumstances so that you can live in earnest what you have experienced during these days. Such an attitude—even amid the chores of daily life—should be able to invigorate and transform what seems ordinary. Such an attitude should be strong enough to keep correcting the distance that inevitably opens up in life between works and desires, between practice and intentions. By continually correcting that imbalance, you will also always be gaining new poise and learning something about being selfless.
2. This new balance is made up of three elements:
 - a) An attitude of profound reconciliation with your own history. The point is to learn to recognize the benefits you have received in your life, but don't see them not as privileges. Rather, view them in a way that leads you to move beyond illusions about yourself, and beyond the chain of events in which you find yourself inexplicably immersed, and beyond all the resistance you have encountered in things. Moving beyond all that, you are offered the possibility of rereading your own history as a Faithfulness stronger than your sin and ambivalence, stronger than any success you have had, great or small.

It is not easy to live reconciled with one's own history. We tend to seek reconciliation in structures or in personal traumas, and to those we attribute our lack of reconciliation. But the true reconciliation we seek comes from work, from community, from relationships, from the witness of our lives, etc. We are not reconciled either by structures or by traumas because they do not cover all the dimensions of our humanity. For we are not only our circumstances; we are what we make of them.

- b) Consider how God lives in history and how our history is polarized by the Kingdom. The point is to awaken in yourself an attitude of vigi-

lance. God lives in the poor as a call to you, so that they cease to be poor. God lives in the afflicted so that you can console them. God lives in the oppressed so that they can find freedom through you. In a word, God lives wherever humanity seeks to flourish, wherever we realize ourselves fully as men and women. And God creates more humanity wherever there is great inhumanity. God lives in the unexpected call, in our ability to hope beyond all hope.

c) Consider how God works in the world. God's work in the world has a name: Jesus. The work of God is also admirable in his saints; it is a work evident wherever we find something of goodness. What is required of you in all this is the regular ability to perceive and admire the goodness of others. Even when mixed with clay, this goodness is the human element that makes life worth living.

3. All these elements should put you in close touch with the Father of Jesus. The eyes of faith are able to discern the profundity of all these elements in your daily life. And the most profound of all is the One whom Jesus called Father.
4. Here are some texts that will help you to pray: Luke 1,46-55; Luke 6,27-35; Rom 5,1-7; 2 Cor 4,7-15; Eph 1,15-21; Rom 8; Pss 18; 26; 65; 66; 83; 104; 105; 118; 138. Also, if it helps you in this moment of transition, you can calmly ask yourself these questions:
 - During these days, have you felt a fresh joy and a new zest for life? Do you have more global vision of things, and are you able to simplify things so that you see what is most essential?
 - Have these days helped you to confirm some concrete decisions and to consider the support mechanisms you'll need to make them reality?
 - Have you genuinely experienced a greater capacity to love, and do you take joy in following Jesus?

'Guides', with this word Ignatius Loyola modestly expresses his great desire to help others. It is under this motto connoting service and simplicity that Cristianisme i Justícia and its Escuela Ignaciana de Espiritualidad-EIDES (Ignatian School of Spirituality) offers this series of materials.

Guides Collection

9. *Immersion in the Manresa of Ignatius*. Francesc Riera
10. *The Art of Friendship in Saint Ignatius of Loyola*. Josep M. Rambla
11. *Ignatius Loyola: A Life Journey*. Carles Marcet
12. *Attracted By God: 49 Spiritual Practices*. David Guindulain
13. *Apostolic Discernment in Common*. Josep M. Rambla and Josep M. Lozano (eds.)
14. *The Fullness of Time*. Josep M. Lozano
15. *The Contemplative Phase of the Ignatian Exercises*. Franz Jalics
16. *Ignatius Loyola: Accompanied, Companion and in Companionship with Others*. Carles Marcet
17. *Living in the Spirit*. Fernando Manresa

All booklets can be downloaded from internet:
www.cristianismeijusticia.net/en/guides

Cristianisme i Justícia
Roger de Llúria, 13. 08010 Barcelona
(+34) 93 317 23 38 • info@fespinal.com
www.cristianismeijusticia.net

