

“20 Hours with Jesus II”

Section I (2021) “Becoming More Like Jesus”

Overview and Instructions

A. “Graces I Seek” in Retreat Section I:

This virtual retreat is broken down into five periods of time (referred to as “Sections”). During Section I the focus is all on *me* ... on *my needs* as I begin this retreat.

In Retreat Section I ... I reflect upon the goodness of God ... the Who He is, His attributes, His work in my life and most particularly, His love for me.

When retreat founder Ignatius first developed his template for retreating in the 16th. century, he set forth a “special focus” for each of the five retreat sections. This was key! Upfront he wanted to make it very clear to the retreatants the “what” they were trying to accomplish during each of the retreat sections. To do that he set forth at the beginning of each section what he referred to as the “**Graces**” to be sought by the retreatant during that particular retreat section.

“Graces I seek” in Section I

*-to see and experience You once again Lord ... afresh and anew
+in the beauty of Your Creation ...
+and in the examination of the many ways wherein You have
blessed me in times past ...*

*-to be awed once again Lord ... overwhelmed with the magnificence
of the You that is in You .*

-to revel in the very real fact that You are never to be grasped fully, never to be fully comprehended and never to be expected according to my understanding ...

-to have a gratitude that might overflow in such a way that I come once again to not only “know” but also to “feel” the great love You have for me.

[It is suggested that retreatants might re-read the “**Graces I Seek**” a number of times while proceeding through the material in this section.]

IMPORTANT:

As you now proceed to seek out the above “Graces” in Retreat Section I, you will have 3 1/2 hours after having viewed the Message. The following materials are provided to help in your reflections, prayers, and meditations, etc.

2 Handout/Exercises

1 “Extra” Handout

A Number of Suggested Scriptures

Move slowly, break-up your meditations, take walks, at times just sit and do nothing, make use of your journal, & relax and look to connect with the Spirit.

B. Handouts/Exercises:

Three Handout/Exercises are provided to assist me in accomplishing (entering into ... experiencing) that which comprises Retreat Section I.

Note however that everything presented in these Handouts is “optional.” Feel completely free to utilize them or ignore them. In the end it is God the Holy Spirit Who is your *actual* retreat Director. A key for each of us on retreat is that we somehow “connect” with the Spirit ... get a sense as to how “He” would have us spend our time ... and then proceed accordingly.

Handout/Exercise I-1: “Creation Paves the Way”

There are various ways for me to once again “enter into” the graces and blessings of God on my behalf in times past. In this Exercise I want to look again at various of His Creations ... literally losing myself in the “Who” is responsible for all that I so often take so casually.

In the process I seek to bring myself to wonder, praise and adoration for this incredible God I serve ... this God Who loves me so.

Handout/Exercise I-2: “Grace ... Blessings ... Gratitude”

What has this God I worship done for me? Frankly ... everything! As a second step in losing myself *afresh and anew* in this God I serve, I reminisce and reflect upon various of the blessings He has bestowed on me over the course of my life.

Ignatius believed that “Gratitude” was the key virtue in any Christian’s life. As I end this Exercise I allow gratitude to flow freely from the depths for all that He has done for me.

Extra: “Adoration + 1 Question”

The first of what we’ll consider this year as we look at 5 ways to **better** Become More Like Jesus ... is Adoration. This handout incorporates various of the things covered in the session message. At the end we are challenged as to what we believe we are to do about it going forward.

C.Suggested Scriptures:

Below are various *Scriptures* that might be used for consideration, meditation, and prayer as you proceed through Section I. Any of these can be used at any time ... whenever you want. (Do not, however, think you must use all of them ... or even any of them. You decide!)

Psalms 8	“What is man (me) that You are mindful of him (me)?”
Job 38:4 - 39:30	“Where were you (me) when I ... “
Psalms 116	“Because He turned His ear to me ... “
Psalms 104	“O God. my God, how great You are.”

Once again my focus here is on absorbing the magnitude of the great love God has poured out on me ... through Creation, through His Son Jesus, and through the enormity of the untold blessings, graces, and gifts I have received over the course of my life to date.

D.Section I Notes:

In Retreat Section I, what I want is to explore again and “enter into” the graces and blessings of God on my behalf ... through all of my past years and into the present.

Retreat founder Ignatius said it well as he instructed his retreatants before they proceeded into Section I:

“The key is to let one’s heart roam about and settle on the particular peaks of joy and blessing of the day (month, years, etc.).

“When we get into the habit of praising and thanking God like this every day ... then we’ll begin to better recognize the blessings of our day ... as they happen ...

and thus, we’ll develop a continual attitude of gratitude. In other words, our praise and thanks won’t begin to flow simply when we reflect on it here and there - [or, I guess it could be said, when we are off on retreat each year] ... rather it’ll flow all day long every day.”

Ignatius

And that continual recognition of one’s blessings Ignatius said was the **absolute key** to developing a continual awareness of the greatness of God in one’s life. It is the perfect introduction for retreating.