

2023 Silent Prayer Retreat Week #2

Overview and Instructions

A. Focus for Week #2

A fundamental shift in focus occurs in Week #2. In Week #1 all of the focus was on *us*...on *our* needs: to be reassured of the Lord's love for us; on our desire to see and be cleansed from our sin; and on our deep desire to know that God is where we are...with us in our brokenness, our sinfulness, and our desperate need.

But in Week #2 the focus now changes from *us* to *Him*. Now we explore the public life of Jesus...en route to better understanding how we might live out our own "call" to become more like Him as we move into the future.

The "Graces I seek" in Week #2...

- *To experience an interior, intimate, personal knowledge of and connection with You Lord. I want to love You more passionately and follow You more closely than I have in years past. Especially this period I want to better understand how Your public life, O Lord, foreshadows my own future.*
- I just want to be where You are...I want to totally immerse myself in You: to know You, embracing all that You were during your time on earth. My deepest desire Lord is to become more like You. As I now focus myself on the ordinariness of Your public life, make clear to me how I might become more like You in my own day-to-day life going forward.

Whereas Week #1 allows us first to revel in the great Glory of God...and then identify, experience conviction for and then deal with our sin (past and present) the remainder of the retreat is "future" oriented. Now I look to the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus and attempt to draw from them a "picture" of what God intends my own

future to be. It is no longer a time for conviction --- for how can I be convicted regarding something that's yet to take place? Rather, I look to the Lord in Weeks #2, #3, and #4 to encourage and bolster me as to all He plans for me in my life going forward.

B. Handouts/Exercises

The Handout/Exercises are provided to assist in accomplishing (entering into...experiencing) that which comprises the Focus for Week #2

Note again that everything presented during the retreat is “optional”. Feel completely free to utilize or ignore anything. In the end, it is God the Holy Spirit who is your *actual* retreat Director. A key for you on retreat is that you somehow “connect” with the Spirit...get a sense for how He would have you spend your time...and then do that.

So, if the Spirit leads you in a different direction...by all means follow that.

Handout/Exercise #6: Jesus' Attributes – Wandering with Him

In this exercise, you are encouraged to “wander” through the Gospel accounts of Jesus' public life. In your wandering, note the character qualities of Jesus and welcome the Holy Spirit to show you where you can grow into these qualities.

Handout/Exercise #7: Ignatius on praying the Scripture

In this exercise you discover a type of Scripture interaction that Ignatius is known for developing. This process calls upon our imaginations to help us “enter into” various biblical events, looking for things that a simple, quick reading may miss.

C. Week #2: A Suggested Plan:

Again, some retreatants are not used to having such elongated blocks of time on their own...and as such, struggle. Below is a sample, sequential plan as to how one might use time allotted for Week #2.

Again, please note that it is not advised that retreatants just “automatically” utilize these suggested plans just because they are included...or because frustrations or struggles arise...or because they are bored and don’t know what to do, etc.

Often “God is in” the frustrations and confusions and boredom...and the best thing may well be to ride it out, to take the time to see what God is up to, or, even just to sit alone and do absolutely nothing (just be with God) until God prompts you to something.

But if you sense a need for further structure the following may be of help:

Get Ready

Read this Handout over...carefully considering how you might best spend your time in this Week #2

Take Handout/Exercise #6 and slowly begin to work your way through one of the Gospels.

Take a break, get a snack, etc.

Take Handout/Exercise #6 again, moving slowly as you continue through the Gospel you selected.

Take a break, walk the grounds, etc. and meditate on the Scriptures you’ve prayed/worked through.

Consider and work through Handout/Exercise #7