

## To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment

### I. OPENING HYMN:

Open my eyes, Lord, I want to see Jesus. To reach out and touch him and say that I love him. Open my ears, Lord and help me to listen, open my heart, Lord, I want to love Jesus.

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus. To reach out and touch him and say that we love him. Open our ears, Lord and help us to listen, open our hearts, Lord, we want to love Jesus.

### II. OPENING SALUTATION: L: Our help is in the name of the Lord

C: who made heaven and earth. (Ps 124:8)

L: Lord hear our prayer

C: let our cry come unto you (Ps 102:1)

### III. SCRIPTURE: A reading from the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians:

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us.

The Word of God.

### IV. REFLECTION:

1. In Christ there is always NEWNESS. The old has been forgiven and forgotten, only the new remains. God's name is "I AM" (Ex 3:14) which indicates a God of the present, a God with us now (Mt 1:23).
2. Reconciliation is at the heart of the message of Jesus and the kingdom. When Jesus came into Galilee, his inaugural proclamation was that the Kingdom had come (Mk 1:14-15; Mt 4:17). This means that God's forgiveness was primary and our response to that forgiveness is Repentance. Our repentance is a consequence of having received God's unconditional love, forgiveness and mercy.
3. Because we are privileged to have received this mercy, it is our responsibility and duty to share it with others. In this we are ambassadors for Christ. God is making his appeal to us to spread this love and forgiveness to the whole of creation.

## PAUSE

### V. PETITIONARY PRAYER: Let our response be: Lord, teach us to be relevant

1. At the end of the parable of the dishonest steward (Lk 16:1-8) the steward is commended for his shrewdness "for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light" (Lk 16:8). "The children of this age" here, refers to secular Society which is constantly challenging us to make the Gospel relevant for our times. That we might rise up to this challenge, let us pray to the Lord... **Lord, teach us to be relevant**
2. All too often we have not been as relevant as we ought to have been. All too often we have been out of touch with the world around us and so have not been salt and light (Mt 5:13-16). All too often the seed we have sown has fallen on the path, rocky ground and among thorns. Very little seed has fallen in good soil (Mk 4:3-9). That we might awaken to the signs of the times and read them well, let us pray to the Lord ... **Lord, teach us to be relevant.**

3. As Jesuits and after the heart of Ignatius, we feel the urgent need to be that leaven in the dough (Mt 13:33) which secular society so badly needs. We cannot do this, however, unless we are familiar with the Lord of the Spiritual Exercises. We are thus compelled “to gain a deeper experience of the Spiritual Exercises” so that in and through them we will encounter the Christ who transforms us and the world. That we might open our hearts to the Lord who transforms the world, let us pray to the Lord ... **Lord, teach us to be relevant.**
4. We become so filled with this experience, that like Andrew did with his brother Simon Peter (Jn 1:41-42), we are driven to share this Lord with others. The Lord we share is the Cosmic Christ whose presence pervades the whole Universe. We do so by making the Exercises relevant and especially to the young. Our resolve is to enable them to encounter the God of unconditional and magnanimous love. That we might communicate to our youth a God whom they can go to with confidence, let us pray to the Lord... **Lord, teach us to be relevant**
5. We strive to communicate a Christ who held nothing back, but emptied himself so completely taking even the form of a slave (Phil 2:5-11) that his appearance was marred beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals (Isa 52:14). This is why God raised him and gave him the name above all names. That we might encounter and communicate this God of generosity and selflessness, let us pray to the Lord... **Lord teach us to be relevant**
6. It is because this cosmic and risen Christ pervades the whole Universe that we learn to find him in all things and all things in him. This is the way of discernment of the Exercises which we must share with all.  
As individuals, as a community and in our ministry, discernment must be our natural and normal way of proceeding. This is because a choice made through discernment is always a choice after the heart of God and in keeping with God’s will. That we be men of discernment and share this gift with others, let us pray to the Lord... **Lord teach us to be relevant.**
7. Jesus’ food and drink, his sustenance and reason for living was to do the Father’s will (Jn 4:34). The “doing” of the Exercises must lead to such an intimate union with the Lord that “doing God’s will” comes naturally to us like it came to Jesus. Then, we and the ones associated with us will be like those who build their homes on rock and not sand (Mt 7:24-28). For this let us pray to the Lord... **Lord teach us to be relevant.**

## **VI. CONCLUDING HYMN**

Jesus, you are my salvation, Jesus, you're my inspiration, Jesus, you're the treasure of my life.

Jesus, you offer new sight to the blind, Healing the crippled, the deaf and the mute, Cleansing the leper and banishing ills, Raising the dead to life.

Jesus, you nurture the hungry with bread, Stilling the tempest and calming the sea, turning life's water to glittering wine, shedding you blood for me.

**Prepared by Errol Fernandes SJ**

## Prayer Service – to walk with the Poor

**Opening prayer:** Lord our God, as we gather together to reflect and respond to the Universal Apostolic Preferences, help us to deepen our understanding of who the poor are so that we may be able to better identify them and reach out in concrete ways. In a broken world, help us to be the messengers of peace and reconciliation.

**Introduction:** In the context of the UAPs, Fr General has asked us "to walk with the poor and the outcastes, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of justice and reconciliation." In our context these are: our farmers and their families in the throes of agrarian distress resulting in mass suicides; Landless labourers who toil, often without minimum wages; domestic workers and other casual labourers susceptible to exploitation, dalits and Indigenous peoples, distress migrants, refugees and the displaced; vulnerable women and children; the homeless and those living on pavements; victims of riots; the minorities; those who have been raped or abused; and those languishing in prisons.

**Meditation:** Mahatma Gandhi gave to all those troubled by doubt, those whose lives were devoid of meaning, a *talisman*. He asked them to remain still and recall the face of the poorest person they had met and see how they could genuinely reach out to him or her in ways that would improve the lot of that person. Gandhiji believed that this would lighten our burden, erase our doubts and lift our spirits.

Let us call to mind the face of any such person from the numerous persons we have met.

After a brief pause, let us share with one another the stirrings of the Spirit within us.

Fr General asks us to reflect on the situation and conditions of the poor. Very often we have a condescending attitude towards them. It is often said that poor are poor because they are lazy and will not look for jobs or will not take up jobs when offered. We often forget that the poor are the victims of sinful structures. We fail to realize that we may be part of the problem. Our sins could be acts of commission or passive omission. We need to therefore study the causes of poverty and sincerely try to find lasting solutions. Fr General has also asked us to strengthen 'political democracy' and to promote political and civic education for the Common Good. Along with political democracy, we need to work for social and economic democracy for the well being of all the people.

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 16: 19 - 31: The Rich man and Lazarus.

Pause in silence.

### **Prayers**

Millions of people are fleeing to escape ethnic cleansing, religious persecution and political and social violence. These are vulnerable people risking their lives, who are uncertain about their present and the future and who are seeking our help and protection.

**Response:** Lord, help us to walk with the poor

Development projects bring several benefits to the population but often these are at the cost of the lives, livelihoods, culture and well being of the most vulnerable who are displaced and evicted from their dwelling places without due compensation. They lead impoverished lives.

**Response:** Lord, help us to walk with the poor

Forced migration due to agrarian distress, deforestation, drought and lack of livelihood opportunities is on the rise. Many farmers have committed suicide unable to cope with the reality, leaving their families in great turmoil and staring at a grim future.

Response: Lord, help us to walk with the poor

Clericalism in the Church has led to abuse of power resulting in the violation of the dignity of children and vulnerable adults. Many of these victims are scarred for life. Measures to make sure that these serious violations do not take place are not adequate. There is a need for healing and rehabilitation.

Response: Lord, help us to walk with the poor

Indigenous peoples all over the world are the most vulnerable. Their livelihoods, habitat and culture are threatened by the greed of companies and the forest mafia. Many of our tribals areas experience unrest and conflict which results in violence. Many youth are forced to migrate to cities.

Response: Lord, help us to walk with the poor

There is an urgent need to strengthen political democracy, the rule of law and the Constitution because all these are threatened today. There are attacks on religious minorities, Dalits and Adivasis. We need more people to participate in civic and political life so that the Common Good is promoted.

Response: Lord, help us to walk with the poor

The Home-less and Hope-less: There are millions of people in our cities and towns who have no place they can call their home. They try to settle on the pavements of our streets and occupy open spaces from where they are regularly and mercilessly evicted. In the villages, people who have lost their land to mega projects find themselves nowhere to go. Homelessness leads to hopelessness.

Response: Lord, help us to walk with the poor

The Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat of our Society is celebrating its golden jubilee. While an enormous amount of good work has happened, we have also sometimes failed to live up to the radical demands of the Gospel. We acknowledge that we still have a long journey to traverse.

Response: Lord, teach us to walk with the poor

**Hymn:** (Joyful Lips, D 104) Make me a Servant, Humble and Meek

**Concluding Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we thank you for your Son Jesus. He is our guide, inspiration and model in our attempt to build peace and reconciliation. In this special Jubilee year, we thank the Society of Jesus, which bears the name of your Son, for the opportunity to serve the poor. As we continue with our journey, we ask for your continued presence among us. Give us your Grace that we may implement the UAPs and in so doing bring more and more people to the liberating joy of knowing Jesus more closely. Amen.

**Prepared by Anthony Dias, SJ**

## Prayer Service – To accompany Young People

### Hymn:

Spirit of the Living God  
Fall fresh on us  
Spirit of the Living God  
Fall fresh on us

Melt us, mould us  
Fill us, use us  
Spirit of the Living God  
Fall fresh on us

**Opening Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of young people in the Church. Bless them so that they may be able to commit themselves to Christ and His values. Lord help us to respond to your call of accompanying the young people with creativity, diligence and courage. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Composition of Place:** Let us place ourselves with youth in environments where we have encountered them. Let us gaze carefully at their faces, let us hear what they are saying and let us touch, taste and smell the energy the youth radiate.

**Grace:** Lord give us hearts and minds that are attuned to the contemporary needs of young men and women.

**Looking at the context:** Youth all over the world are passing through very difficult times. The breakdown of families, the erosion of moral values, the overriding desire for money, pleasure and power have destroyed many a youth, who have become victims of alcohol, drugs, sex and other evils in society. The current spirit of competition has taken a heavy toll in the lives of the young, even to the extent of ending one's own life. They suffer from a deep sense of insecurity about their future. Loss of meaning in life, lack of interest in matters spiritual and inability to accept failure have greatly affected their day-to-day life. In this challenging context, we are called to reach out to young people with compassionate love. Many young people feel the presence of the Church a nuisance, even an irritant. This attitude arises from several reasons: sexual and financial scandals; clericalism, rigid doctrine and a reluctance to read the signs of the times.

**Prayer of St Rupert Mayer (optional)**  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SN-JUgbJnjw>)

**L:** Lord, what You will, let it be so

Where You will, there we will go

What is Your will, help us to know

**C:** *Because You will it, it is best*

*Because You will it, we are blest*

*Till in Your hands our hearts find rest*

*Till in Your hands our hearts find rest*

**L:** Lord, when You will, the time is right

In You there's joy in strife

For Your will, I'll give my life

**C:** *Because You will it, .....*

**L:** To ease Your burden brings no pain

To forego all for You is gain

As long as I in You remain

**C:** *Because You will it, ...*

## **Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 13: 1-8**

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

**Pause in silence:** As we pause in silence, we introspect about our ability to love youth and our strengths and weaknesses in our dealings with youth.

**Reflection:** In *Christus vivit*, Pope Francis cites the examples of young people in the Old Testament - Joseph, Gideon, Samuel, King David, Solomon, Jeremiah, the very young Jewish servant of Naaman, and the young Ruth to remind us that in an age when young people were not highly regarded, God sees them differently. Accompanying the young in the creation of a hope filled future demands a new authenticity of life, spiritual depth and openness to sharing our life and mission with the young. Each person, community, and institution needs to ask, "Do our lives give witness to the joy, hope and life of the One we follow? Are we really listening to young people and allowing them to teach us? How are we accompanying and assisting them to truly encounter Jesus?" To respond to these sorts of questions, we must discern together both how to transform our own lifestyles, but also how to foster creative spaces that are open to young people in society and the Church.

### **Intercessions:**

#### **Our Response – Lord hear our prayer.**

1. Lord, help us to engage in projects that can strengthen youth, accompany them and impel them to encounter others and engage in generous service.
2. Lord, help us to free the Church and the Society from tendencies that will make her grow old, encase her in the past, hold her back or keep her at a standstill.
3. Lord, free us from the tendency of being excessively caught up in our past glory and help us to build a Church and Society that truly reflects Jesus Christ.
4. Lord, help us to build a Society that listens and is ready to give humble and credible witness.
5. Lord, free us from the tendency to provide pre-packaged answers and ready-made solutions. Grant us humility to allow the real questions of the youth to emerge and to face the challenges they pose.
6. Lord, help us as we encourage young people to walk the path of peace, justice and reconciliation without violence and hatred. May these young people become a source of inspiration and hope to others.

### **Invocations: (Optional)**

#### **Our response - Pray for us.**

Jesus who is ever young.

Blessed Martyr Andrew Phû Yên,

Mary the young woman of Nazareth.

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha,

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Saint Dominic Savio,

Saint Aloysius Gonzaga

Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus,

Saint John Berchmans

Blessed Ceferino Namuncurá,

Saint Stanislaus Kostka

Blessed Isidoro Bakanja,

Saint Sebastian,

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati,

Saint Francis of Assisi,

Blessed Marcel Callo,

Saint Joan of Arc,

Blessed Chiara Badano.

### **Concluding Prayer**

Come Holy Spirit inspire us as we prayerfully discern new horizons for spreading joy in the lives of the youth. Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of young people with the hope and love of Jesus Christ and enliven us with the creativity, energy and joy of youth. Walk with us, as we blaze new trails of discipleship accompanying young people and guide us as we together build a hope-filled future. .

**Concluding Hymn:** God's Spirit is in my heart (S19 With Joyful Lips)

**Prepared by John Cyriac, SJ**

## Prayer service – To collaborate in the Care of Creation

**Opening Prayer:** Loving Compassionate God we praise and thank you for the gift of brother sun, sister moon and our innumerable other natural relatives like the plants and animals, birds and bees, stars and galaxies in this universal web of love and life. Open our minds and hearts and lives to become aware of our calling to be grateful co-creators of a new heaven and a new earth. We make this prayer through the Cosmic Christ. Amen

### HYMNS:

- i. Ten Creation Videos in Thanksgiving for Laudato Si (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPT4F-zjQwA>)
- ii. Tukaram's Abhang 'Vrukshavalli Amha Soyari' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yi50TntYkzw>)
- iii. Aakash Panghruni (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxRjqLpZIAI>)

### INPUTS:

**Background:** The United Nations has said countries must take “unprecedented” action to slash carbon emissions to zero by 2050 to limit global warming. What is needed, Pope Francis argues, is a more holistic, integrated approach – what he calls an “integral ecology”. This way holds that we can develop a global model of economic growth that lifts people out of poverty, creates employment and funds innovation while at the same time moving us away from attitudes, activities and technologies that are clearly damaging the well-being of our planet.

What is needed for this is to happen, however, is something much more challenging and fundamental – an “ecological conversion”, as he calls it. Without a personal change of heart, laws or agreements between nations will be limited in their impact.

The input would consist of any one of the following resources mentioned below. The other two can be used at subsequent prayer sessions.

- i. Reduce Your Carbon Footprint - GEM (see attached power point presentation)
- ii. Our House is on Fire (<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jan/25/our-house-is-on-fire-greta-thunberg-16-urges-leaders-to-act-on-climate>)
- iii. Dear Future Generations Sorry (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRLJscAlk1M>)

**ECO-EXAMEN:** Let us reflect on the following questions.

1. Are we aware of our carbon footprint?
2. In our consumer culture do we count the environmental cost of lights, fans, AC, fridge, computers, smart phones?

3. Are we succumbing to a culture of silence in the face of violence to Mother Earth?
4. What concrete steps can we take to begin a process of ecological conversion?

(if time permits, some can briefly share their reflections on the above questions)

**Possible Activities:**

1. Visit individually and as a community a suitable place (either across the street or further away) that will help to listen to the Cry of the Earth and Cry of the Poor.
2. Choose one or more areas to Reduce-Reuse-Recycle.

**Sharing on Activity:** Each individual, and the community as a whole could resolve to take concrete steps to care for creation. At subsequent weekly prayer sessions, members of the community could share on what they have done the previous week to care for our common home.

**Concluding Prayer:** Loving Compassionate God, In the midst of our ecological crisis, we pray that we may learn to respect and take of our common home as your precious gift. Give us the grace to listen to the cry of the Earth and the poor and the courage to take a prophetic stand in word and deed. We ask this in your Holy Name, Amen.

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**Additional material**

- A. Pope Francis' quote on **Ecological Conversion** <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2019/03/08/pope-world-in-need-of-ecological-conversion-to-advance-sustainability/>

**B. Relevant Quotes from Laudato Si**

- i. If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society. (208)
- ii. Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together (228)
- iii. The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion. (219)
- iv. People may well have a growing ecological sensitivity but it has not succeeded in changing their harmful habits of consumption which, rather than decreasing, appear to be growing all the more. A simple example is the increasing use and power of air-conditioning. The markets, which immediately benefit from sales, stimulate ever greater demand. (55)

NOTE: A typical Split-Unit AC\* in India consumes as much energy as 25 ceiling fans. 41 million AC users cause power cuts depriving 25-fold the number of persons of power to operate fans during India's harsh summers

v. The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone ... That is why the New Zealand bishops asked what the commandment "Thou shall not kill" means when "twenty percent of the world's population consumes resources at a rate that robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive". (95)

**C. Biblical References:** Genesis 8:15-17, Deuteronomy 22:6-7, Isaiah 43:20-21, Job 12:7-10, Job 37:14-18, Leviticus 25:23-24, Ezekiel 34:2-4, Jeremiah 2:7, , Matthew 6:26, Romans 8:22, Revelation 11:18

**D. Interfaith Prayers for Peace and Creation**

1. Tribal Tradition: O Mother Earth, Blessed is the air we breathe, your atmosphere that surrounds us and binds us to every living thing. Blessed are all creatures who walk along your surface or swim in your waters or fly through your air, for they are all our relatives.
2. Hindu: Oh Lord God Almighty, May there be peace in the celestial regions and on earth. May the waters be appeasing, the herbs be wholesome, and may trees and plants bring peace to all. Shanti (3).
3. Jain: May I forgive all creatures and let all creatures forgive me. "Do not injure any living being." This is the eternal way of spiritual life. No weapon can be superior to nonviolence and love.
4. Muslim: In the name of God Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. All creatures form the family of God; and he is best loved by God who best loves His creatures.
5. Christian: O Compassionate God, we praise and thank you for Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Sister Water, Brother Fire, Mother Earth.
6. Zoroastrian: We pray to God to eradicate all the misery in the world. May generosity triumph over indifference, and truth triumph over falsehood.
7. Buddhist: Cut down the forest of desire not the forest of trees.
8. Sikh: You are the Ocean of Water, and I am Your fish. Your Name is the drop of water, and I am a thirsty rainbird. You are my hope, and You are my thirst.
9. Bahai: O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.

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