

Eight Days Ignatian Retreat With the Universal Apostolic Preferences

Dear Friends

Here is a proposal for an eight-day retreat of Spiritual Exercises following Ignatian spirituality with a special emphasis on the Universal Apostolic Preferences. Each day I suggest two prayer sheets. Later the retreatants with their spiritual directors will adapt them to their needs and to their own rhythm of pauses and repetitions. The scheme of each prayer sheet is approximately as follows:

- The image
- Texts of the Sacred Scripture and Ignatian tradition
- The grace I wish to ask for
- Prayer guidelines
- Colloquy

The idea is to move forward according to the dynamic of the four weeks of the Spiritual Exercises. I wanted to include some references to the UAPs. They will guide the mission of the Society of Jesus in the next ten years. I do not intend to leave the proposals for prayer closed. Each person has his or her own way of praying. I would rather like to share some images that can help each one's spiritual journey. It is an adventure in the Spirit that asks for our conversion to enjoy this gift received in the UAPs. Retreatants will have to adapt the contents with their spiritual directors according to persons, places and times. May the Lord be with you, guide you and bless you always.

José de Pablo, SJ

DAY 0 - Arrival

- 1 – **My life of faith as a River** Review of last year

DAY 1

- 2 **Let your light shine:** The First Principle and Foundation
- 3 **Receiving the Universal Apostolic Preferences:** The need of conversion

DAY 2

- 4 **Hell situation:** A world without UAP
- 5 **With Eyes of Mercy:** Reconciliation

DAY 3

- 6 - **The Call in Motion** The call of the Eternal King: UAPs as a Call
- 7 **Incarnation, God Moves First** Contemplation of the Incarnation

DAY 4

- 8 **The preferences of Jesus: His first 30 years with us:** Contemplating the hidden life
- 9 **Guided by the Spirit:** Temptations and the Two Standards

DAY 5

- 10 **Contemplating His Life** with the eyes of the UAPs
- 11 **The image of God From the Last Supper to Gethsemane**

DAY 6

- 12 **The consequences of His Preferences. Three Judgements:** Social, Political, Religious
- 13 **The seven last sayings of Jesus on the Cross**

DAY 7

- 14 **Words of Resurrection:** Contemplations of the Resurrection
- 15 **All in the same boat with Him.**

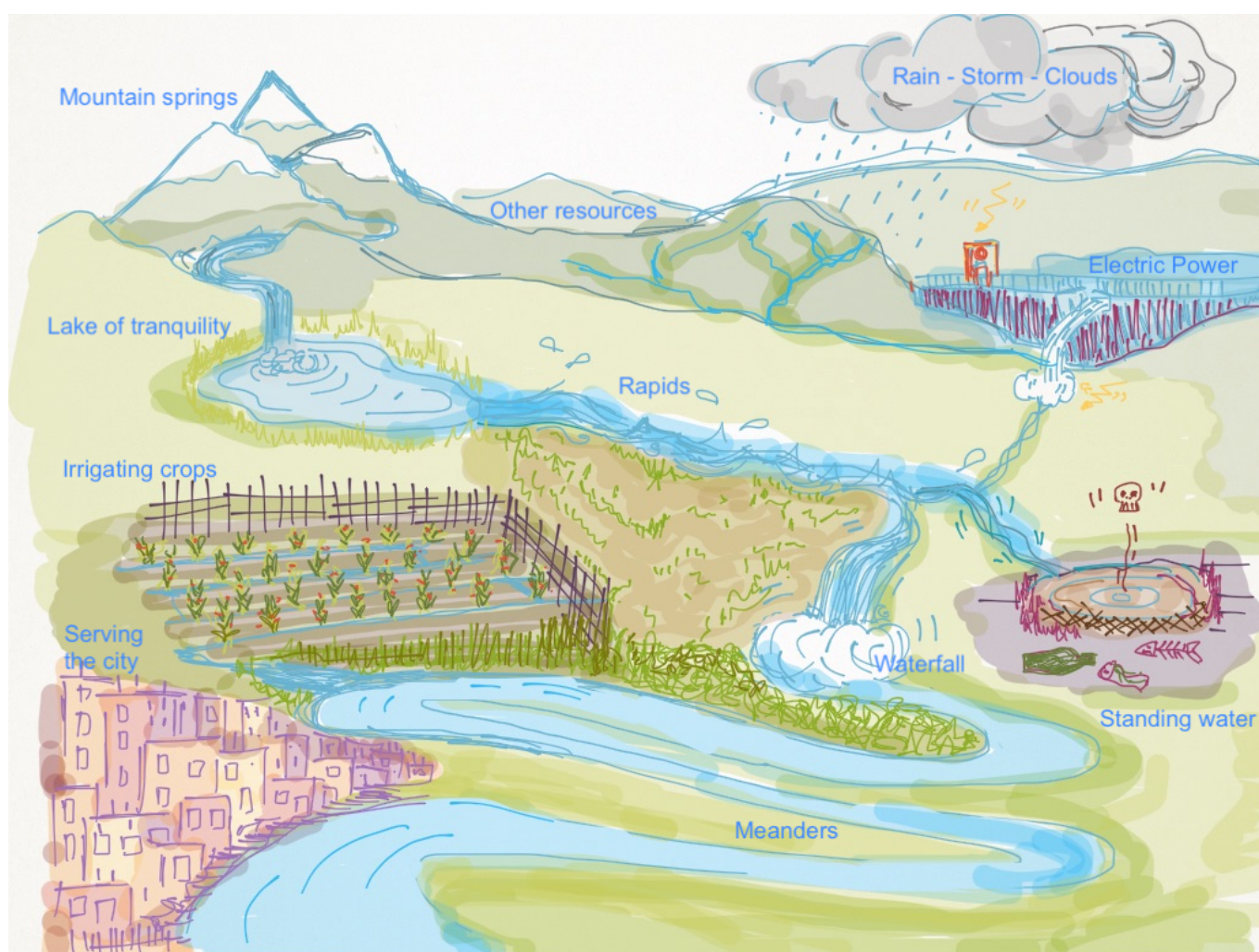
DAY 8

- 16 **Attaining Love:** Contemplation to reach love
- 17 **An exercise of reform :** Pray from gratitude and for gratitude.

My Life as a River

Text: John, 4, 7-15

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." [The woman] said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the well is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."



Composition

I imagine my life as a river and I try to identify where the flow of Life has been leading me throughout the past year.

Asking for Grace

I ask for the inner knowledge and freedom to open myself to discover the work of God in me and in the world around me in the past year.

Guidelines for prayer

- I try to draw my last year's river, using the image of water as a symbol of the presence of the Spirit of God in my life and in my work. I try to find the image which best describes these last months: flowing water, desert, waterfall, fountain, irrigation, etc...
- I imagine Jesus contemplating my own river and asking me for water to drink. What has made me feel dry or fresh throughout this year?
- I ask the Lord for the water I need for this retreat, for the coming days, months, year, for others...

Colloquy

I present all this to the Lord and talk to him about the points that provoke the strongest inner movements in me. I ask Him to give me the spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Other biblical text about water:

Gen 1,2. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Is. 12, 3. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

Is. 44, 3. For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

Is. 58, 11. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

Ez. 36, 25-26. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Am. 5, 24. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

Psalms 63, 1. You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.

Mt.10, 42. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward."

Jn. 7, 37-38. On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."

Rev 21, 6. He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.



Let the Light Shine

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION

The Goal of our life is to live with God forever.
God, who loves us, gave us life.
Our own response of love allows God's life
to flow into us without limit.

All the things in this world are gifts from God,
presented to us so that we can know God more easily
and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God
insofar as they help us to develop as loving persons.
But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives,
they displace God
and so hinder our growth toward our goal.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance
before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a
choice and are not bound by some obligation.
We should not fix our desires on health or sickness,
wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a
short one.

For everything has the potential of calling forth in us
A deeper response to our life in God.

Our only desire and our one choice should be this:
I want and I choose what better leads
to God's deepening his life in me.

(St. Ignatius as paraphrased by David L. Fleming SJ)



Asking for Grace

I ask for the inner knowledge of the light of God in me, and how it makes itself felt in my
life so as to be able to love and serve the Lord at all times.

Texts :

- **Genesis 1:3-5** - And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
- **John 1: 1-14** - In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome...
- **John 8:12** "I am the light of the world," He said. "Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness."
- **Matthew 5:14-16** - "You are like light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl; instead it is put on the lampstand, where it gives light for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.

Guidelines for prayer

You can choose between different approaches :

- Read slowly calmly the Principle and Foundation and try to discover the areas in your life that are enlightened by God's light.
- You are part of a covenant that God has made with us since the beginning of time, going back to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David... Jesus... Peter, Paul... Ignatius... and the torch has now been passed onto you. Receive this light as a legacy and reflect on how it has enlightened your life to this day. Give thanks for all those who have passed on this torch to you.
- Everything in our life is a gift from God. With our gifts and choices we can enlighten the world or leave it in darkness. God is for me like a beacon that illuminates and guides me through life. Let me take a moment to thank Him for my areas of light and ask Him to help me get to know better my areas of darkness.



Colloquy

I thank the Lord for the gifts I have received in my life, for those who handed them to me and for the light I am able to bring.

Receiving the Universal Apostolic Preferences



The Image:

Just like in ancient races a chariot was driven by four horses, the Society of Jesus has received the four Universal Apostolic Preferences to help it move forward towards reconciliation and justice. This is the target promoted by the 36th General Congregation. The launching of the UAPs has been a long-term and extensive discernment process for the entire Society of Jesus. Father General Arturo Sosa presented the fruits of this discernment to Pope Francis who approved and confirmed them. Father General insisted that the four Universal Apostolic Preferences should advance together and be guided by a basic disposition of discernment, conversion and intellectual depth.

Asking for Grace :

I ask for the interior knowledge of the gift received in the Universal Apostolic Preferences as the fruit of a communal discernment of the whole Society of Jesus guided by the Holy Spirit and confirmed by the Pope.

Texts :

- **Proverbs 2:1-9** My son, if you receive my words ... For the LORD gives wisdom,... Guarding the paths of justice
- **John 15: 4-5** Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me...
- **Pope Francis (letter to Fr. General):** The first preference is crucial because it presupposes as a basic condition the Jesuit's relationship with the Lord in a personal and communal life of prayer and discernment... Without this prayerful attitude the other preferences will not bear fruit.
- **Fr. General: Universal Apostolic Preferences 2019-2029.**
 - (Pg. 1) The UAP are the fruit of an election... Our desire has been to find the best way to serve the Church at this time the best contribution we can make with what we are and have, seeking to do what is for the greater divine service and the more universal good
 - To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment;
 - To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice;
 - To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future;
 - To collaborate in the care of our Common Home.

(Pg. 8) **The call is to share the life and mission of Jesus Christ.** At the heart of this call is the love of the One and Triune God who is not paralyzed in the face of the world's situation but who sends Jesus to take on our humanity and give his life in order to open the gates to divine life and love for all human beings. In dying Jesus expresses the supreme love that vanquishes death. To accept that call is **to give one's life for love expressed in deeds of reconciliation and justice**; it means being transformed into authentic followers of Jesus and active members of the Church and the Society that serves the mission in collaboration with so many other persons. **Conversion empowers us to take part in the mission:** conversion to faith in the Good News that the Reign of God is at hand, and conversion to a living faith that expresses itself in works that make possible the fulfillment of God's promise in human history.

Guidelines for prayer

- I imagine how the Holy Trinity has guided the UAPs' discernment. How the Lord hands over this mission to the Society from the hands of the Holy Father to the ones of Father General, then to the whole Society of Jesus and finally to me.
- The launching of the UAPs has been a very different process of discernment for each person involved -Jesuit or partner in mission, communities or institutions, provinces, regions, conferences and the entire Society. Did I feel part of this discernment process? How have I welcomed the Universal Apostolic Preferences?
- Conversion. Father General insisted: The temptation is to rush into putting the UAPs into practice without taking the time to assimilate and delve deeper into them so as to feel what they are asking of us in terms of personal and communal transformation and conversion. What do I need to receive and embrace in the UAPs on a personal and communal level?

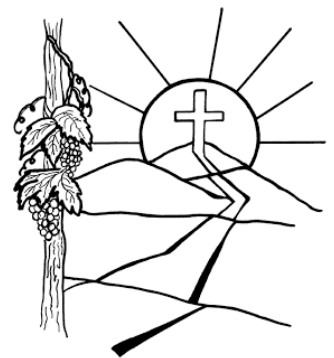
Colloquy: I thank the Lord for the gift of the preferences and present my feelings of joy or resistance.

Guiding principles for the understanding of the UAPs (Extracts from Fr. General talks)

<p>UNIVERSAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are universal because they reflect the diversity of cultures. They are committed to plurality and they oppose the homogenization of globalisation. • Preferences must make us grounded and heart-felt in the common good of all humanity by different paths. 	<p>Not GLOBAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalization is the choice of world uniformity as opposed to the richness of the local and the individual. • Globalization trusts that all human societies must have the same identity and the same historical trajectory.
<p>APOSTOLIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are apostolic because they assume the mission of Jesus as the apostles did. • They are the result of an exercise of spiritual discernment in common as was made by the first Jesuits. • They are not objectives and goals but the soul of all the plans and actions of the Society of Jesus. 	<p>Not IMMOBILE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UAPs are not a list of qualities and characteristics that we must fulfil in a particular Jesuit territory. They are not a ticking-the-box exercise. • They are a call to explore the new territories of the present without being anchored to the past, while still taking into account our traditions.
<p>PREFERENCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A preference is a vital orientation for focus all our apostolates in the next ten years. They are an inspiration for every Jesuit ministry. • To prefer something is to desire it more than other things. This entails my own will and feelings. A preference is what we really need and have to seek. 	<p>Not PRIORITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing is exclusive. If I prioritize, I am choosing something over other things. • We are not making a ranking of actions or works, but following discernment, we choose what direction to take.

Proverbs 2:1-9

*My son, if you receive my words
and treasure my commands,
Turning your ear to Wisdom,
inclining your heart to understanding;
Yes, if you call to intelligence,
and to understanding raise your voice;
and like hidden treasures search her out:
Then will you understand the fear of the LORD;
the knowledge of God you will find;
For the LORD gives wisdom,
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
He has counsel in store for the upright,
he is the shield of those who walk honestly,
Guarding the paths of justice,
protecting the way of his pious ones.
Then you will understand rectitude and justice,
honesty, every good path.*



John 15: 4-5

Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

Hell Situation



The Image: A broken World

Imagine a world where just the opposite of our UAPs prevails

- A world without God, where the Spiritual Exercises have no sense and discernment is an empty word. A world with no communication between us and God
- A world where the poor are abandoned and humiliated; where human beings have no dignity of their own. A world without paths of reconciliation where only injustice remains.
- A world where young people's values are miles away from solidarity, faith and hope; and closer to superficiality, selfishness and power.
- An environmentally sick world that has passed the point of no return. A world exploited, polluted, and worn out, where life becomes impossible.

Texts

Sp. Ex. 65-71 – The meditation of hell.

A Godless World

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

John 1 :10-11

A World where the poor are abandoned

For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat,
I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,
I was a stranger and you did not invite me in,
I needed clothes and you did not clothe me,
I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

Matthew 25 :31-46



Youth without hope

When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Matthew 19 : 21-22

No common home care

The one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Luke 6:48-49

Composition

I imagine myself in a broken world and take a look at its victims.

Asking for Grace

I ask for an inner sense of the pain that the damaged people of this world are enduring. I ask the Lord to help me understand the evil path that separates us from them and from Him.

Guidelines for prayer

- I try to imagine a broken world going from the situations that are farthest to those closest to me.
- I meditate on the present situations of rupture with God, with creation, with others, with my inner self. How will the future be for them and for me if we continue down this path?
- With my inner senses, I try to explore the final consequences and proportions of the wounds of our world.

Colloquy

I present to the Lord the pain of the damaged people of this world as I consider my own past, present and future. I share with God what is in my heart during this meditation of a broken world.

With Eyes of Mercy

The Image:

In many of our cities, we see people selling goods on a blanket. Many of them are migrants looking for a way to survive in a trade that is not always legal. Among their merchandise, they sell genuine and counterfeit goods, authentic and artificial stuff, fake brands, and so on. In Spain, they are called *manteros*.

They look for the busiest streets to sell more but as soon as they see the police coming, they quickly grab the four corners of the blanket and run away to avoid getting their things confiscated.



Composition

I imagine myself in front of God, the God of Mercy, and present all that constitutes my life: vocation, studies, work, community, apostolate, spiritual life, friends, family, ...

Asking for Grace

I ask for the grace to distinguish between what is and what is not authentic in my life. The grace of discovering through the light of God's mercy what separates me and what brings me closer to God, to others and myself in love and truth.

Texts

- **Exodus 3:1-16** - Moses and the burning bush. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground... I have seen the oppression of my people..."
- **Luke 15:11-32** - The Merciful Father and the two sons. The prodigal son and his elder brother discovered their truth, and the truth of their Father's mercy.
- **Luke 19:1-10** - Zacchaeus. «Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house... For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."»
- **Psalms 139** - You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.
- **Psalms 51** - a broken and contrite heart, you, God, will not despise.

Guidelines for prayer

- I take some time to enter God's presence. I acknowledge that I am in a sacred space and ask the Lord to place me under his merciful gaze.
- I choose and read one of the texts and contemplate how it speaks about the relationship with God
- I take into account the different relationships, memories and aspects of my life. I let my mind and heart to move through those different moments, people and places in my relationship with God, with others and with myself.
- Among my reality there are light and heavy things, authentic and false realities, blessings and sins... the labels I wear, the labels I put to others... I present to God all that I am and all that I have.
- If negative memories and feelings arise, I try to embrace them as part of who I am and present them to God who knows me better than I know myself. I let God shed light on these shadowy memories all in His timing.

Colloquy

I offer the Lord the points that provoke the strongest inner movements in me and I ask Him to let me experience His mercy in my life

The Call in Motion

The Image:

Momentum: The force that keeps an object moving or an event to unfold once it has started. Momentum occurs when a positive result generates more positive results causing in turn a general forward force with a collective confidence. Momentum gains more strength the longer it lasts.



Texts:

- Matthew 5:1-12 or Luke 6:20-26
 - *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*
 - *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
 - *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God*
 - *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*
- **Fr. General: Part I: Universal Apostolic Preferences 2019-2029.**
(Pg7) The preferences seek to embody concretely the mission received as the Lord's response to the cry of a wounded world; the cry of the most vulnerable, who have been displaced and marginalized; the empty rhetoric that divides and dismantles our cultures; the growing chasm between rich and poor; the cry of the young in search of hope and meaning; the cry of the earth and its peoples, who have been degraded to the point of having their very existence put at risk. The preferences seek to respond to a world in which entire generations have never heard about Jesus and his Gospel.
- **Pope Francis:** The God of love shows us our place in this world to be channels of His love to all the Earth's creatures, for not one of them is forgotten in His sight. (Laudato Si' 246)
- **Saint Ignatius:** "Eternal Lord of all things, I make my oblation with Thy favor and help, ... that I want and desire, and it is my deliberate determination, if only it be Thy greater service and praise, to imitate Thee in bearing all injuries and all abuse and all poverty of spirit, and actual poverty, too, if Thy most Holy Majesty wants to choose and receive me to such life and state." Spiritual Exercises 98

The image

- I imagine myself on the mountainside listening to Jesus in the midst of the crowd.

Asking for Grace

- I ask God for inner knowledge of His preferences and my own desire to follow Him.

Guidance for prayer

- Read the text and imagine the scene. Contemplate the way Jesus looks at the crowd and how he asks his disciples to collaborate in his mission.
- Look at the verbs of the preferences: to show the way, to walk with, to accompany, to collaborate in, ... Go through the first part of Fr. General's letter and imagine yourself doing these actions.
- The UAPs are the first fruit of a long process of discernment which will continue now in our apostolic planning. How have I felt part of this process until now and how do I feel about the next steps?
- Imagine your life as an answer to Jesus' programme expressed in the beatitudes: Are the preferences of Jesus my own preferences? Are the preferences given to the Society of Jesus my preferences? What desires within me move in favour or against? What are my longings and what's holding me back?

Colloquy: Present your desires to Jesus as if you are talking to a friend.

Incarnation, God Moves First



The image:

The Holy Trinity in merciful dialogue. It is like a diptych; on one side we have the dialogue of the Trinity before the world and on the other Our Lady of Nazareth.

The Trinity approaches humanity knowing its pain and its separation from the God of Mercy. God decides to save a lost humanity: "The three Divine Persons gazed" at the gloomy sight of a humanity that has lost the meaning of life, broken due to division and selfishness, and decided "that the Second Person should become a human being to save the human race".

And thus it is proclaimed to Mary. God's first movement is to ask to be received into the world by a wonderful poor woman who is able to say yes to God.



Asking for Grace

I ask the Lord for the grace to see the world with its "many and diverse people" through His eyes. And to respond as Our Lady did from her house in Nazareth. I ask for the interior knowledge of the Lord, who became human for me, so that I may love him more intensely and follow him more closely.

Texts

Jesus' way of seeing

- Our Lord is a child that brings light and salvation for Simeon and Anna. For my eyes have seen your salvation... **Luke 2,25-35**
- He looks to the disciples and he calls them. **John 1:35-42**
- When he saw the crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. **Matthew 9:36**
- He saw a large crowd and he had compassion on them. **Matthew 14:13-14**
- He looks to the one who denied him, and He changes his heart. **Luke 22:61-62**
- Jesus looked at the one who did not what to change and loved him. **Marc 10:17-27**
- Jesus looks with mercy till the end. Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing. **Luke 23:34**

Our Lady's way of seeing

- Annunciation. May your word to me be fulfilled... **Luke 1:26-38**
- Magnificat. For the Mighty One has done great things for me... **Luke 1:39-56**
- Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. **Luke 2:19,51**

Other texts

- I ask no more of you to look at him... Silenced the understanding, I look that he looks at me. **Saint Theresa of Avila**
- By giving us his Word, he does not have another word to deliver, and by giving us his own Son, he has no other gift to grant us; he has nothing else to say, nothing else to grant us. By giving us Jesus, he has said all. **Saint John of the Cross**
- Teach me your way of looking at people... your image changes those with whom you come into contact. **Fr. Pedro Arrupe**

Guidelines for prayer (Sp Ex 101-109)

1. **To see, listen to and look at the world “in such blindness”:** The world we live in is a divided one needy of salvation: "To see the people, listen to what they are saying, see what they are doing...", "some in peace and others at war, some weeping and others laughing, some healthy and others sick, some being born and others dying". It is a humanity that asks "to be freed from the shackles of mortality and is to enter upon the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom 8:21). I bring this scene to my life.
2. **To see, listen to, and look at the Trinity:** "Let us work the redemption of the human". God takes the initiative to save us. The second person of the Holy Trinity becomes incarnate, and by so doing, he shares all the problems, hopes and pain of humanity... And make men and women perceive how fraternity and affiliation is lived: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3:16). I try to transpose this scene to my life.
3. **See, listen to and look at the annunciation to Mary** Mary is the response model to the call for collaborating in the coming of the Kingdom of God. God's intervention in history previously requires human consent. Before intervening in the history of men, God asks for consent. By choosing Mary, God chooses what is simple, weak, feminine, in order to carry out great deeds. I try to transpose this scene to my life.

Colloquy with our Father, rich in mercy; with his Son, who has taken on Him all that is ours and to whom nothing is strange; with the Spirit, giver of life; and with Mary, instrument of the New Alliance, "I will ask for favours according to what I perceive in my heart that I may better follow and imitate Our Lord, who in this way has recently become a human being" (Sp Ex 109).

The Preferences of Jesus: His First 30 Years with us



The image: There are always different paths we can take. Some are wide and easy, others are narrow and hard. My choice of path is a question of preference and selection. Many human beings cannot choose their way of living. God did.

Asking for Grace:

O Lord, teach me your ways (Ps. 25). I ask for interior knowledge of the Lord's wisdom, He who for my sake became man, that I may love and follow Him more.

Texts:

- **Luke 2:1-20** - The Nativity of Jesus: *She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*
- **Matthew 2:13-15** - *So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt.*
- **Luke 2:39-40,51-52** – The hidden life of Jesus in Nazareth ... *And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*
- **Sp Ex. 110-117 – Contemplation of the Nativity**
 - o ... to see the persons; that is, to see Our Lady and Joseph and the maid, and, after His Birth, the Child Jesus, I making myself a poor creature and a wretch of an unworthy slave, looking at them and serving them in their needs, with all possible respect and reverence, as if I found myself present; and then to reflect on myself in order to draw some profit.
 - o ... to look and consider what they are doing, as going a journey and labouring, that the Lord may be born in the greatest poverty; and as a termination of so many labours—of hunger, of thirst, of heat and of cold, of injuries and affronts—that He may die on the Cross; and all this for me.

Guidelines for prayer

- I follow the texts contemplating the Nativity and/or the first years of the life of Jesus. I reflect on how **Jesus Christ reveals God's preference** for the poor, the humble, and the simple life in a simple village.
- Nazareth is an example of a healthy and ecological environment, the kind of environment I seek to taste simplicity and **the values of the Gospel**. It is such environments that heal my anxieties and desperate search for efficiency to help me find the right balance. It is there that I find the inspiration to bear the daily routine because every single thing makes sense. In Nazareth I may encounter Mary in sandals or barefoot, holding dear to her heart the face and words of her son Jesus. It is the place of the new Wisdom where Jesus grew, the school where Jesus learnt the living language he brought to us all. In short, it is the place to gain a divine way of looking, thinking, feeling, judging... I go back to the place where it all began.
- I observe Jesus in **his growing process**. In the way he behaved with his family, with neighbours, friends, with the One he was getting to know better as his Father. I go deep inside his heart, a heart nurtured anonymously to strengthen a full way of being human-divine from his childhood to his adolescence and young adulthood.

Colloquy : I finish with a colloquy with the Virgin Mary, who *"kept all these things in her heart"*. I share with her what in my prayer appeared as God's preferences in the hidden life of Jesus.

Guided by the Spirit



The image: On the platform I know which train I want to get on and I know my destination, but there are moments in which people, relationships, wishes and possessions unexpectedly cross my life. Suddenly I find myself on a different train that is already on its way to destinations I didn't want to reach.

Texts:

- **Matthew 4:1-11** - Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
- **Luke 4:16-21** - The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.
- **Sp. Ex. 136-147** – Meditation on Two Standards
- **Fr. General: Part II: Guided by the Spirit**
 - We are deeply convinced that the preferences will help the apostolic body of the Society if they maintain a clear **unity between life and mission**; if we understand them as orientations that go beyond “doing something” and enable us to achieve our transformation as persons, as religious communities, and as apostolic works and institutions in which we collaborate with other. Consequently, while each preference points to some important aspect of our apostolate, it also invites us to renew our own lives so that our work will be credible and effective (Pg. 7)
 - The universal apostolic preferences seek to deepen these processes of personal, communal, and institutional conversion. They are orientations for improving both the apostolic work of the whole body of the Society and the ways in which we accomplish our ministries, in which the preferences are expressed. At the same time, they seek to help Jesuits and our companions in mission to make their apostolic lives a pathway to God. We want to invite all people to follow the path opened up by Jesus of Nazareth, a path on which we ourselves are walking, following in his footsteps, encouraged by his Spirit. (Pg. 8)
 - They are not our preferences. We have followed the Holy Spirit, who has guided and inspired us. (Pg. 8)

Asking for Grace:

O Lord, teach me your ways (Ps. 25). Holy Spirit, give me insight into the DECEITS of the world and help me to stay away from them. Give me insight into the GENUINE LIFE that Jesus shows us.

Guidelines for prayer

- The Universal Apostolic Preferences like the Meditation on Two Standards demand of us a unity of spirit and action. They invite us permanently to acknowledge where we are and to look again at the map of the route to follow the same Spirit as Jesus Christ.
- Temptations were present throughout Jesus' life, not only in the desert:
 - The temptation of using God's power and gifts for one's own profit. **Richness vs. Poverty**
 - The temptation of taking shortcuts instead of accompanying people in their life situations. **Power vs. Service**
 - The temptation of worshipping other gods in exchange for solutions. **Fame vs. Humility**
- I become aware of the combat. All those temptations or “inner demons” walk with us as they walked with Jesus trying to change the direction of our inner journey. In fact, the text finishes saying “the devil departed from him until an opportune time”. The devil does the same with us. What are the temptations/deceits I face in life? Which are my temptations/deceits as I reflect on the UAPs?
- I contemplate Jesus in the Synagogue, his peace and sense of security as he is led by the Holy Spirit. The goal of the journey that Jesus is proposing are the poor, the captives, the broken-hearted and all those suffering. They are his companions and the goal of his life journey.

Triple Colloquy:

Colloquy 1 A colloquy with Our Lady, asking her to obtain for me grace from her Son and Lord that he accepts me under His banner, first in the highest spiritual poverty, but also, if His Divine Majesty requires this and should be pleased to choose and receive me for it, in actual poverty. Secondly, in suffering insults and reproaches, so as to imitate Him more closely, provided only that I can suffer these without sin on the part of any other person and without displeasure to His Divine Majesty I end with a Hail Mary.

Colloquy 2 To ask the same of the Son that He may obtain it for me from the Father, and then say an *Anima Christi*.

Colloquy 3 To ask the same of the Father that He grants this Himself, and say an Our Father.

Contemplating His Life

The image: A seed is a carrier of a full life contained in a very small recipient. It needs care and time to grow. If just for one moment in your life you have contemplated a seed growing, you will never forget the value of small things. The same happens when we contemplate Jesus.



Steps in Ignatian Contemplation:

1. **Choose** a Gospel text for your prayer. Prepare it before entering your sacred space.
2. **Prepare** for gospel contemplation by being still for a time. Be aware of God's presence within you and all around you. With the eyes of your heart, 'look at God looking at you'. Be aware that the Spirit is guiding you in your prayer.
3. **Be aware** of yourself in the presence of God, your moods, your desires, your hopes. Out of that awareness try to focus on a particular grace to ask of the Lord during your prayer time.

Asking for Grace: O Lord, teach me your ways (Ps. 25). Jesus please show me where is the fulfilling and happy life to which you are inviting me to. Teach me to have interior knowledge of you in order to better love and follow you.

4. **Read** and re-read the gospel passage letting its details settle into your memory.
5. **Using the senses of your imagination**, see and hear the scene in which the event takes place, the people who are there, their expression, their posture, their words. Do not be afraid to let your creativity take over when you do this. How you see and hear will often be how the Gospel passage will touch you.
6. **Use your other senses** (smell, taste, touch) both literally and spiritually. What is the taste, the feel of the interactions in the story, and how do they touch you? Identify with one or other person in the story. You can come back to the story time and time again living it in the position of other persons within the text, including Jesus.
7. **Be spontaneous.** Enter into your own conversation and interact in your own way with the persons in the story. The Gospel passage becomes the backdrop for your own involvement with Jesus. If at a certain point you feel drawn to be silent and to simply **enjoy the presence of God**, stay there. Do not feel the need to move on. Take time to listen and hear what God has to say
8. **Gather together the main strands** of your contemplation and spend a few minutes giving attention to the part in the contemplation that most deeply moved you. Also be aware of those parts of the contemplation that have disturbed you or left you cold. There is something in that for exploration another time.
9. Speak to the Lord in a spontaneous **colloquy**. Conclude with the Our Father or some other favourite prayer.

Texts and guidelines for prayer

- UAP1 - **Luke 5:1-11 - Jesus calls to work beside him** “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.” “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.”
 - Jesus leads us out of the shores we know. He invites us to enter deeper waters, to cast the net where we had not fished before. It is an invitation to trust in God.
 - Spiritual Exercises and Discernment are possible if we journey to our deepest self. We are called to offer an alternative to other secular trends.
- UAP2 - **Marc 6:30-44 – Jesus feeds the people.** “You give them something to eat.” “How many loaves do you have?” ... He gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people.
 - I recall the gifts I have received from God, my loaves of bread. I ask Jesus to feed other (the poor, the outcast, the sufferers...) with the gifts given to me.
 - With Jesus I can be a server of reconciliation and justice in the world.
- UAP 3 - **Luke 7:11-17 – Jesus raises a widow’s son** - When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.” ... “Young man, I say to you, get up!”
 - Human stories touch the heart of Jesus. What was a dead child, resurrected as a man. Jesus helped to make possible this journey to create a hope-filled future for him.
 - With Him we what to help young people feel themselves loved and healed, saved and forgiven.
- UAP 4 - **Matthew 8:23-27 - Jesus calms the storm** - “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” ... He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.
 - We are all in the same boat (the Church, the common house...). Sometimes God seems to be sleep. Which are the storms that threat our life together?
 - We need a new relationship with the environment. We can live with a new horizon, embracing Jesus’ vision of the Kingdom of God, of a renewed and transformed world and ecosystem where we are all brothers and sisters, responsible to each other.

Colloquy

Do not forget to finish your prayer in a gentle dialogue with God: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and conclude with your favourite prayer: Our Father, Anima Christi, Psalm 23

The Image of God From the Last Supper to Gethsemane



The image: We like to light candles to pray to God.

There are times when darkness becomes more intense and we find it more difficult to see God and our brothers and sisters. It is precisely in this darkness that God reveals Himself as the closest one to our suffering. However, this is not easy to perceive. Suffering is a theological place where one comes to know God. Tell me what you think about human suffering and I will tell you the image of God you have.

Texts

- **Sp. Ex. 196** - Ignatius invites us to enter in the mystery of God: "Consider how Divinity hides itself"
- **John 13:1-17** - Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet
 - Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.
 - ...So he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.
 - "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."
 - "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."
- **Jesus prays at Gethsemane**
 - **Mark 14:32-40** – He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."
 - **Luke 22:39-45** - He knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

Asking for Grace:

I ask the Lord for the grace of being with Him and being able to identify myself with the pain and suffering that He underwent for me in His Passion.

Guidelines for prayer

- Contemplate how **"He loved them to the end"**. During the meal, Jesus observes his disciples in silence. It is a time of contemplation, of thanksgiving, of petition, and of offering. He looks at them one by one, he recalls the building of the community, a first and imperfect sign of the Kingdom to come.
- Jesus **"takes a different place"**. He places himself at his companions' feet, inverts the roles and "dis"places us. He becomes one of many, lowers and dispossesses himself of this status and, with his gesture, dignifies his disciples, and makes them real, and unites them with He who serves. What places or posts do I occupy or have in my life? With what attitude or disposition have I occupied these places or posts?
- Jesus invites us: **"you are to do as I have done for you"**. He washed the feet of the twelve, including Peter and Judas. Peter in shock reacts to Jesus' gesture - he cannot allow the Teacher "to be out of his place" and, once again, Jesus' reply is astounding. Jesus wants to be among them at the place he has chosen. How do I accept the help of others, their nice gestures, the lessons they can teach me?
- I consider and imagine the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane. I imagine how he would speak to the Father knowing that all his friends were about to abandon Him.. **Where does he get the faith and assurance from?** Is this the way to build the Kingdom of God? How do we spread the Good News of a God who is Father when it now entails conflict and the risk of death?
- **Am I able to pray in my moments of anguish, darkness, tiredness and anger?** What is my image of God in these moments? Is there any "angel" to help me? Is God still the centre of my prayer?

Colloquy

I sit next to Jesus, accompany him, speak to him about what it means to share this moment of my life, to receive his will, and tell him about the feelings and hopes that are stirred up in me. Pray together with Jesus... Our Father

The Consequences of His Preferences. Three Judgements



The image: The physical principle of action and reaction is also fulfilled in the actions of our life. Every action has its consequences and some are disproportionate. Similarly, Jesus' actions had their consequences when the authorities saw him as a threat to social stability, the political order and the religious immobilism. Jesus' preferences led him to actions that led him to the cross.

Texts

▪ Religious Judgement:

- **Luke 22:70-71** - They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You say that I am." Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips."
- **Luke 23:5** - They insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."
- **Matthew 26:57-68** - ... Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! ... What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered.

▪ Political Judgement:

- **Mark 15:1-15** - "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them. "Crucify him!" they shouted.
- **John 19:1-16** - "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

▪ Social Judgement:

- **Luke 23:8-12** - When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. ... Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him.
- **Matthew 26 69-75** - "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

Asking for Grace:

I ask the Lord to give me the interior knowledge of the link between Jesus' preferences and the passion he endured for all of us.

Guidelines for prayer

- Before entering prayer I choose the texts that I am going to pray with. I try to contemplate Jesus in his trials before religious, political and social tribunals.
 - Religious Judgement: Jesus has blasphemed against God. He has ridiculed the Jewish authorities. He has shown no respect for the law and traditions. All this cannot come from God. Hence, he must die.
 - Political Judgement: Jesus has disturbed the Roman peace and that of his governor. Pilate does not want to lose political friends or money by taking Jesus' side. He then seeks an accusation of rebellion against Caesar. If Jesus declares himself king; He must die.

- Social Judgement: Jesus remains completely alone. Separated from friends who deny him and surrounded by enemies who mock him. Herod sees him as a celebrity who deceives him. Jesus is a fraud; He must die.
- Imagine you were in a trial and were Jesus' defending lawyer, try to bring to the stand the witnesses on Jesus' behalf. Ask those who witnessed his good deeds to testify. The people he helped, the parables he taught, his coherent life. Unfortunately, all his good deeds do not count in the eyes of the judges and authorities. Similarly, I consider that throughout history the followers of Jesus have often suffered the same consequences as the Master. The Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus are a fruit of discernment; they have been given to us. "The preferences are an opportunity for us to feel that we are the least Society in collaboration with others": (letter UAPs pg. 8). This world is not going to allow it.
 - In a world that does not want to hear about God, we want to make the Good News known.
 - In a world that protects itself from the poor, the migrants, the excluded, we want to open the doors to hospitality.
 - In a world where young people live under infinity of models that hijack Christian values, we want to accompany them to a future with faith and hope.
 - In a world where the economic benefit counts more than the environmental sustainability of the planet, we want to live and take care of a common house for all humanity.

Colloquy Anima Christi.

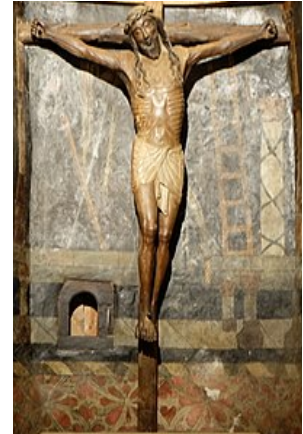
Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
 Body of Christ, save me.
 Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
 Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
 Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
 O Good Jesus, hear me.
 Within your wounds hide me.
 Permit me not to be separated from you.
 From the wicked foe, defend me.
 At the hour of my death, call me
 and bid me come to you
 That with your saints I may praise you
 For ever and ever.
 Amen.

The Seven Last Sayings of Jesus on the Cross.



The image:

The image of Christ in Saint Francis Xavier Castle (13th Century). Many Jesuits throughout history have prayed in front of this image, especially the missionaries who went to faraway lands like St. Francis Xavier. Looking at his face helps us to feel beside Christ in his Passion. Throughout his life, Jesus opened his arms to embrace all of us. On the cross, with his arms wide open, he reached the most vulnerable position a man can be in.



Asking for Grace

I ask for the grace of becoming one with Christ's feelings on the cross, so as to feel closer to the pain and grief he suffered because of us.

Texts and guidelines for prayer:

I go through the passion of Christ, letting especially Christ's last seven sayings on the cross resound within me. Identifying his words in my life and contexts as a call for conversion and action in favour of those who need reconciliation and justice.

- **Luke 23:34: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.**
 - Forgiveness: For the perpetrators, for those who kill the innocent, for those who keep quiet, for those who deny, for those who hide...
 - Jesus forgives not because we deserve it, but because he brings mercy and not revenge or anger.
 - He does not deny or justify what is unjust; he opens other ways even from the cross. ("without forgiveness there is no future" Desmond Tutu)
 - Who are those that "don't know what they're doing" in today's world? Who are the victims who open new paths?
- **Mark 15:34 My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?**
 - Psalm 22. We need God to touch with his blessing our experiences of emptiness and abandonment.
 - "There's no solitude in which you don't grow strong" (José Luis Blanco Vega, SJ)
 - Do you recall experiences of abandonment and absence of God? On the other hand, call to mind moments of faith and trust?
- **Luke 23:43: Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.**
 - The good thief sees something in Jesus that brings a change of heart. If I were in his same position, would I be able to show the same faith in Jesus?
 - Jesus welcomes his request and opens his doors wide open. God's heart has a place for everyone. He wants to prepare a place for us.
 - He is always the shepherd of the lost sheep.
- **John 19:26–27: Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother**
 - Together with Mary I remember the sorrowful mothers of all times
 - Our Lady is the first woman of the new humanity. She has opened to us the home of the followers of Jesus.
 - Who are the men and women who make today's new humanity?

- John 19:28: **I thirst.**
 - Jesus knows the limits of human thirst
 - It's a basic need that makes him shout from the cross.
 - The Christian response: "I will be the one to quench your thirst" Saint Theresa of Calcutta

- Luke 23:46: **Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.**
 - They are words of profound trust in God as a safe place in life and death.
 - Trust in the Father is not something imposed. It does not give prefabricated answers to human pain but allows us to live the processes of mourning.
 - What are the situations of pain that I leave in God's hands?

- John 19:30: **It is accomplished**
 - Everything is blessed, everything is assumed, everything is saved...in Christ.
 - When everything human is assumed, the incarnation is fulfilled
 - The grain of wheat has died and fallen to the ground... fidelity will bear fruit.

Colloquy Anima Christi.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
 Body of Christ, save me.
 Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
 Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
 Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
 O Good Jesus, hear me.
 Within your wounds hide me.
 Permit me not to be separated from you.
 From the wicked foe, defend me.
 At the hour of my death, call me
 and bid me come to you
 That with your saints I may praise you
 For ever and ever.
 Amen.

Words of Resurrection

The image: I begin this retreat by imagining my life of faith as a flowing river. Thinking of the presence of the Risen Lord I cannot forget the image of the water of life that is present in everything.

Asking for Grace

«To ask for what I want, and here it will be to ask for grace to feel gladness and to rejoice intensely over the great glory and joy of Christ Our Lord» [Sp Ex 221]. Once again, the center of our prayer is to share Jesus' experience, an experience of fullness and fulfilment. Jesus should be the center of our lives, not us. This de-centering of our lives is something we must bear in mind at all times.



Texts and guidelines for prayer

The resurrection of Jesus is the Passover from death to life. The resurrection is a new relationship with God that generates a more authentic and deeper life for those who want to follow Him.

- Let the risen Lord reach your life as he did with his disciples, with Mary Magdalene, with his Mother...
- Let yourself be found through Jesus in the tomb, in the garden, in the cenacle, in all the ways and paths of your life.
- In the Resurrection of Jesus there are words of life. Go through the sayings of the resurrection passages and ask the Lord to accompany you in your journey from death to life wherever you need it most.

Peace be with you (from anxiety and distress to hope and peace)

- Luke 24:36 - 36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."
- John 20:19-29 - Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you!"

Don't be afraid. From fear to apostolic courage

- Matthew 28:10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."
- Matthew 28:20 - and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Community: From individualism to unity

- John 20:17 - Go instead to my brothers and tell them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.
- Luke 24:13-33 - They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen."

Mission: From dispersion to live with a mission

- Matthew 28:19-20 - Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
- Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."
- John 21:1-25 - He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."...
- John 20:19-29 - As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

Discernment: from being distracted to be centred in the Holy Spirit

- Luke 24:13-33 - And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.
- John 20:19-29 - And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."...

Witnesses: from sharing second-hand stories to be first-line testimonies

- Luke 24:45-48 - Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: ... You are witnesses of these things.

Personal relationship with God: From distance to reconciliation and blessing

- John 20:11-18 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"... Jesus said to her, "Mary."
- John 20:19-29 - Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
- John 21:1-25 - Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Colloquy: I talk to the Risen Lord sharing my prayer. Which of his words resonates most strongly in me today? and I finish praying "Take Lord, receive..."

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
All I have and call my own.

You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.

All in the Same Boat with Him

The image

The seashore with Jesus. I imagine my community and myself during a moment of rest with the Lord, sharing the fruit of our work.



Texts:

- **John 21:1-17**

- *"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you."*
- *He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"*
- *Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.*
- *Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep".*

- **Fr. General: Part III: The necessary personal, communal, and institutional conversion**

Receiving the preferences means that we initiate their implementation immediately by changing any styles of life or work that hinder the renewal of the persons, communities, and works committed to mission. We are inspired by the response of the first apostles, who promptly abandoned their nets and their lives as fishermen in order to set out on the path of discipleship following Jesus. (Pg. 8)

Making our communities spaces for communal discernment where a life of prayer is encouraged, the Eucharist is shared and spiritual conversation is practiced enables us to share the gift of discernment as a way of letting ourselves be guided by the Spirit in apostolic works and in all ministries. Living simply, close to the poor, awakens the creativity we need to do more with less, and it gives greater credibility to our apostolic work offered freely to others. (Pg. 9)

It corresponds to us, as a body obedient to the Holy Spirit, to plan with diligence the implementation of the preferences in every dimension of our life-mission. **The preferences seek to unleash a process of apostolic revitalization and creativity that makes us better servants of reconciliation and justice.** (Pg. 9)

Let us undertake this process, designing it and assessing it *in accord with persons, times, and places* in the light of the Church's orientations and the Spirit's guidance. (Pg. 10)

- **Saint Ignatius:** "Love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words." Contemplation to Attain Love -Spiritual Exercises 230- 237

Asking for Grace

I ask God for the interior knowledge of such great good received, so that, being moved to profound gratitude, me, my community and province may be able to love and serve His Divine Majesty in all things.

Guidelines for prayer

- Read the Gospel text and imagine the scene. Contemplate the way Jesus, through His resurrection, gathers the community of disciples around the work, the Eucharist and the personal relationship with each one of us.
- Like St. Peter there are times when we jump into the water to look for Jesus, but then there are times when we get distracted counting 153 fish when Jesus is beside us. The new approach to the UAPs focuses not on “action”, but on “conversion” that leads to action. Are there distractions in our personal and community life which we can work on to embrace the conversion that the UAPs ask of us?
- Read the third part of Fr. General's letter and imagine possible steps which could help our community to share in the spiritual path that has opened itself to us with the UAPs.
- Only recognition and gratitude for so much good received can help us to follow Jesus closely. More than three times we will ask ourselves if, in spite of everything, we love Him; and He will continue giving us a mission saying "feed my sheep".

Colloquy : Conversation with God Present to the Risen Lord your lights and shadows, your certainties and distractions, both in personal and community life, and ask for the grace to live the conversion that enables us to participate in Christ's mission. Ask the intercession of Our Lady to help us remain close to Her Son in the development of the UAPs .



Attaining Love

The image

Isaiah 49:17 Those who build you go faster than those who demolish you.

Sp. Ex. 230-231. First, love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words. Second, love consists in a mutual communication between two persons. That is, the one who loves gives and communicates to the beloved what he or she has, or a part of what one has or can have; and the beloved in return does the same to the lover. Thus, if the one has knowledge, one gives it to the other who does not, and similarly in regard to honors or riches



Asking for Grace

To ask for the interior knowledge of all the goodness I have received, in order that, stirred to profound gratitude, I may be able to love and serve in all things.

Texts and guidelines for prayer:

- **Sp. Ex 230-237** – Follow the Ignatian contemplation steps.
 - **God's memory** (SE234). To discover our history out of love: Loved by the One who has given me life (creation). Loved by him in this or that occasion (and always) as he has always been "my Saviour" (redemption).
 - **God's dwelling** (SE235). He does not only grant us the gift, but His presence. Love is never far away. It is following the notion, "I'll be with you", as Jesus said many times.
 - **God's labors and work** (SE236). He does not only grant us gifts and dwells in all of us, but He is doing so for me. Remember with love all those people who have given you a gift that they have made thinking about you.
 - **All is a gift** (SE237). "All the good things and gifts descend from above". There is no other source of goodness but God and what He gives me is a part of Himself, "just as the rays come down from the sun, or the rains from their source..."; for this reason, there is the emotion of those whose eyes are enlightened from the heart. God is descending so that the smallest may be at His height.
 - **Take Lord Receive...**
- **Psalm 13** - God's Work in Creation and in History
 - Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.
 - I rewrite the psalm of my life. I do my own reading as a believer of my last days, months, years...
 - I give thanks for the successes and for the strength, but I might also want to consider being grateful for my weaknesses and apparent failures
- **Deuteronomy 8:7-18** – Bless the Lord for the good land given to you.
 - For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land ...
 - Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God...
 - I face the temptation of forgetting when I dwell in the Promised Land.
 - Always remember the One who gave you strength to reach your wealth.

Contemplative way : The ten lepers - Luke 17 :11-19

- Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."
 - Where are the other nine? Where are you when you feel the action of God? Am I one of those nine at times? Let me ask for conversion.
 - Feel the asymmetry before God at the moment of thanking and worshipping him.
 - Learn from the Samaritans, foreigners, and the ones in shadows.
 - Your grateful faith leads you to a new way of living in thankfulness

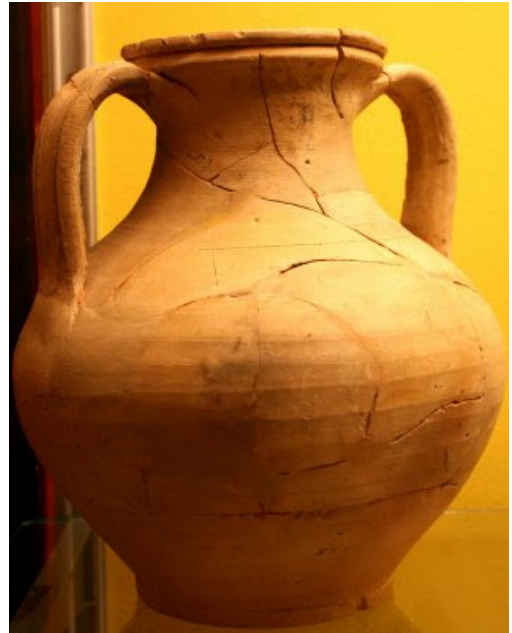
Colloquy Let your heart pour out a chant as a reply to all the good received: TAKE, LORD, AND RECEIVE...

An Exercise of Reform

1. **I ask for a humble, pure and free attitude.** The image now is the image of my self at the en of the retreat: My own image.

*Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in. (Leonard Cohen)*

2. **I read the reviewing prayers.** I see the origin and direction of those moments in which I have experienced consolation, inner peace, calmness, spiritual harmony, light... I also focus on those moments in which I have experienced desolation, anxiety, obscurity, lack of hope...
3. **I write down in a few words a title for all my experience of the Exercises** up until now, something expressing the core of these days. I could recall a text from the Gospel in which that nuclear aspect is well depicted, or simply a passage that has been more meaningful to me during these days.



4. **I remember as a given gift the action verbs of the four Universal Apostolic Preferences:**
 - Showing the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment
 - Walking with the excluded. Walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice.
 - Journeying with youth. Accompanying young people in the creation of a hope-filled future.
 - Caring for our common home. Collaborate with Gospel depth, for the protection and renewal of God's Creation.
5. **Which attitudes should I deepen into** to make the title become more real in my life according to the UAPs? I put 3, and then take just one. For example: simplicity, cleanness, honesty, union with God, trust, patience, mission, let myself be loved, attention, community, mastering my time, being closer to the suffering of the world, help, respect...
6. **Which means could I put?** I look for the possible, not the impossible; the ordinary, not the extraordinary, the simple, not the complex... For example, prayer, be more with people, community, personal accompaniment, duties at home, daily exam, sacraments... But any means has to be specific to be evaluated: vagueness leads to reform nothing.
7. **Colloquy.** I offer it to the Lord and seek confirmation. The Third and Fourth Weeks are moments especially adequate to confirm or adapt the reform.

**The Reform is nothing more – or less – than the way God encourages us
to carry the Exercises to our everyday life**

Pray from gratitude and for gratitude

Keep this recipe for your life:

- To know what is good is to acknowledge who has shown it to you and given it to you.
- Gratitude is a spontaneous and learnable attitude.
- Gratitude can be chosen in the face of attitudes of complaint or resentment. But beware of hurting yourself: you can also recognize what is unjust and complain about it.

Ask God to heal your experience of time:

- Faced with the unhealthy nostalgia of the past... show gratitude
- In the face of unnecessary anguish for the future... show gratitude

Ask God to mature in your spiritual life and in accepting success and failure alike

- In consolation, when pride and self-sufficiency appear, when there is a risk of scepticism and not needing God... insist on gratitude
- In desolation, when we see and feel nothing, we can complain, while looking for sources of trust and gratitude all along.
- In success: "Thank you Lord for with you everything would have been much better"
- In failure: "Thank you Lord for without you all this would have been much worse"

Gratitude as the most humanly healthy root of our commitment

- o *Thinking is thanking.* (Denken ist Danken) – Martin Heidegger
- o *To love another person is to see the face of God.* Victor Hugo, Les Misérables

Psalms of Gratitude

Your right hand sustains me;
You stoop down to make me great.
You made room for my steps.
(Psalm 18)

for you have been my help
and I am safe in the shadow of your wings.
I follow you closely and your right hand upholds me.
(Psalm 63)

Blessed be the Lord,
for he has heard my voice as I plead for mercy.
The Lord is my strength and my shield;
in him my heart trusts. I am sustained, and my heart
leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.
(Psalm 28)

I shall praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart.
And give honour to your name for ever.
For your love towards me is great,
and you have rescued me from the depths of Sheol.
(Psalm 86)

Blessed be the Lord,
whose unfailing love for me was wonderful...
In sudden alarm I said, 'I am shut out from your sight';
But you heard my plea when I called to you for help.
(Psalm 31)

It is good to give thanks to the Lord...
To declare your love in the morning and your
faithfulness every night...
Your acts, Lord, fill me with exultation;
I shout in triumph at your mighty deeds.
How great are your deeds, Lord,
How very deep are your thoughts!
(Psalm 92)

I shall praise you ...
for our unfailing love is as high as the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches the skies.
(Psalm 57)

Bless the Lord, my soul, and forget none of his
benefits.
He pardons all my wrongdoings and heals all my ills.
He rescues me from death's pit and crowns me with
love and compassion.
He satisfies me with all good in the prime of life.
(Psalm 103)

Thus all my life I bless you...
I call you to mind my bed
and meditate on you in the night watches,