



DAY #1

THE FIFTH WEEK

Congratulations and welcome to Day 1 of the “Fifth Week!” Let us give thanks to God for the many blessings and received throughout these fifty days of *Spiritual Exercises*.

When we finish the exercises, we can be like the apostles coming down with our Lord after His transfiguration on Mt. Tabor (cf. Lk 9). Although this wasn’t exactly a ‘total retreat’ (it is partial; in a total retreat you do nothing but pray), we still had a special time of closeness to the Lord. Perhaps many things were revealed to you; perhaps you received an insight in your spiritual life. And now you may be asking...what now? The apostles seemed to have a similar experience at Our Lord’s Ascension into heaven:

*⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “**Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?**” ⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.” ⁹And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, “**Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?**” This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:6-14)*

So does this mean we are all supposed to become super **active**? St. Paul says:

***3** So if you have been raised with Christ, **seek the things that are above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your **minds on things that are above**, not on things that are on earth, **3** for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ who is your ^{life} life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. (Col 3:1-4)*

What do we do now? We try to imitate Christ, to seek the will of God in all things (I always do what is pleasing to my Father, cf. Jn 8:29).

Now what **should** I do? In first place – try and build a **routine of prayer**:

- Morning Offering?
- Daily rosary?
- Sacramental life
 - Daily Mass? (this is best!)
 - Regular confession (monthly, or even every two weeks)

Perhaps less – but something **consistent! Consistency is crucial!**

Let’s discuss a few things, a few particular fruits from the exercises:

- 1 - Elections (vocation)
- 2 - Reform (Plan) of Life
- 3 - Daily Examination
 - Particular

- General

1 - ELECTIONS (VOCATION)

- This is one of the key parts of the exercises; to try and see what's God will is for me, as we said in the first point:

...so we **call Spiritual Exercises** every way of preparing and disposing the soul **to rid itself of all inordinate attachments, and, after their removal, of seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of our life for the salvation of our soul.** [1]

- If we are discerning our call in life, we have to 'do something'
- Let's not sit around waiting forever:
 - If you think you are called join priesthood or religious life, start visiting and talking with vocation directors!
 - Get a spiritual director (or at least talk with a priest)
 - And realize that working on holiness is key (you'll do this in whatever state of life you are in)

2 - REFORM OF LIFE

- Good to save this (that one sheet of paper)
- If you haven't already, good to finish the *Reform or Plan of Life*
- On a monthly basis, to review this, to see more or less how things are going
- The spiritual life is not a matter of feelings (consolation and desolation); feelings may help us discern 'what to do', but not the measure of 'how we are doing'
- It's better to work towards acquiring virtue.
- Our plan of life gives us certain things that we can spend time working on,

3 - EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

- Particular Examination → on **one thing** ([link](#))
- General Examination → more 'general' ([link](#))

What else can I do?

It can be good to take the Exercises in their more 'traditional' formal if possible (often for people in the world, it is 3 days, a Friday night through Monday afternoon). It allows one to really go into the silence, to 'withdraw' better. St. Ignatius points this out in point [20]:

*To one who is **more disengaged**, and desirous of making as much progress as possible, all the Spiritual Exercises should be given in the same order in which they follow below.*

***Ordinarily**, the **progress** made in the Exercises will be **greater**, the **more** the exercitant **withdraws** from all friends and acquaintances, and from all worldly cares. For example, he can leave the house in which he dwelt and choose another house or room in order to live there in as great privacy as possible, so that he will be free to go to Mass and Vespers every day without any fear that his acquaintances will cause any difficulty.*


*There are **many advantages** resulting from this separation, but the following three are the most important:*


1. *First, if in order to serve and praise God our Lord one withdraws from numerous friends and acquaintances and from many occupations not undertaken with a pure intention, he gains no little merit before the Divine Majesty.*
2. *Secondly, in this seclusion the mind is not engaged in many things, but can give its whole attention to one single interest, that is, to the service of its Creator and its spiritual progress. Thus it is more free to use its natural powers to seek diligently what it so much desires.*
3. *Thirdly, the more the soul is in solitude and seclusion, the more **fit it renders itself to approach** and be united with its Creator and Lord; and the more closely it is united with Him, the more it disposes itself to receive graces and gifts from the infinite goodness of its God. [20]*


The advantage of the online? You can go through ‘more’ exercises (especially week 2). So while this version is suggested by St. Ignatius (cf. [19]), the preferred is this ‘**in person**’. To see upcoming ‘**in person**’ retreats, see here([link](#)).


It is great – if possible – to take the *Spiritual Exercises* every year.

Ongoing Formation


- It is important to keep filling our mind with good things. Of course:
 - Holy Scripture (perhaps reading the daily readings, with the Magnificat), reading through the Gospels, etc.
-  Catholic Resources to Grow in Your Faith

 Daily Homilies from IVE missionary priests: ([YouTube](#) / Spotify)

 The Sower [Blog](#): *Helping people live according to the Gospel through reflections inspired by the teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*

 [IVE Press](#): *A publishing house offering solid Catholic formation books.*

 [Catholic Q&A](#): *A platform to ask questions and learn more about the Catholic faith.*

 Institute of the Incarnate Word ([IVE](#)): *Chronicles and photos of the missionary work of the Institute around the world.*

Things to do

- **Pray** for the fruits of the Spiritual Exercises
- Be an **apostle of the exercises**
 - tell others about them and recommending they take them
 - especially any of those discerning their vocation or seeking to truly grow in holiness.
- **Help out** with the exercises (cooks, coordinating, driving, etc.)
- **Support financially** (this apostolate is made available at no charge, but there are costs involved (production, some volunteers and some paid staff to post and edit the videos)
 - Cameras
 - Lighting
 - Hosting the website
- **Survey / Poll / Feedback** (coming soon)



In conclusion, let us consider the famous “Letter to Diognetus”

*To sum up all in one word — what the soul is in the body, **Christians are in the world**. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and **Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world**. The soul dwells in the body, yet is not of the body; and *Christians dwell in the world, yet are not of the world*. The invisible soul is guarded by the visible body, and **Christians are known indeed to be in the world**, but their godliness remains invisible.*

3 *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. (Col 3:1)*

³³ *But **seek first his kingdom and his righteousness**, and all these things shall be yours as well. (Mt 6:33)*

This is our life as Christians – to be “in” the world, but not living by the Spirit of the world (*I chose you out of the world* (Jn 15:19b). To seek holiness. To keep striving.

May God bless you all, may you stay close to Mary our Mother. Let us close by praying, by offering to the Blessed Virgin Mary all the spiritual fruits we have received and asking her for the grace to persevere in our good resolutions, in all the graces and all the goods that our Lord has given us in these exercises, and above all, to ask the Blessed Virgin that she obtain for us the grace from her Son to imitate Him more and more perfectly:

Hail Mary...Glory Be...We give you thanks Almighty God...

St. Ignatius of Loyola, pray for us.

May God bless you all!