



Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life

By John Cooper

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¹ Picture credit: Rembrandt, The Philosopher in Meditation

Thank You

Thanks to John Lochman, PHD, and Linda Dover, PHD
for their suggestions concerning this course.

Thanks to the following individuals for their encouragement, prayers and inspiration:

Christopher Viscardi, S.J.

Michael Hansen, S.J.

Joseph Tetlow, S.J.

Madeleine Gregg, fcJ

Preface

What you are about to read is a course or class designed for small group usage as an adaption of the 18th Annotation of the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola* that could well assist you in your final journey in this life to reach the absolute finality of life in our physical bodies. Many postpone considering this reality, imagining perhaps death is not going to happen. It will happen. It has to happen.

This document is a manual for giving of this adaption of the 18th Annotation that accepts each person where they actually are in the process of death. The givers¹ of this small group course, (hopefully two in a pair as two by two associates), will listen for movements of the Spirit and become your Spiritual Friend or Spiritual Companion on this journey of dying and death we all must take.

May you be blessed in your quest!

John Cooper, CSD

¹ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, "Givers" and "Receivers" in place of "Spiritual Director."

Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life: Overview of a Small Group Class

Purpose of the Courses: The intention of this small group course is to provide spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional accompaniment for individuals in the final third of our lives.

Audience: those of us who are in the final third of their lives, who are chronically ill, and/or who are caring for the ill, suffering, or dying. Generally speaking this means those age 60 years or older or those facing end of life issues such as terminal illness. We will explore the mystery of suffering, death and of eternal life. We ask you to purchase at this time is *Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life*, the textbook for this small group class. An optional reference for you will be *A Beginners Guide to the End*, but this book will not be required which is for your reference and is not anticipated to be in small group discussion.

Method and meeting times: We are planning for nine total weekly meetings to read and discuss *Pilgrimage into the Final Third of Life*. We will have one Orientation meeting, seven “Gateway” meetings in which we will confidentially discuss each Gateway section of our textbook, and a final “Celebration” meeting. This is a light load which should give time for prayer, reflection and other reading and contemplation as desired. After reading each “Gateway” plan to put your book down or only look at the questions at the end of the section and write whatever comes to your mind in your “Listening Book”² which you will bring to every meeting and have a period of time for confidential discussion and listening to each other share.

Spiritual Directors: We are certain to find as we take this course together that the Holy Spirit is our “real” Spiritual Director whom we meet in every meeting and who watches over us from above. Her Presence will be recognized as we listen to each other, care for each other, all the while discerning the movements of the Holy Spirit among us. I, John Cooper, am a Certified Spiritual Director, in the Jesuit tradition, and Christian Spirituality for the final third of life is my primary focus at this time. John Lochman is my associate in this group and a Clinical Psychologist who attends St. Francis Church with me.

Vision: We hope our companionship may become a pilot example for other Parishes, Dioceses, and non-Catholic Churches also. The format may replicate via the “two by two” principles spoken of in the New Testament as Disciples were sent out “two by two” to teach and share the Gospel.

There is one additional reference source we hope you will explore. We hope you will subscribe to the Field Hospital Exercises of Fr. Michael Hansen, SJ, of Australia at this link: <https://www.first-exercises.com/field-hospital-sign-up/>. This link will allow you to receive weekly 18th Annotation style prayer exercises for meditation and access to about 80 other exercises that may fit a particular need you have.

John Cooper

² I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, “Listening Book,” known in other terms as “Journal.”

Appendix

The purpose of this Appendix is to explain that there are several possibilities for future groups, including discussing *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*, by Richard Rohr. Rohr's book explains the beginning quest in our lives of "getting," having," "building up," then in the second half letting go of some of those concerns and "falling" upwards into the loving embrace of our God as we anticipate a life better to come. Each of the future possibilities will be discerned according to potential group's needs, desires, and Pastoral approval.

Another possibility for discussion may be my book, *Let God In: One Ignatian Journey*, which shares a period in my life of 32 weeks, digesting it as an easy to follow description of my taking the 19th Annotation of the Exercises of St. Ignatius, in daily life. You will be introduced to the 500 year old method of the Spiritual Exercises that lead one through 4 "Weeks" of giving up everything to live only in God's love and grace, learning to know Him more clearly, follow Him more nearly, and love Him more dearly. In a way, this is my personal testimony to dying to the self in daily life. At the end of this session, you may wish to take these Spiritual Exercises yourself.

The third possibility subject to discernment, need, and approval for this course is for advanced students who wish to explore the mystery of life after death and what happens to all men after we die. This book is *Dare We Hope*, by Hans Urs von Balthasar, a Swiss Theologian who was appointed Cardinal, by Pope John Paul II, but he died before consistory. *Dare We Hope* looks into the question of if "all" men will be saved, or only some will be saved and others will go to a place of eternal punishment. There are several ways of viewing this dilemma, in the Catholic Tradition, but in the end, the matter will remain a Mystery even though there are Scriptural ways to attempt to "prove" the matter from several viewpoints.

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2021 – Times and places to be determined

Description: This small group course is intended to be conducted in small group. The participants are referred to as “receivers” of the Spiritual benefits of this course. Spirituality for the final third of life will be approached from a Christian point of view.

Required Text (Please Bring to Class Each Time)

-*Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life: 7 Gateways to Spiritual Growth* by Jane Marie Thibault and Richard L. Morgan; Upper Room Books 2012. ISBN 978-0-8358-1117-0.¹

Other resources:

-*Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr; Josey-Bass, 2011. ISBN 978-0470-90775-7.²

-*Let God In: One Ignatian Journey*: by John Cooper, Austin Macauley Press, 2019. ISBN 9781528927482.³

-*A Beginners Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living life and Facing Death*, by Bruce L. Miller/Shoshana Berger, Simon & Schuster, 2019 ISBN 9781501157165.⁴

-Other handouts to be used as course progresses including the *Field Hospital Exercises* of Fr. Michael Hansen, SJ of Australia.⁵

Dare we Hope “That All Men Be Saved”?, by Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Ignatius Press, 2014, ISBN 978-1-58617-942-7.¹

Required Reading

The readings above are the basis of small group discussion and Spiritual progress into our own aging and death, all the while seeking Divine unity, now and in our sure coming transition into life after death. Page assignments will be given for each class. The first session will be for 9 weekly session to discuss *Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life: 7 Gateways to Spiritual Growth* **in advance**. *A Beginners Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living life and Facing Death* is an optional text. **The class will progress at a pace whereby one can read the assigned pages a little at a time before the small group discussions take place.**

So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to all the generations to come (Psalm 71:18 – NRSV).

¹https://www.amazon.com/Pilgrimage-into-Last-Third-Life/dp/0835811174/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=pilgrimage+into+the+last+third+of+life&qid=1624110854&sr=8

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²https://www.amazon.com/Falling-Upward-Spirituality-Halves-Life/dp/0470907754/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3GY0YD7MR9KH0&dchild=1&keywords=falling+upward+rohr&qid=162411163

1&sprefix=Falling+UpWard%2Caps%2C261&sr=8-1

³https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Let+God+In%3A+One+Ignatian+Journey&ref=nb_sb_noss_2

⁴https://www.amazon.com/Beginners-Guide-End-Practical-Advice-ebook/dp/B07M9LN65C/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=A+Beginners+Guide+to+the+End&qid=1624909189&sr=8-1

⁵<https://first-exercises.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=75fd6f8cf8deaab17d0961da5&id=b548fb5c23&e=a0332c9cc8>

ⁱ This book is for advanced students who wish to explore the possibility and Mystery of Universal Salvation, See: https://www.amazon.com/Dare-Hope-That-All-Saved/dp/158617942X/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3AP9R8IHO083M&dchild=1&keywords=dare+we+hope+von+balthasar&qid=1630528360&sprefix=Dare+We+Hope%2Caps%2C781&sr=8-1

Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life

Class One:

Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life



<http://www.jcooperforpeace.org/>

September 7, 2021

Discussion Guidelines...

Discussion go better when each person:

- 1.) Respects the value of everyone's observations or insights.
- 2.) Allows everyone the opportunity to speak, if they so choose.
- 3.) Focuses the discussion on the topic being discussed.
- 4.) Share freely, but refrain from correcting or giving advice, or interrupting others.
- 5.) Keeps all personal sharing confidential
(once a smaller group is established, all promise to keep confidential info in the group only)
- 6.) Puts unanswered questions on the Future Study List"



Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life

If you are 60+ years of age, or facing an end of life issue.....

How do you envision your life and spiritual journey for the last third of your life?

Consider joining a Circles of Peace small group based upon *Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life*, and other resources.

Email: <mailto:jcooper1154@bellsouth.net> to apply to attend a group.

| P.O. Box 2757, Tuscaloosa, AL 35403 Phone: 205-310-0245 <http://www.jcooperFORpeace.org>



Orientation:

Period of Silence:

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

We should begin each meeting with a notation of respect for God watching over our meeting. For Catholics, the Sign of the Cross is appropriate. For those of other Faiths or no Faiths, perhaps a bow of reverence may be appropriate. However, no one should feel forced or uncomfortable.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

1.) Introductions and brief autobiographies of participants

2.) Reading for next meeting: **Facing Aging and Dying**

(In the Orientation Meeting, we hand out the reading assignments and Agenda for the next meeting.)

3.) Go over Expectations

Refer to handout for overview of this course where our purpose is that is the intention of this small group course is to provide spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional accompaniment for individuals in the final third of our lives. Also the Syllabus provides text books you will need to purchase as needed, however, only two books will be needed for the first class, -*Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life: 7 Gateways to Spiritual Growth* by Jane Marie Thibault and Richard L. Morgan; Upper Room Books 2012. ISBN 978-0-8358-1117-0.

-*A Beginners Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living life and Facing Death*, by Bruce L. Miller/Shoshana Berger, Simon & Schuster, 2019 ISBN 9781501157165.

The later book is for your personal study and is a practical guide concerning what you may need to “do.”

Please bring *Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life* with you to each meeting as well as your personal *Listening Book* which will be described later in this document.

Periodically we will refer to the Field Hospital Exercises which may be utilized as appropriate. See the Overview for details of the Field Hospital Exercises. As well, other supplementary documents may occasionally be shared as handouts.

“Givers³ and Receivers,” are terms we will use which more accurately reflect our intention and replace the terms “Spiritual Director” and “Directee.” A better understanding of a Spiritual Director is someone who does a lot of listening and companioning, not someone who focuses on “telling” others what to do, although some suggestions may be made at times to that end. “Two by Two Partners,” reflect the Biblical remembrance of Jesus sending His disciples out in pairs. We hope at least some Receivers will want to become Givers and go two by two, beginning other groups and thus replicating our Circles of Peace small Groups.

“Apophatic” and “Kataphatic” prayer, are just fancy terms for praying without words, of meditative types of reflection and praying with words, which we will also do. You may wish to look up the terms and what they mean in more detail, but this will become clearer as we go along.

“Colloquy” is another fancy term used by St. Ignatius of Loyola which is a type of prayer that is conversational with God, where one speaks with Jesus as one would speak to a friend.

“Listening Book”⁴ is the term we will use for what is sometimes referred to as your own Personal Journal. You will bring this book to each meeting and share whatever you are inspired to share, that you have heard from the Holy Spirit to write. At the end of each “Gateway” in *Pilgrimage* there are questions for reflection you may wish to address in writing, or, perhaps better, you may wish to merely put the book up and silently reflect, allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire you and write down what you hear. Our group will listen to what you have to say, according to the Guidelines for Group Discussion paper we handed out, and we will all listen for movements of the Holy Spirit.

³ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, “Givers” and “Receivers” in place of “Spiritual Director.”

⁴ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, “Listening Book,” known in other terms as “Journal.”

4.) When we refer to Contemplative Prayer We mean the type of Apophatic prayer mentioned above where one concentrates on one's breath, perhaps having a "Sacred Word" such as "Yahweh" or "Love" in reserve when our naturally distracted mind wants to light up with busy thoughts. This is also referred to as the "Monkey Brain." Sit still, in a relaxed position, releasing any tightness, relaxing the jaw, breathing in, "Yah" and out, "weh" if you begin "thinking". Imagine yourself sitting with God as perhaps a husband and wife sit on a porch together, enjoying each other's presence, not saying anything at all. Sitting with God, in His/Her Presence is enough for us.

5.) Open for Questions:

6.) Period of Silence:

7.) Final Blessing:

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper

John Lochman

Name
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Blessing and Farewell:

Reading and time for next meeting:

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John Cooper

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September 7, 2021

Book Annotation For:

-Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life: 7 Gateways to Spiritual Growth by Jane Marie Thibault and Richard L. Morgan; Upper Room Books 2012. ISBN 978-0-8358-1117-0.

Purpose: In *Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life*, Jane Marie Thibault, a gerontologist, and former professor as well as author and a trained spiritual director partners with Richard L. Morgan, a national leader in issues of aging, a prolific author, with three degrees including a PHD to “address the spiritual concerns of both the hale and frail” (p. 10), and help us consider the following points.

Important Points:

As we age we realize we are on a Pilgrimage and must humbly accept both life and death: Death is described as a place or destination not to be feared because it is a giant leap into the arms of God. (p. 15). We are to view the losses that will inevitably occur as we age, and the losses which we will humbly bear as an affirmation of our being, not as something to be resisted. (pp. 19-25). In a way this is a non-violent movement in our souls where we experience deep inner peace with our self and learn to live with our limitations gracefully. (pp. 37-39). Our humility sets us to work, that is the work of forgiveness, examination, and thankfulness for the life we are still living and have lived. (pp. 40-54). There is still time for other work also. Working on our pride, working out our salvation, dropping our false masks and selfishness are worthy things to do. (pp. 55-63). We may be “retired” from monetary endeavors, but “work” still remains to be done as we age and that work leads to both inner work, and communal work.

The end time of life is a time for communion and community and a time to look for the same in our transition to eternity: A possible goal is to die together, or to die in communion with others as we consider our calling to community. “How good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!” Ps. 133.1 (p. 66). One goal of your being in this small group class is to be a part of a blessed community. Blessings are part of the agenda. We will endeavor to become an inner circle of friends. (Note the name, Circles of Peace, of our small group course.) WE hope to become “soul friends” (pp. 69-70). To this end, we will carry together the armor of God, setting aside our differences, and welcoming each other in community. “The distinguishing mark of a spiritual person is turning strangers into friends.” (Richard Morgan (p. 74). Jane Thibault speaks of becoming a Christ-gift to others. This is a sharing of the Divine within ourselves who lives in community, the Trinity living within us and each other (pp. 81-83).

Dying is also a process in Spirituality: We will consider living the last third of our lives and dying as a spiritual process. Methods of prayer and meditation will be explored. A focus on a contemplative lifestyle will be promoted. Silence and solitude will be considered our sister and brother friends. We will have “time” to deal with the uncertainty of it all, yet, like a delicious meal, we will be able to value our lives for what we have done, with God, on our journey, and consider the legacy we will be leaving for others to enjoy and remember.(pp. 86-140).

Application: This book, *Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life: 7 Gateways to Spiritual Growth* is to be the first text for St. Francis of Assisi, University Parish, our first setting for this adventure, but hopefully our small group course will be useful in other Churches, Assisted Living Facilities, and community programs for the aging. This is the first step, hopefully this course will multiply, helping those over 60 years and anyone who faces terminal health issues.

Recommendation: I recommend this book as a “keeper” for periodic reference and reflection by Spiritual Guides, Psychologists, and Gerontologists and for anyone facing advancing age and death.

John Cooper

Outline for *Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life* Discussion Group

Week 1 Orientation to course

Assignment: Read **Book Annotation for Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life**, (Handout)
“Gateway I: **Facing Ageing and Dying**” and reflect on questions.

Week 2 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read “Gateway 2: **Living with Limitations**” and reflect on questions.

Week 3 Discussion of above

Assignment: Read “Gateway 3: **Doing Inner Work**” and reflect on questions.

Week 4 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read “Gateway 4: **Living in and Out of Community**” and reflect on questions.

Week 5 Discussion of the above.

Assignment: Read “Gateway 5: **Prayer and Contemplation**” and reflect on questions.

Week 6 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read “Gateway 6: **Redeeming Loss and Suffering**” and reflect on questions.

Week 7 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read “Gateway 7: **Leaving a Legacy**” and reflect on questions.

Week 8 Discussion of the above

Week 9 Celebration Meeting



December 23, 2021

Agenda Meeting _1_

Facing Aging and Dying

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

__and the king asked him, “How old are you?”

9Jacob answered, “My life of wandering has lasted 130 years. Those years have been few and difficult, unlike the long years of my ancestors in their wanderings. [KJV = Pilgrimage]

Gen 47: 8-9 GNBKD

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: _____ **Divine Union** _____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine ending my journey and meeting Jesus in brilliant light and living with God forever.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book”⁵ notations for this “Gateway” or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

⁵ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, “Listening Book,” known in other terms as “Journal.”



December 23, 2021

Agenda Meeting 2

Living With Limitations

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the time of affliction arrives and the years draw near, about which you will say, "These do not please me."

2 Before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain,
3 when the guardians of the house will tremble, and the strongest men will waver, and those who grind grain will be idle, except for a small number, and those who look through the keyholes will be darkened.

4 And they will close the doors to the street, when the voice of he who grinds the grain will be humbled, and they will be disturbed at the sound of a flying thing, and all the daughters of song shall become deaf.

Eccl. 12: 1-4 GNBKD

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: Humility

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: "I imagine my body growing weak but I am increasing in spiritual poverty, relying more and more on God and less and less on the self."

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe "Listening Book" notations for this "Gateway" or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

Let me have too deep a sense of humor ever to be proud.
Let me know my absurdity before I act absurdly.
Let me realize that when I am humble I am most human,
most truthful,
and most worthy of your serious consideration.

—Daniel A. Lord, SJ, in [*Hearts on Fire: Praying with Jesuits*](#)

²
_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference³ _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Gateway 2 – Living with Limitations __ - Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman

² <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/prayer-for-humility/>

³ <file:///C:/Users/Owner/Dropbox/Field%20Hospital%20Medicine%20Chest/SFH%20Training%20Blessings/Ex%2061%20-%20Hope%20in%20Recovery.pdf>

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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.

[Saint Ignatius of Loyola, 1491-1556](#)

²

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference³ _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Gateway 2 – Living with Limitations__ - Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman

² <https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/prayer/traditional-catholic-prayers/saints-prayers/suscipe-prayer-saint-ignatius-of-loyola/>

³ [Ex 125 - Hope in Transformation.pdf](#)



December 23, 2021

Agenda Meeting _3_

Doing Inner Work

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“14 If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done. Matt. 6:14-15
GNBDK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: _____ **Forgiveness of self** _____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine my self being healed by accepting forgiveness of all I have done in life and all that has been done to me, accepting forgiveness and breathing out humility and forgiveness to all I know who remain living and even all whom I know who have died..”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for this “Gateway” or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

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“When we pray, we move inward to our God centre. Then we move out again...to our situation in the world. This movement into the centre and out again brings about an act of transformation... Usually there is a subtle, gentle, almost indiscernible change in our way of being that will carry its healing, changing power out through the layers of our lived experience and in infuse the Where of our lives with its Kingdom values. This happens every time we pray, whether we are aware of it or not.” Margaret Silf, *Inner Compass*

Spontaneous Prayer as desired

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

“Blessing of fire!!! Greater experience of God's love and Spirit be with you. Peace and thanks to all May the blessing of Courage hope charity with everyone Cheers, Go well Courage and Peace Faith and love May the Lord keep you, May the Lord hold and keep you, May the Lord show you his face May the Spirit give you courage, stickabilty, and a big heart May you be filled with the abundance of God's love. May the Lord hold you all in His loving embrace Blessings of good health and safety.”

Field Hospital Blessings

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Gateway 4 – Living In and Out of Community__ - Time and

Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman

December 23, 2021



Agenda Meeting _4_

Living In and Out of Community

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“1 How wonderful it is, how pleasant,
for God's people to live together in harmony!
2 It is like the precious anointing oil
running down from Aaron's head and beard,
down to the collar of his robes.”
Psa. 133:1 GNBDK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: _____ **Brotherhood** _____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine myself being loved by people with whom I live. I imagine a bond of peace and love for all whom I know. I breathe in the spirit of brotherhood and breathe out love and brotherhood to all I know who remain living and even all whom I know who have died..”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for this “Gateway” or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

“The meaning here is not that the Church is on one side and all those who are not visibly in the Church are on the other side. The kingdoms of Christ and Satan as described by St. Ignatius both embrace the whole world. Lucifer also expands his power inside the Church, for there we find pride, greed for wealth, and power. The Church is also the Church of sinners and not just the Church of saints! On the other hand, God seeks to win over men who do not yet belong to the community of the Church in a visible way, as it were officially, through the reception of baptism. . . . [T]he banner of Christ cannot be simply identified with the Church, nor can the banner of Satan be simply identified with the world outside of the Church.”

Spiritual Exercises by Karl Rahner, SJ

Spontaneous Prayer as desired

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

“Blessings of hope peace love joy to all Go in peace and share the spirit May the spirit of love, strength and hope be with us all May God's Spirit embrace you and guide you always Blessing of healing for all in here and for the world. God, Äôs mercy for all. God bless you :D Peace and love Peace and Love to everyone. Blessing of Uplifting Clarity to help others Gratitude, joy and love for others Peace, delight and courage to all.”

Field Hospital Blessings

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Gateway 5 – Prayer and Contemplation__ - Time and

Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper



December 23, 2021

Agenda Meeting _5_

Prayer and Contemplation

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“1 For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.
2 He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.”
Psalm 62:1 ESV

11 He said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.
I Kings 19:11-12 NRSV

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: _____ **Divine Union** _____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine myself, when I die, in a Divine embrace with Jesus as he welcomes me into Heaven! I breathe in the Spirit of Divine Union and breathe out that vision of union with all whom I love.”

Each person shares as desired.

Name

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Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for this “Gateway” or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

“The purpose of the Contemplation for attaining Love is developmental. It immediately aims at an elevation of consciousness, a growth in awareness, that kind of total human perception and experience which Ignatius called “interior knowledge,” which caught up understanding, sensibility and feeling. One is called to a meaning that is radically dynamic and invitational. A man grasps this meaning only when he himself is grasped by what he knows, when he possesses a knowledge from within.

Unlike erudition, learning, or science, this knowledge was profoundly personal in its subjective participation and comprehensive in its penetration of human sensibility. It was knowledge, but felt knowledge, one that identified with life itself and whose experience could only be compared with taste and sensation. The Contemplation aims at this kind of sensitive, unifying consciousness in which a man deeply becomes what he knows.”

“The Contemplation to Attain Love” by Michael Buckley, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired_

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

_____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

“A blessings of deep love, peace and connection to everyone here and to all you will meet on this shared journey God bless all the way God's grace and love be with you all Go well everyone. Rest in God. Let the Spirit guide you. Blessings! Open to the other onwards and outward Blessings of joy and humour for all Lord, bind us in love and joy, peace and wonder. send us forth full of your spirit of love Thank you for the wonderful training May the peace that surpasses all understanding descend upon you now Thank you so much.”

Field Hospital Blessings

Reading and time for next meeting:

Gateway 6 – Redeeming Loss and Suffering Leaving a Legacy

Time & Date _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



December 23, 2021

Agenda Meeting _6_

Redeeming Loss and Suffering

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“24 I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.
Colossians 1:24 NRSV-CI

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **_ Satisfaction of and Peace for what God has done in my life's Journey_**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine God thanking me after I die for my cooperation with His Spirit guiding me and for all the hurts, pain and suffering I have offered throughout my life. I breathe in the Spirit of Suffering and breathe out the Spirit of relief.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for this “Gateway” or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

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“Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To Thee, O Lord, I return it. All is Thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is sufficient for me.”

Ignatius of Loyola. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph (Kindle Locations 729-731). Kindle Edition.

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference² _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Gateway 7 – Leaving a Legacy __ - Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman

² <file:///C:/Users/Owner/Dropbox/Field%20Hospital%20Medicine%20Chest/SFH%20Training%20Blessings/Ex%2061%20-%20Hope%20in%20Recovery.pdf>



December 23, 2021

Agenda Meeting 7

Leaving a Legacy

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“6 As for me, the hour has come for me to be sacrificed; the time is here for me to leave this life. 7 I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, and I have kept the faith.”
2 Timothy 4:6-7

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: I want to pass along a heritage to those I love who follow me

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine those whom I love thinking of me often after I die and appreciating the life and legacy I hope to leave.” I breathe in the Spirit Thankfulness and breathe out that Spirit even until my last breath.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for this “Gateway” or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

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“Everything should be attributed to God in a song of praise. Whoever can do that, whoever can say the “Suscipe” with his whole heart and soul and mean every word of it, whoever is capable of that because he is free from sin and has broken away from himself in the following of Christ, he has arrived at that point where St. Ignatius wants him to be at the end of the spiritual Exercises. He is the kind of person St. Ignatius can send back into the world of daily life so that he can find the living God of love there in his work, in his destiny, in his gifts and sufferings, in life and death, in using and leaving the things of this earth. If he truly attains such love, he will possess God, not in opposition to the world, but as the only One who gives value and dignity to the world.”

Spiritual Exercises by Karl Rahner, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference² _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Gateway 7 – Leaving a Legacy __ - Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman

² <file:///C:/Users/Owner/Dropbox/Field%20Hospital%20Medicine%20Chest/SFH%20Training%20Blessings/Ex%20125%20-%20Hope%20in%20Transformation.pdf>

Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life

Class Two:

Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life

Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life: Overview of a Small Group Class

Purpose of the Courses: The intention of this small group course is to provide spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional accompaniment for individuals in the final third of our lives.

Audience: those of us who are in the final third of their lives, who are chronically ill, and/or who are caring for the ill, suffering, or dying. Generally speaking this means those age 60 years or older or those facing end of life issues such as terminal illness. We will explore the mystery of suffering, death and of eternal life. We ask you to purchase at this time is *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*, the textbook for this small group class. An optional reference for you will be *A Beginners Guide to the End*, but this book will not be required which is for your reference and is not anticipated to be in small group discussion.

Method and meeting times: We are planning for nine total weekly meetings to read and discuss *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*. We will have one Orientation meeting, seven “*Falling Upward*” meetings in which we will confidentially discuss each two chapter section of our textbook, and a final “*Celebration*” meeting. This is a light load which should give time for prayer, reflection and other reading and contemplation as desired. After reading each two chapters, plan to put your book down and write whatever comes to your mind in your “Listening Book”⁶ which you will bring to every meeting and have a period of time for confidential discussion and listening to each other share.

Spiritual Directors: We are certain to find as we take this course together that the Holy Spirit is our “real” Spiritual Director whom we meet in every meeting and who watches over us from above. Her Presence will be recognized as we listen to each other, care for each other, all the while discerning the movements of the Holy Spirit among us. I, John Cooper, am a Certified Spiritual Director, in the Jesuit tradition, and Christian Spirituality for the final third of life is my primary focus at this time. John Lochman is my associate in this group and a Clinical Psychologist who attends St. Francis Church with me.

Vision: We hope our companionship may become a pilot example for other Parishes, Dioceses, and non-Catholic Churches also. The format may replicate via the “two by two” principles spoken of in the New Testament as Disciples were sent out “two by two” to teach and share the Gospel.

There is one additional reference source we hope you will explore. We hope you will subscribe to the Field Hospital Exercises of Fr. Michael Hansen, SJ, of Australia at this link: <https://www.first-exercises.com/field-hospital-sign-up/>. This link will allow you to receive weekly 18th Annotation style prayer exercises for meditation and access to about 80 other exercises that may fit a particular need you have.

John Cooper

⁶ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, “Listening Book,” known in other terms as “Journal.”

Outline for Discussion Group

- Week 1 Orientation to course
 Assignment: Read “Read the first two Chapters, *The Two Halves of Life*, and *The Hero and Heroine’s Journey*.” Put the book down and Journal your Spirit led thoughts in your *Listening Book*.⁷
- Week 2 Discussion of the above
 Assignment: Read “*The First Half of Life* and *The Tragic Sense of Life*.” Put the book down and Journal your Spirit led thoughts in your *Listening Book*.
- Week 3 Discussion of above
 Assignment: Read “*Stumbling over the Stumbling Stone* and *Necessary Suffering*” Put the book down and Journal your Spirit led thoughts in your *Listening Book*.
- Week 4 Discussion of the above
 Assignment: Read “*Home and Homesickness* and *Amnesia and the Big Picture*” Put the book down and Journal your Spirit led thoughts in your *Listening Book*.
- Week 5 Discussion of the above.
 Assignment: Read “*A Second Simplicity* and *A Bright Sadness*” Put the book down and Journal your Spirit led thoughts in your *Listening Book*.
- Week 6 Discussion of the above
 Assignment: Read “*The Shadowlands* and *New Problems and New Directions*” Put the book down and Journal your Spirit led thoughts in your *Listening Book*.
- Week 7 Discussion of the above
 Assignment: Read “*Falling Upward*” Put the book down and Journal your Spirit led thoughts in your *Listening Book*.
- Week 8 Discussion of the above
- Week 9 Celebration Meeting

⁷ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, “Listening Book,” known in other terms as “Journal.”

Appendix

The purpose of this Appendix is to explain that there are several possibilities for future groups, including discussing *Let God In: One Ignatian Journey*, by John Cooper. Cooper's book is a short digest of his 32 week journey through the 19th Annotation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. It is both a personal testimony and a practical guide to prepare oneself for taking the 19th Annotation. You will be introduced to the 500 year old method of the Spiritual Exercises that lead one through 4 "Weeks" of giving up everything to live only in God's love and grace, learning to know Him more clearly, follow Him more nearly, and love Him more dearly. Each of the future possibilities will be discerned according to potential group's needs, desires, and Pastoral approval.

The second possibility subject to discernment, need, and approval for this course is for advanced students who wish to explore the mystery of life after death and what happens to all men after we die. This book is *Dare We Hope*, by Hans Urs von Balthasar, a Swiss Theologian who was appointed Cardinal, by Pope John Paul II, but he died before consistory. *Dare We Hope* looks into the question of if "all" men will be saved, or only some will be saved and others will go to a place of eternal punishment. There are several ways of viewing this dilemma, in the Catholic Tradition, but in the end, the matter will remain a Mystery even though there are Scriptural ways to attempt to "prove" the matter from several viewpoints.

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 Life**

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2021 – Times and places to be determined

Description: This small group course is intended to be conducted in small group. The participants are referred to as “receivers” of the Spiritual benefits of this course. Spirituality for the final third of life will be approached from a Christian point of view.

Required Text (Please Bring to Class Each Time)

--*Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr; Jousey-Bass, 2011. ISBN 978-0470-90775-7.¹

Other resources:

--*Let God In: One Ignatian Journey*: by John Cooper, Austin Macauley Press, 2019. ISBN 9781528927482.²

--*A Beginners Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living life and Facing Death*, by Bruce L. Miller/Shoshana Berger, Simon & Schuster, 2019 ISBN 9781501157165.⁴

--Other handouts to be used as course progresses including the *Field Hospital Exercises* of Fr. Michael Hansen, SJ of Australia.³

Dare we Hope “That All Men Be Saved?”, by Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Ignatius Press, 2014, ISBN 978-1-58617-942-7.¹

Required Reading

The readings above are the basis of small group discussion and Spiritual progress into our own aging and death, all the while seeking Divine unity, now and in our sure coming transition into life after death. Page assignments will be given for each class. Our second small group class be for 9 weekly session to discuss *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr. **One should acquire *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* in advance.** *A Beginners Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living life and Facing Death* is an optional text. **The class will progress at a pace whereby one can read the assigned pages a little at a time before the small group discussions take place.**

So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to all the generations to come (Psalm 71:18 – NRSV).

¹ https://www.amazon.com/Falling-Upward-Spirituality-Halves-Life/dp/0470907754/ref=sr_1_1?crd=3GY0YD7MR9KH0&dchild=1&keywords=falling+upward+rohr&qid=162411163

² https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Let+God+In%3A+One+Ignatian+Journey&ref=nb_sb_noss_2

³ <https://www.first-exercises.com/>

ⁱ This book is for advanced students who wish to explore the possibility and Mystery of Universal Salvation, See: https://www.amazon.com/Dare-Hope-That-All-Saved/dp/158617942X/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3AP9R8IHO083M&dchild=1&keywords=dare+we+hope+von+balthasar&qid=1630528360&prefix=Dare+We+Hope%2Caps%2C781&sr=8-1



<http://www.jcooperforpeace.org/>

September 7, 2021

Discussion Guidelines...

Discussion go better when each person:

- 1.) Respects the value of everyone's observations or insights.
- 2.) Allows everyone the opportunity to speak, if they so choose.
- 3.) Focuses the discussion on the topic being discussed.
- 4.) Share freely, but refrain from correcting or giving advice,
or interrupting others.
- 5.) Keeps all personal sharing confidential
(once a smaller group is established, all promise to keep confidential info in the group only)
- 6.) Puts unanswered questions on the Future Study List"



Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life

If you are 60+ years of age, or facing an end of life issue.....

How do you envision your life and spiritual journey for the last third of your life?

Consider joining a Circles of Peace small group based upon *Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life*, and other resources.

Email: <mailto:jcooper1154@bellsouth.net> to apply to attend a group.

| P.O. Box 2757, Tuscaloosa, AL 35403 Phone: 205-310-0245 <http://www.jcooperFORpeace.org>



September 7, 2021

Book Annotation For:

--*Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr; Josey-Bass, 2011. ISBN 978-0470-90775-7.¹

Purpose: In *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*, Richard Rohr, a Franciscan Priest and founder of The Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, helps to understand how our griefs and losses facilitate spiritual understanding and deep hope for our future in eternity. Our failures and falling down can really in the end be the way upward into the hands of our living God who loves us beyond what we can understand in this body. Below are some important points from this book to consider:

Important Points:

There are two halves of life: In the first half of life we create a “container” for the self in order to discover who we are, what we are to do, and who will go with us in life’s journey and the second half is a matter of discovering what this container is to hold (p. 1). Having awareness of our container, or human shell, mankind sets of on a quest for understanding of the meaning of life and divine union with God (pp. 2-15).

There is a tragic sense to our life whereby we suffer losses which mature and refine our being: The ups and downs, the griefs and losses, humble us and enable us to be more accepting and loving. This “must be” done. It “must” happen to us. Rohr states: “Creation itself, the natural world, already “believes” the Gospel, and lives the pattern of death and resurrections, even if unknowingly” (p. 77). This is a part of the “groaning” of creation mentioned in Romans 8:22. We too, stumble and fall, experience little deaths and resurrections as we navigate the stumbling stones of life set before us as well as set before all of nature (pp. 53-77).

We are innately equipped with a “homing” device where especially in our second half of life, we discover another sense, that of a “taste for God” and an eternal home: Rohr states: “Yes, but now home has a whole new meaning, never imagined before. As always, it *transcends but includes* one’s initial experience of home” (pp. 87-88). This desire for coming home is already created in us. It is a restlessness that will only rest in God, a clearness that rises when our business and cluttered thinking cease. “Our mature years are characterized by a kind of bright sadness and a sober happiness, if that makes any sense...It is what John of the Cross called a “luminous darkness”” (p. 117).

Application: This book, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* is to be the second text for St. Francis of Assisi, University Parish, our second setting for this adventure, but hopefully our small group course will be useful in other Churches, Assisted Living Facilities, and community programs for the aging. Hopefully this course will multiply, helping those over 60 years and anyone who faces terminal health issues.

Recommendation: I recommend this book as a “keeper” for periodic reference and reflection by Spiritual Guides, Psychologists, and Gerontologists and for anyone attempting to understand the meaning of life.

John Cooper

¹ https://www.amazon.com/Falling-Upward-Spirituality-Halves-Life/dp/0470907754/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3GY0YD7MR9KH0&dchild=1&keywords=falling+upward+rohr&qid=162411163

Outline for *Falling Upward* Discussion Group

Week 1 Orientation to course

Assignment: Read **Book Annotation for Falling Upward** (Handout), Chapter 1: **The Two Halves of Life** and Chapter 2: **The Hero and the Heroine's Journey**.

Week 2 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read Chapter 3: **The First Half of Life** and Chapter 4: **The Tragic Sense of Life**.

Week 3 Discussion of above

Assignment: Read Chapter 5: **Stumbling over the Stumbling Stone** and Chapter 6: **Necessary Suffering**.

Week 4 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read Chapter 7: **Home and Homesickness** and Chapter 8: **Amnesia and the Big Picture**.

Week 5 Discussion of the above.

Assignment: Read Chapter 9: **A Second Simplicity** and Chapter 10: **A Bright Sadness**.

Week 6 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read Chapter 11: **The Shadowlands** and Chapter 12: **New Problems and Directions** and Chapter 13: **Falling Upward**.

Week 7 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read Chapter 13: **Falling Upward**.

Week 8 Discussion of the above

Week 9 Celebration Meeting

February 14, 2022



Orientation:

Period of Silence:

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

We should begin each meeting with a notation of respect for God watching over our meeting. For Catholics, the Sign of the Cross is appropriate. For those of other Faiths or no Faiths, perhaps a bow of reverence may be appropriate. However, no one should feel forced or uncomfortable.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

1.) Introductions and brief autobiographies of participants

2.) Reading for next meeting: **The Two Halves of Life; The Hero and Heroine's Journey**

(In the Orientation Meeting, we hand out the reading assignments and Agenda for the next meeting.)

3.) Go over Expectations

Refer to handout for overview of this course where our purpose is that is the intention of this small group course is to provide spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional accompaniment for individuals in the final third of our lives. Also the Syllabus provides text books you will need to purchase as needed, however, only two books will be needed for the first class, --*Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr; Josey-Bass, 2011. ISBN

978-0470-90775-7.¹

-A Beginners Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living life and Facing Death, by Bruce L. Miller/Shoshana Berger, Simon & Schuster, 2019 ISBN 9781501157165.

The later book is for your personal study and is a practical guide concerning what you may need to “do.”

Please bring *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* with you to each meeting as well as your personal *Listening Book* which will be described later in this document.

Periodically we will refer to the Field Hospital Exercises which may be utilized as appropriate. See the Overview for details of the Field Hospital Exercises. As well, other supplementary documents may occasionally be shared as handouts.

“Givers⁸ and Receivers,” are terms we will use which more accurately reflect our intention and replace the terms “Spiritual Director” and “Directee.” A better understanding of a Spiritual Director is someone who does a lot of listening and companioning, not someone who focuses on “telling” others what to do, although some suggestions may be made at times to that end. “Two by Two Partners,” reflect the Biblical remembrance of Jesus sending His disciples out in pairs. We hope at least some Receivers will want to become Givers and go two by two, beginning other groups and thus replicating our Circles of Peace small Groups.

“Apophatic” and “Kataphatic” prayer, are just fancy terms for praying without words, of meditative types of reflection and praying with words, which we will also do. You may wish to look up the terms and what they mean in more detail, but this will become clearer as we go along.

“Colloquy” is another fancy term used by St. Ignatius of Loyola which is a type of prayer that is conversational with God, where one speaks with Jesus as one would speak to a friend.

“Listening Book”⁹ is the term we will use for what is sometimes referred to as your own Personal Journal. You will bring this book to each meeting and share whatever you are inspired to share, that you have heard from the Holy Spirit to write. At the end of each assignment in *Falling Upward*, merely put the book up and silently reflect, allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire you and write down what you hear. Our group will listen to what you have to say, according to the Guidelines for Group Discussion paper we handed out, and we will all listen for movements of the Holy Spirit.

⁸ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, “Givers” and “Receivers” in place of “Spiritual Director.”

⁹ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, “Listening Book,” known in other terms as “Journal.”

4.) When we refer to Contemplative Prayer We mean the type of Apophatic prayer mentioned above where one concentrates on one's breath, perhaps having a "Sacred Word" such as "Yahweh" or "Love" in reserve when our naturally distracted mind wants to light up with busy thoughts. This is also referred to as the "Monkey Brain." Sit still, in a relaxed position, releasing any tightness, relaxing the jaw, breathing in, "Yah" and out, "weh" if you begin "thinking". Imagine yourself sitting with God as perhaps a husband and wife sit on a porch together, enjoying each other's presence, not saying anything at all. Sitting with God, in His/Her Presence is enough for us.

5.) Open for Questions:

6.) Period of Silence:

7.) Final Blessing:

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper

John Lochman



February 14, 2022

Agenda Meeting _1_

**The Two Halves of Life
The Hero and Heroine's Journey**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“18 I am telling you the truth: when you were young, you used to get ready and go anywhere you wanted to; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will bind you and take you where you don't want to go.” 19(In saying this, Jesus was indicating the way in which Peter would die and bring glory to God.) Then Jesus said to him, “Follow me!”” John 21:18,19 GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: _____ **God's Grace and Love for me** _____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine walking through the rest of my life hand in hand with God, who loves me and is with me on the last half of my life's journey.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

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The phrase “and so embrace salvation” also suggests the need to distinguish between love of self and selfishness or self-centeredness. It is right to love ourselves. We are beings of love. Truly loving ourselves is a process; it happens as we accept ourselves, say yes to our destiny, and live out the purpose of life’s journey. When we accept the pull of the Spirit and say yes to our destiny, we find meaning, we love ourselves, and we reach fulfillment. We understand ourselves as meaningful beings when we experience God filling up our emptiness. Salvation is an experience of friendship and relationship with God. It is important, therefore, to realize that this phrase—“and so embrace salvation”—in the *Exercises* means to find fulfillment, to come to a sense of completeness and meaningfulness in the totality of our being.

Spiritual Freedom: From an Experience of the Ignatian Exercises to the Art of Spiritual Guidance by John J. English

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Chapter 3: **The First Half of Life**; Chapter 4: **The Tragic Sense of Life** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



February 14, 2022

Agenda Meeting _2_

**The First Half of Life
The Tragic Sense of Life**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“26 Jesus went on to say, “The Kingdom of God is like this. A man scatters seed in his field. 27 **He sleeps at night**, is up and about during the day, and all the while the seeds are sprouting and growing. Yet he does not know how it happens. 28 The soil itself makes the plants grow and bear fruit; first the tender stalk appears, then the ear, and finally the ear full of corn. 29 When the corn is ripe, the man starts cutting it with his sickle, because harvest time has come. Mark 4 - GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Appreciation for the first half of my life journey with God and hope for the future.**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine walking through the rest of my life hand in hand with God, who loves me and is with me on the last half of my life’s journey.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE A SEED THAT SPROUTS AND GROWS

Certainly, we cannot ask of divine grace to reveal all its potentialities during the period of growth. The seed that dies, the delicate shoot that comes up, do not tell exactly what they bear within them. Every germination and all growth take place in darkness or at least in mystery. Only the full flowering shows forth the properties of the life and the quality of the fruit.

So too, after the periods of obscurity that have hidden from us some of its properties, grace, in the transforming union, is to reveal its essential riches, showing us that it is working a transformation by a likeness of love to Christ Jesus. The exterior revelation of Christ in souls will take different forms. The grace of Christ is actually multiform and shines out in diverse reflections; but transformation in Him must be real and deep. It must be attested to by the likeness that love creates in the will, thoughts, sentiments, and external activity. (...)

Divinization of human nature that we may be the children of God; incarnation of the divine life that we may be Christians – such is the twofold realism we must find in transforming union if it be genuine and authentically Christian

dailygospel.org Transforming union (I am a daughter of the Church, pub. The Mercier press, 1955 ; p. 601, 605) Blessed Marie-Eugène of the Child Jesus (1894 - 1967), Carmelite, Founder of Notre Dame de Vie

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Chapter 5: **Stumbling Over the Stumbling Stone**; Chapter 6: **Necessary Suffering** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



February 14, 2022

Agenda Meeting _3_

**Stumbling Over the Stumbling Stone
Necessary Suffering**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

“13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be* your fear, and *let him be* your dread. 14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.” Isaiah 8 – GNBK

“24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Matthew 16 - GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Comfort and Faith to go on despite all our daily losses.**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine giving up everything, yet receiving back my life at the resurrection and having whatever I need to serve God now, in this life.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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Prayer: “Take, Lord, and receive . . .”

On the face of it, expressing requests like these in prayer is either a sign of exaggerated asceticism, that negates much of what it means to be human, and devalues our autonomy, or it is the kind of “I wish” prayer of surrender that we might speak with our lips but refuse to engage with in our hearts. I suggest Inigo’s prayer (called the *Suscipe* prayer, from its first word in Latin) is neither of these things. Rather, it is an invitation to peel the onion, or unwrap the parcel, recognizing that this is the only way to discover the hidden treasure at the heart of things. In other words, we cannot discover the “more” until, and unless, we are prepared to let go of the “less.” It is a profound and extremely challenging prayer. If we enter into it sincerely, it draws us into an examination of what exactly the “less” is, that is wrapped around the “more.”

Companions of Christ: Ignatian Spirituality for Everyday Living by Margaret Silf

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Chapter 7: **Home and Homesickness**; Chapter 8: **Amnesia and the Big Picture** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



February 14, 2022

Agenda Meeting _4_

**Home and Homesickness
Amnesia and the Big Picture**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

“ ‘Do not be worried and upset,’ Jesus told them. ‘Believe in God and believe in me. 2 There are many rooms in my Father’s house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so. 3 And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am. 4 You know the way that leads to the place where I am going.’” John 14 GNBK

“20 Some Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God would come. His answer was, “The Kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen. 21 No one will say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’; because the Kingdom of God is within you.” ‘Luke 17 GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Coming to my Eternal Home.**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine embracing my Father, my Mother, all my relatives, and the entire Communion of Saints when I arrive in Heaven, my Eternal Home.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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“Many persons’ worldview remains largely unexamined, an unconscious frame of reference for living and relating to God, self and creation. Each person making the Spiritual Exercises needs to answer the implicit questions in the Principle and Foundation: How would you describe your world and how it influences you? How do you imagine God? What is your relationship to others and all of God’s creation? What is your part in creation? What are the dominant influences on your sense of God, humans, heaven and earth? What does it mean to exist in this vast unfolding universe?”

The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women by Katherine Dyckman, Mary Garvin, and Elizabeth Liebert

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Chapter 9: **A Second Simplicity**; Chapter 10: **A Bright Sadness** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



February 14, 2022

Agenda Meeting _5_

**A Second Simplicity
A Bright Sadness**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

3 "Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor;
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

4 Happy are those who mourn;
God will comfort them!

5 Happy are those who are humble;
they will receive what God has promised!

6 Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires;
God will satisfy them fully!

7 Happy are those who are merciful to others;
God will be merciful to them!

8 Happy are the pure in heart;
they will see God!

9 Happy are those who work for peace;
God will call them his children!

10 Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires;
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

11 Happy are you when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of evil lies against you because
you are my followers.

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12 Be happy and glad, for a great reward is kept for you in heaven. This is how the prophets who lived before you were persecuted.” Matthew 5, GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Loving God as a little child.**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine I will never know God, but by Naked Love.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

“But the higher part of contemplation, as it may be had here, hangeth all wholly in this darkness and in this cloud of unknowing; with a loving stirring and a blind beholding unto the naked being of God Himself only.”

Anonymous. *The Cloud of Unknowing* (p. 18). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

“We may be willing to admit sin intellectually, but to experience it as part of who we are, at the core of our being, is another matter. To grasp it, to hold it in our hands, to bring it into the presence of another person, to expose it to the light of God in Christ requires a willingness to be naked, which is quite terrifying. Thus, like Adam and Eve, we take cover under the trees of denial and repression and persuade ourselves that to hide from the face of God is less painful than to experience our shame.”
A Generous Openness: Praying the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius by Charlotte C. Prather

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Chapter 11: **The Shadowlands**; Chapter 12: **New Problems and New Directions** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,
John Cooper &
John Lochman



February 14, 2022

Agenda Meeting _6_

**The Shadowlands
New Problems and New Directions**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“19 So far as the Law is concerned, however, I am dead — killed by the Law itself — in order that I might live for God. I have been put to death with Christ on his cross, 20 so that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me. 21 I refuse to reject the grace of God.” Galatians 2, GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Living with my true identity in God as I die to self.**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine I will never know God, but by Naked Love.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

“Obviously we have more than three choices about how closely we want to identify with Jesus. There is a continuum of humility. Between the minimum and the maximum are many degrees of acceptance of a life being modeled on the life of the poor Jesus. We move along the spectrum in successive stages. Every day we are presented with new opportunities to grow closer to Jesus, or to draw away from him.

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Ignatius wants us to know that we have a choice. The meditation on the three kinds of humility reminds us of what the choice is. Jesus had nothing of his own. He has no words except the words that the Father gives him to speak. He does no deeds on his own. He does only what his Father would have him do. He is the one who has been “sent.” As he says to Philip, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.”

Perfect humility would have us be able to say the same things about ourselves. We would be poor as Jesus is poor. We have nothing of our own, only what God gives us. We want to speak Jesus’ words and do Jesus’ deeds. Our whole identity would be summed up in the phrase “son or daughter of God.”

Paradoxically, then, we are truly rich, rich with an identity that only God can give and no one can take from us.”

What Is Ignatian Spirituality? by David A. Fleming, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Chapter 13: **Falling Upward** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



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Agenda Meeting _7_

Falling Upward

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“10 But if Christ lives in you, the Spirit is life for you. 10 *the Spirit is life for you; or your spirit is alive.* because you have been put right with God, even though your bodies are going to die because of sin. 11
1 Cor 3.16 If the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from death, lives in you, then he who raised Christ from death will also give life to your mortal bodies by the presence of his Spirit in you...

18 I consider that what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. 19 All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his children...

28 We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose. Romans 8, GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Falling Upward into the loving arms of God who lives in me and loves me.**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine I will never know God, but by Naked Love.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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“[A]ll the mysteries from the Resurrection to the Ascension inclusive are to be gone through”

<p>Now, in the Easter-risen life, the body of Jesus becomes a universal body that incorporates all of us within it. It is no longer a finite, limited body; it is cosmic-sized. It is present everywhere in the universe. It is a divine milieu. You and I no longer simply observe Jesus from the outside, as the disciples did. You and I live in Christ. We experience Christ from inside him, which is where we live (Col. 1:18–20). For us, the guarantee of the resurrection generates in us the spiritual energy of joy. Despite our many disappointments and failures, joy and hope are always available when we recognize that we are living, moving, and enjoying life within the great Christ Body (Col. 2:6–7).</p> *The New Spiritual Exercises: In the Spirit of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* by Louis M. Savary

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

____ Discuss interest in the next book in the series, *Let God In: One Ignatian Journey*, by John Cooper _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman

Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life

Class Three:

Let God In: One Ignatian Journey

Simply This: An Intro to the Third Book, *Let God In: One Ignatian Journey*, of the Small Group Course, *Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life*

At first glance, when one looks at the little book I wrote, *Let God In: One Ignatian Journey*, one might think that the book is a little “simple.” Well it is simple in a way, and a good bit simpler than the original 387 pages manuscript, not the 113 pages as it is in the published edition.

Loyola Press first looked at the original manuscript and advised it needed to be edited. Andrew Yankech of Loyola Press cut it down into a small devotional, smaller than it is now. However, Loyola Press decided not to publish it because they had too many books in that genre. I then put the book out to some more publishers and Austin Macauley Press picked it up, but wanted it longer, so I added back some material to the book and it is as you see it now.

In order for the reader to get the most out of this book, allow me to comment on how to approach *Let God In: One Ignatian Journey*. First of all, spend some time with the cover art which I commissioned from Mary Kerr, who attends St. Francis of Assisi University Parish Church with me. Mary painted the original oil just as I envisioned. “Don’t make Jesus white,” I asked her, so she painted Jesus as a darker complexed Middle Easterner, as he actually was. The door Jesus has “knocked on” is an 8/4” thick solid Oak door made in my cabinet shop and is the door to my work office. Jesus could very well have built the door. Jesus was a carpenter. I am a cabinet maker.

Sometimes the walls and doors we build up keep Jesus out of our lives and homes. Those walls and doors can be very thick, just like my own walls and doors were. Therefore, one core message of *Let God In: One Ignatian Journey* is “simple,” to let God into your life as your friendly, loving, and inviting Lord, who wants to be your Spiritual Friend. Just let Him in, please! Jesus is knocking on your door!

However, letting God into your life is something not so “simple.” For me it took an “Ignatian Journey” which I digest as tightly as possible in my book, which is a personal testimony and a practical guide to my transformation and formation while the taking of the 19th *Annotation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*. Spend more time with the cover art in silent meditation and apophatic (without words) reflection. Let the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the Dove, speak to you. Listen well. Experience the warm light of the Father which illuminates the Dove and Jesus. Bath in God’s Glory! Let God into your life, please! Jesus is knocking on your door.

As we prepare to use *Let God In: one Ignatian Journey* in our third class of our small group course, *Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life*, refer to the possible thesis of the book on page 25:

My purpose in sharing my journey through the 19th Annotation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius is to encourage you, the reader, through the lens of Grace and Peace, to explore Ignatian prayer as one way to encounter the living Christ yourself and in yourself by reflecting on Him as you read this book. By integrating Scripture, reflective quotations, and my own personal story of financial hardship coupled with spiritual growth, I endeavour to share with you this nearly five hundred-year-old form of spirituality. Perhaps you may even be inspired to take an Ignatian retreat yourself. I hope that this book will promote Ignatian spirituality for both Catholics and non-Catholics, and even those of non-Christian beliefs. Please find a place and a time to pray and let God into your life!

Cooper, John. Let God In: One Ignatian Journey (Kindle Locations 230-235). Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd. Kindle Edition.

However, this “purpose” may not be quite as “simple” as one might think, because at the heart of Ignatian Spirituality is the Suscipe:

Take Lord, receive all my liberty, my memory, any understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me. To You, O Lord, I return it. All is yours, dispose of it wholly according to your will. Give me only Your love and Your grace, for these are enough for me.”

Cooper, John. Let God In: One Ignatian Journey (Kindle Locations 1036-1038). Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd. Kindle Edition.

So, isn't that a wonderful concept, to give up everything to live only in God's love and grace? “Simple,” isn't it? The problem comes in to this simple and wonderful idea, when one discovers he/she may need to give up all or some of your most cherished accumulations and “inordinate” attachments AND DIE DAILY to them. Hence, the reason this book, Let God In: One Ignatian Journey, is the third book for our Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life small group course.

Fear not. Do not be afraid. Although we die daily and will die in this body, there remains a resurrected Jesus, the Christ, and our Spiritual Friend, who loves us, standing at the door of death now, and at our end, inviting us to fall upward into His loving arms!

John Cooper

Tuscaloosa, AL

Outline for *Let God In: One Ignatian Journey* Discussion Group

Week 1 Orientation to course

Assignment: Read **Simply This** (Handout); **Introduction; Who Was St. Ignatius of Loyola?** and **Author's Note**

Week 2 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read: **Formation – pp. 31-39**

Week 3 Discussion of above

Assignment: Read: **The First Week – pp 40-48**

Week 4 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read: **The Second Week – pp. 49-63**

Week 5 Discussion of the above.

Assignment: Read: **Interlude – pp. 64 – 83**

Week 6 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read: **The Third Week – pp. 84-91**

Week 7 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read: **The Fourth Week – pp. 92-102; Epilogue, p. 103; Suggested Readings, 104-107**

Week 8 Discussion of the above

Week 9 Celebration Meeting

| P.O. Box 2757, Tuscaloosa, AL 35403 Phone: 205-310-0245
<http://www.jcooperFORpeace.org>



February 28, 2022

Orientation: Let God In

Period of Silence:

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

We should begin each meeting with a notation of respect for God watching over our meeting. For Catholics, the Sign of the Cross is appropriate. For those of other Faiths or no Faiths, perhaps a bow of reverence may be appropriate. However, no one should feel forced or uncomfortable.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

1.) Introductions and brief autobiographies of participants

2.) Reading for next meeting: **Simply This (Handout); Introduction; Who Was St. Ignatius of Loyola?; Author's Note**

(In the Orientation Meeting, we hand out the reading assignments and Agenda for the next meeting.)

3.) Go over Expectations

Refer to handout for overview of this course where our purpose is that is the intention of this small group course is to provide spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional accompaniment for individuals in the final third of our lives. Also the Syllabus provides text books you will need to purchase as needed, however, only two books will

be needed for the first class-*Let God In: One Ignatian Journey*: by John Cooper, Austin Macauley Press, 2019. ISBN: 9781528927482.3

-*A Beginners Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living life and Facing Death*, by Bruce L. Miller/Shoshana Berger, Simon & Schuster, 2019 ISBN 9781501157165.

The later book is for your personal study and is a practical guide concerning what you may need to “do.”

Please bring *Let God In* with you to each meeting as well as your personal *Listening Book* which will be described later in this document.

Periodically we will refer to the Field Hospital Exercises which may be utilized as appropriate. See the Overview for details of the Field Hospital Exercises. As well, other supplementary documents may occasionally be shared as handouts.

“Givers¹⁰ and Receivers,” are terms we will use which more accurately reflect our intention and replace the terms “Spiritual Director” and “Directee.” A better understanding of a Spiritual Director is someone who does a lot of listening and companionship, not someone who focuses on “telling” others what to do, although some suggestions may be made at times to that end. “Two by Two Partners,” reflect the Biblical remembrance of Jesus sending His disciples out in pairs. We hope at least some Receivers will want to become Givers and go two by two, beginning other groups and thus replicating our Circles of Peace small Groups.

“Apophatic” and “Kataphatic” prayer, are just fancy terms for praying without words, of meditative types of reflection and praying with words, which we will also do. You may wish to look up the terms and what they mean in more detail, but this will become clearer as we go along.

“Colloquy” is another fancy term used by St. Ignatius of Loyola which is a type of prayer that is conversational with God, where one speaks with Jesus as one would speak to a friend.

“Listening Book”¹¹ is the term we will use for what is sometimes referred to as your own Personal Journal. You will bring this book to each meeting and share whatever you are inspired to share, that you have heard from the Holy Spirit to write. At the end of each “Gateway” in *Pilgrimage* there are questions for reflection you may wish to address in writing, or, perhaps better, you may wish to merely put the book up and silently reflect, allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire you and write down what you hear. Our group will listen to what you have to say, according to the Guidelines for Group Discussion paper we handed out, and we will all listen for movements of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, “Givers” and “Receivers” in place of “Spiritual Director.”

¹¹ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, “Listening Book,” known in other terms as “Journal.”

4.) When we refer to Contemplative Prayer We mean the type of Apophatic prayer mentioned above where one concentrates on one's breath, perhaps having a "Sacred Word" such as "Yahweh" or "Love" in reserve when our naturally distracted mind wants to light up with busy thoughts. This is also referred to as the "Monkey Brain." Sit still, in a relaxed position, releasing any tightness, relaxing the jaw, breathing in, "Yah" and out, "weh" if you begin "thinking". Imagine yourself sitting with God as perhaps a husband and wife sit on a porch together, enjoying each other's presence, not saying anything at all. Sitting with God, in His/Her Presence is enough for us.

5.) Open for Questions:

6.) Period of Silence:

7.) Final Blessing:

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper

John Lochman



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Agenda Meeting _1_

Simply This (Handout)
Introduction
Who Was St. Ignatius of Loyola?
Author's Note

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

PSALMS 49(48),2-3.6-7.8-10.11. Hear this, all you peoples!

Give ear, all who inhabit the world,

You of lowly birth or high estate,

rich and poor alike.

Why should I fear in evil days,
 when my wicked pursuers ring me round,
 They trust in their wealth;
 the abundance of their riches is their boast.

Yet in no way can a man redeem himself,
 or pay his own ransom to God;
 Too high is the price to redeem one's life; he would never have enough
 to remain alive always and not see destruction.

Anyone can see that the wisest die,
 the fool and the senseless pass away too,
 and must leave their wealth to others.

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dailygospel.org

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: _____ **Understanding How I am to Give my Life to God** _____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine living in the Presence of God, and dying in God’s Presence, with many Angels and Saints, including loved ones who have preceded me in transition, all watching over me.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

(023)

This first principle is a disarmingly simple statement about the meaning of life, but because of this, it demands a second look. The implication, I think, is that if we are to build our lives on prayer, then this must be the principle upon which we build them. It’s straightforward enough, but it forces us to ask some basic questions: Do I live this belief? What would my life—my day-to-day choices—look like if I honestly believed this principle? If my life were really founded on the belief that I was created by God for praise, reverence, and service, then it would seem that everything I do must somehow be related to these goals. Is this the case?

The Ignatian Workout: Daily Spiritual Exercises for a Healthy Faith by Tim Muldoon

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

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Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **Formation – pp. 31-39** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



February 28, 2022

Agenda Meeting _2_

Formation – pp. 31-39

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“Let us imitate the breadth of love of Jesus himself. For the Church, the Bride of Christ, is one; and yet so vast is the love of the divine Spouse that it embraces in His Bride the whole human race without exception. Our Savior shed His Blood precisely in order that He might reconcile men to God through the Cross, and might constrain them to unite in one body, however widely they may differ in nationality and race. True love of the Church, therefore, requires not only that we should be mutually solicitous one for another as members (Rm 12:5), sharing in their suffering (1 Cor 12:26), but likewise that we should recognize in other men, although they are not yet joined to us in the body of the Church, our brothers in Christ according to the flesh, called together with us, to the same eternal salvation.

It is true, unfortunately, especially today, that there are some who extol enmity, hatred and spite as if they enhanced the dignity and the worth of man. Let us, however, while we look with sorrow on the disastrous consequences of this teaching, follow our peaceful King who taught us to love not only those who are of a different nation or race, (Lk 10:33 f.) but even our enemies (Lk 6:27 f.). While our heart overflows with the sweetness of the teaching of Saint Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, we extol with him the length, and the breadth, and the height, and the depth of the charity of Christ (Eph 3:18) which neither diversity of race or customs can diminish, nor trackless wastes of the ocean weaken, nor wars, whether just or unjust, destroy.”

dailygospel.org Encyclical “Mystici Corporis Christi ” Venerable Pius XII, Pope from 1939 to 1958

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Proper Formation of my Life in Christ.**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine walking with Jesus and the early Disciples, learning first hand who Jesus is, **Touching Him, Hearing Him, Tasting the same food as Him, Seeing the same things Jesus**

saw.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

. . . We are not contemplating the actual resurrection event, which is a mystery, beyond time and space. *Resurrection* refers to the event of God’s transformation of life, making all things new, as in a new creation. Resurrection is a conquering of sin and death, once and for all. Instead of being distracted by the mechanics of the Resurrection or what a resurrected body looks like, we simply contemplate the risen Christ consoling others. We notice how his friends both recognize and fail to recognize the One they have followed and loved. We marvel at how Jesus in the resurrected life—where his divinity is no longer hidden—does very human things: eating, talking, consoling, teaching, and enjoying the company of others. As with the mystery of the Incarnation, we see in the Resurrection how our divinity and humanity are not opposed but are an integral part of each other.

The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life by Kevin O’Brien, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

The First Week – pp 40-48

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



February 28, 2022

Agenda Meeting _3_

The First Week – pp 40-48

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

10 “The LORD says, ‘When Babylonia's seventy years are over, I will show my concern for you and keep my promise to bring you back home. 11 I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for. (Or, 29.11 *the future you hope for; or a future full of hope.*) 12 Then you will call to me. You will come and pray to me, and I will answer you. You will seek me, and you will find me because you will seek me with all your heart. 14 Yes, I say, you will find me, and I will restore you to your land. I will gather you from every country and from every place to which I have scattered you, and I will bring you back to the land from which I had sent you away into exile. I, the LORD, have spoken.’ – Jeremiah 29 - GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Comfort and Faith to know that even though I am a sinner, God loves me unconditionally.**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine meeting Jesus in a beautiful garden, like Eden once was, and Jesus putting his arms around me saying, “Well done, my good and faithful servant!”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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Prayer:

(059–61)

The loved sinner stands at the center of the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises. Although sin provides the focus, the First Week really dwells on love, God’s love, which is greater than human sin. This Week moves from awareness of and responsibility for sin to awareness of God’s gracious love, a love that forgives sin and welcomes the sinner.

The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women by Katherine Marie Dyckman, Mary Garvin, and Elizabeth Liebert

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **The Second Week – pp. 49-63** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



February 28, 2022

Agenda Meeting _4_

The Second Week – pp. 49-63

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“57 As they went on their way, a man said to Jesus, “I will follow you wherever you go.”

58 Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lie down and rest.”” Luke 9 - GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Knowing, following, and loving Christ in our daily lives, moment by moment.**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine embracing my Father, my Mother, all my relatives, and the entire Communion of Saints when I arrive in Heaven, my Eternal Home.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

The second week is seeking to know, follow, and love Christ in our daily lives – John Cooper

“What have I done for Christ today? We all have the same twenty-four hours per day to choose how much time we are going to give back to God, how much time we want to live only in God’s love and grace. We all

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must choose our ways to follow Christ. I choose to follow the Gospel of Peace— to be a living example of non-violence as Jesus preached; to lay down the sword of intolerance, anger, and hatred; to see the face of God in all I encounter.”

Cooper, John. Let God In: One Ignatian Journey (Kindle Locations 567-570). Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd. Kindle Edition.

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **Interlude – pp. 64 – 83** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



February 28, 2022

Agenda Meeting _5_

Interlude – pp. 64 – 83

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“26 Now remember what you were, my brothers and sisters, when God called you. From the human point of view few of you were wise or powerful or of high social standing. 27 God purposely chose what the world considers nonsense in order to shame the wise, and he chose what the world considers weak in order to shame the powerful. 28 He chose what the world looks down on and despises, and thinks is nothing, in order to destroy what the world thinks is important. 29 This means that no one can boast in God's presence. 30 But God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made Christ to be our wisdom. By him we are put right with God; we become God's holy people and are set free. 31 So then, as the scripture says, “Whoever wants to boast must boast of what the Lord has done.” 1 Cor - GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Continuing Confirmation of my Calling and Purpose for Being.**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine I will never know God, but by Naked Love.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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“In the end, we make a decision in hope. If we made a good discernment and receive confirmation, then we can trust that this is the way that God asks us to use our freedom here and now. Something may happen in the future that requires us to make another discernment, but such events should not undermine our confidence in the initial discernment.

Once a choice is made, there are no guarantees that we will be successful (as the cross teaches us) or actually be able to do what we want (Ignatius was convinced that he was to spend his life in the Holy Land, but on his first try he was ordered to leave, and later, with his companions, he was not able to find safe passage there). We do our best to follow God’s lead, and then we trust that God is with us in our decision making and will lead us where we need to go, even if by a circuitous route.”

The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life by Kevin O’Brien, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **The Third Week – pp. 84-91** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



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Agenda Meeting _6_

The Third Week – pp. 84-91

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

“20 Then the wife of Zebedee came to Jesus with her two sons, bowed before him, and asked him a favour.

21 “What do you want?” Jesus asked her.

She answered, “Promise me that these two sons of mine will sit at your right and your left when you are King.”

22 “You don't know what you are asking for,” Jesus answered the sons. “Can you drink the cup of suffering that I am about to drink?”

“We can,” they answered.

23 “You will indeed drink from my cup,” Jesus told them, “but I do not have the right to choose who will sit at my right and my left. These places belong to those for whom my Father has prepared them.”

Matt. 20 - GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: “**The Grace for which we are asking is to learn Christ’s call by walking with Him to Calvary, to be with him in his passion and death.**” *Let God In: One Ignatian Journey*, p. 84

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine I will never know God, but by Naked Love.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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“(197)

“what I myself ought to do and suffer”

“To the “do for Christ” of the First Week is now added “suffer”; to act and suffer for Christ: both must be the disciple’s lifelong response to the Cross. By the Third Week, this response has acquired a certain specific content. “Doing and suffering” recall now Christ’s summons to his followers to labor with him and to share in the sufferings inseparable from his own conflict with the world’s opposition to the reign of God.”

Understanding the Spiritual Exercises by Michael Ivens, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **The Fourth Week – pp. 92-102; Epilogue, p. 103; Suggested Readings, 104-107** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



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Agenda Meeting 7

The Fourth Week – pp. 92-102; Epilogue, p. 103; Suggested Readings, 104-107

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
Prayer Text:

“25 “I have told you this while I am still with you. 26 The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you.

27 “**Peace is what I leave with you;** it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, ‘I am leaving, but I will come back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father; for he is greater than I. 29 I have told you this now before it all happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe.” John 14 - GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Moment by moment, breath by breath, to share the joy and peace of the risen Christ!**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine I will never know God, but by Naked Love.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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(218–237)

“In the Fourth Week we ask to share in the joy and peace of the risen Christ. This joy, like any grace we pray for, is a gift from God; we cannot earn or force it. We simply try to be open to receiving Easter joy by contemplating Christ as he shares the joy of the Resurrection with others.

. . . We are not contemplating the actual resurrection event, which is a mystery, beyond time and space. *Resurrection* refers to the event of God’s transformation of life, making all things new, as in a new creation. Resurrection is a conquering of sin and death, once and for all. Instead of being distracted by the mechanics of the Resurrection or what a resurrected body looks like, we simply contemplate the risen Christ consoling others. We notice how his friends both recognize and fail to recognize the One they have followed and loved. We marvel at how Jesus in the resurrected life—where his divinity is no longer hidden—does very human things: eating, talking, consoling, teaching, and enjoying the company of others. As with the mystery of the Incarnation, we see in the Resurrection how our divinity and humanity are not opposed but are an integral part of each other.”

The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life by Kevin O’Brien, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

See

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ Discuss interest in the next book in the series, *Let God In: One Ignatian Journey*, by John Cooper _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman

Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life

Class Four:

Dare We Hope “That All Men Be Saved”?

Book Annotation For:

Dare we Hope “That All Men Be Saved”?, by Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Ignatius Press, 2014, ISBN 978-1-58617-942-7.ⁱ

Purpose: In *Dare we Hope “That All Men Be Saved”?*, by Hans Urs Von Balthasar, a Swiss theologian appointed to be a Cardinal by Pope John Paul II, but who died shortly before his induction we find perhaps the most balanced viewpoint on the early Christian ideology of some early Christians such as Origen concerning Universalism, or the possibility that all men may be saved. Here are some important points from this book to consider:

Important Points:

There are two differing narratives in Scripture regarding salvation: Some of Jesus’ words are threatening indeed. ““Depart from me...into eternal fire,...into eternal punishment.” (Mt. 25: 41,46)” (p. 11), for instance, but other principles seem opposed such as ““God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all” (Romans 11:32; and so forth,” (P. 11).

The Early Church scholars and Fathers and those who succeeded them had different viewpoints regarding salvation: Balthasar summarizes beliefs of Origen, Augustine, Saint Ambrose, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Didymus the Blind, and later scholars such as Thomas Aquinas and Ignatius of Loyola and others in presenting differing viewpoints of the Eastern and Western Church. (pp. 32-63). He Approaches the hope all men will be saved from an historical viewpoint calling upon Early Church Fathers and scholars who held differing viewpoints to enlighten our vision beyond our own constructs.

Our obligation is to hope that all men will be saved: *Dare we Hope* does not make a dogmatic and clearly definitive “yes” or “no” statement that all men will be saved, one reason which is that human freedom to choose not to be saved must be honored. However, predominately, the hope is that all men will be saved. “Then faith in the unboundedness of divine love and grace also *justifies hope for the universality of redemption*, although through the possibility of resistance to grace that remains open in principle, *the possibility of eternal damnation also persists*” (p. 176). The heart of Balthasar’s thesis is that **Christians have a right to hope for all men**, even Judas, for whom we have no way of knowing his remorse and repentance on the way down to his death by suicide (pp. 148-149).

Application: This book, *Dare we Hope “That All Men Be Saved”* is to be the fourth class text for St. Francis of Assisi, University Parish, small group course, *Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life*. It is our hope that *Dare we Hope* will provide encouragement for those concerned about the afterlife and their loved ones who have already passed on to this realm.

Recommendation: I recommend this book as an orthodox and easy to understand viewpoint regarding the ideology of Universalism and Apokostasis, or universal salvation for all. A person who is concerned about their loved ones whom one believes may not be saved should read this book and hope and pray for the souls of those departed.

John Cooper

ⁱ This book is for advanced students who wish to explore the possibility and Mystery of Universal Salvation, See: https://www.amazon.com/Dare-Hope-That-All-Saved/dp/158617942X/ref=sr_1_1?crd=3AP9R8IHO083M&dchild=1&keywords=dare+we+hope+von+balthasar&qid=1630528360&sprefix=Dare+We+Hope%2Caps%2C781&sr=8-1

Outline for *Dare We Hope* Discussion Group

Week 1 Orientation to course

Assignment: Read **Book Annotation for *Dare We Hope*** (Handout), Chapter 1: **The Issue and the Charge** and Chapter 2: **The New Testament**.

Week 2 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read Chapter 3: **Origen and Augustine** and Chapter 4: **Thomas Aquinas**.

Week 3 Discussion of above

Assignment: Read Chapter 5: **The Personal Character** and Chapter 6: **Testimonies**.

Week 4 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read Chapter 7: **Blondel's Dilemma** and Chapter 8: **The Eternity of Hell**.

Week 5 Discussion of the above.

Assignment: Read Chapter 9: **The Self-Consumption of Evil**, Chapter 10: **Satan**, and Chapter 11: **Justice**.

Week 6 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read from *A Short Discourse on Hell*, Chapter 1: **On the Situation** and Chapter 2: **Christian Faith**.

Week 7 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read Chapter 3: **The Directives of Scripture** and Chapter 4: **Hell for Others**.

Week 8 Discussion of the above

Assignment: Read Chapter 5: **Joy over Damnation**, Chapter 6: **“Accursed and Cut Off from Christ for the Sake of My Brethren”** and Chapter 7: **The Obligation to Hope for All**.

Week 9 Discussion of the above.

Assignment: Read: **EPILOGUE: APOKATASTASIS: UNIVERSAL RECONCILIATION.**

1. Definition of Context and 2. Possible Responses.

Week 10 Discussion of Above.

Week 11: Celebration Meeting

| P.O. Box 2757, Tuscaloosa, AL 35403 Phone: 205-310-0245
<http://www.jcooperFORpeace.org>



April 16, 2022

Orientation:

Period of Silence:

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

We should begin each meeting with a notation of respect for God watching over our meeting. For Catholics, the Sign of the Cross is appropriate. For those of other Faiths or no Faiths, perhaps a bow of reverence may be appropriate. However, no one should feel forced or uncomfortable.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

1.) Introductions and brief autobiographies of participants

2.) Reading for next meeting

(In the Orientation Meeting, we hand out the reading assignments and Agenda for the next meeting.)

3.) Go over Expectations

Refer to handout for overview of this course where our purpose is that is the intention of this small group course is to provide spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional accompaniment for individuals in the final third of our lives. Also the Syllabus provides text books you will need to purchase as needed, however, only two books will

be needed for the first class, *Dare we Hope "That All Men Be Saved"?*, by Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Ignatius Press, 2014, ISBN 978-1-58617-942-7.i

-A Beginners Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living life and Facing Death, by Bruce L. Miller/Shoshana Berger, Simon & Schuster, 2019 ISBN 9781501157165.

The later book is for your personal study and is a practical guide concerning what you may need to "do."

Please bring *Dare We Hope* with you to each meeting as well as your personal *Listening Book* which will be described later in this document.

Periodically we will refer to the Field Hospital Exercises which may be utilized as appropriate. See the Overview for details of the Field Hospital Exercises. As well, other supplementary documents may occasionally be shared as handouts.

"Givers¹² and Receivers," are terms we will use which more accurately reflect our intention and replace the terms "Spiritual Director" and "Directee." A better understanding of a Spiritual Director is someone who does a lot of listening and companionship, not someone who focuses on "telling" others what to do, although some suggestions may be made at times to that end. "Two by Two Partners," reflect the Biblical remembrance of Jesus sending His disciples out in pairs. We hope at least some Receivers will want to become Givers and go two by two, beginning other groups and thus replicating our Circles of Peace small Groups.

"Apophatic" and "Kataphatic" prayer, are just fancy terms for praying without words, of meditative types of reflection and praying with words, which we will also do. You may wish to look up the terms and what they mean in more detail, but this will become clearer as we go along.

"Colloquy" is another fancy term used by St. Ignatius of Loyola which is a type of prayer that is conversational with God, where one speaks with Jesus as one would speak to a friend.

"Listening Book"¹³ is the term we will use for what is sometimes referred to as your own Personal Journal. You will bring this book to each meeting and share whatever you are inspired to share, that you have heard from the Holy Spirit to write. At the end of each Assignment in *Dare We Hope*, merely put the book up and silently reflect, allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire you and write down what you hear. Our group will listen to what you have to say, according to the Guidelines for Group Discussion paper we handed out, and we will all listen for movements of the Holy Spirit.

4.) When we refer to Contemplative Prayer We mean the type of Apophatic prayer

¹² I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, "Givers" and "Receivers" in place of "Spiritual Director."

¹³ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, "Listening Book," known in other terms as "Journal."

mentioned above where one concentrates on one's breath, perhaps having a "Sacred Word" such as "Yahweh" or "Love" in reserve when our naturally distracted mind wants to light up with busy thoughts. This is also referred to as the "Monkey Brain." Sit still, in a relaxed position, releasing any tightness, relaxing the jaw, breathing in, "Yah" and out, "weh" if you begin "thinking". Imagine yourself sitting with God as perhaps a husband and wife sit on a porch together, enjoying each other's presence, not saying anything at all. Sitting with God, in His/Her Presence is enough for us.

5.) Open for Questions:

6.) Period of Silence:

7.) Final Blessing:

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper

John Lochman



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Agenda Meeting _1_

Forward (ix)
The Issue and the Charge (p. 5)
The New Testament (p.18)

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)
 Prayer Text:

Matt. 25:41

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Away from me, you that are under God's curse! Away to the eternal fire which has been prepared for the Devil and his angels! 42 I was hungry but you would not feed me, thirsty but you would not give me a drink; 43 I was a stranger but you would not welcome me in your homes, naked but you would not clothe me; I was sick and in prison but you would not take care of me.’ Copyright © Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, USCCB
 dailygospel.org

I Timothy 2:

5 For there is one God, and there is one who brings God and human beings together, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself to redeem everyone. That was the proof at the right time that God wants everyone to be saved,

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: _____ **Understanding for whom Jesus came to save (Some? All?)** _____

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Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine living in the Presence of God, and dying in God’s Presence, with many Angels and Saints, including loved ones who have preceded me in transition, all watching over me.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book”¹⁴ notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

(059–61)

Within your growing awareness of sin, something profoundly personal and hopeful is at work. The fire of God’s love is inviting you insistently into the deep glow of peace and the radiant energy of salvation in Christ Jesus. Your own memory and willpower cannot produce this revelation. Without a lively sense of God’s love, this revelation of sin is not possible. In that situation the problem lies not with God but with your complacent sense of the Creator’s immediate, intimate love.

Stretched for Greater Glory: What to Expect from the Spiritual Exercises by George A. Aschenbrenner, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **Origen and Augustine and Thomas Aquinas pp. 32-63** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
 John Lochman

¹⁴ I credit Fr. Michael Hansen S.J. of Australia for the term, “Listening Book,” known in other terms as “Journal.”



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Agenda Meeting _2_

**Origen and Augustine
Thomas Aquinas pp. 32-63**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text: 2 I praise you because you always remember me and follow the teachings that I have handed on to you. 1 Cor. 11, GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Understanding the history and tradition of the Early Church and later Church scholars.**

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: "I imagine sitting at the feet of the Apostles and Early Church Fathers, learning of the Traditions of the Church, which later split into the East and the West."

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe "Listening Book" notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

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This image has a pre-historical origin. It is constantly used in Scripture and tradition (for example, Jerusalem-Babylon; the City of God and the City of Satan). But while tradition, at least since the time of St. Augustine, draws a clear line between the fronts of the two kingdoms—the Church here and the kingdom of Satan over there—Ignatius emphasizes the mutual penetration of both kingdoms. According to St. Ignatius, there are no static front lines between the two, but only swift emissaries who are sent to all parts of the globe. The meaning here is not that the Church is on one side and all those who are not visibly in the Church are on the other side. The kingdoms of Christ and Satan as described by St. Ignatius both embrace the whole world. Lucifer also expands his power inside the Church, for there we find pride, greed for wealth, and power. The Church is also the Church of sinners and not just the Church of saints! On the other hand, God seeks to win over men who do not yet belong to the community of the Church in a visible way, as it were officially, through the reception of baptism. . . . [T]he banner of Christ cannot be simply identified with the Church, nor can the banner of Satan be simply identified with the world outside of the Church.

Spiritual Exercises by Karl Rahner, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **The Personal Character; Testimonies, (pp. 64-88)** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



April 16, 2022

Agenda Meeting _3_

**The Personal Character;
Testimonies, (pp. 64-88**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

1 For we know that when this tent we live in — our body here on earth — is torn down, God will have a house in heaven for us to live in, a home he himself has made, which will last forever. 2 And now we sigh, so great is our desire that our home which comes from heaven should be put on over us; 3 by being clothed with it we shall not be without a body. 2 Cor. 5, GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Understanding the horrendous possibility that I am personally capable of being lost and experiencing eternal separation from God, or Hell.**_____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine a deep awareness of the pain suffered by the damned and I imagine that all others could go to heaven but that I could be lost.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

(065–71)

Colloquy: Once I have let the awfulness of this experience sink deep within me, I begin to talk to Christ our Lord about it. I talk to him about all the people who have lived—the many who lived before his coming and who deliberately closed in upon themselves and chose such a hell for all eternity, the many who walked with him in his own country and who rejected his call to love, the many who still keep rejecting the call to love and remain locked in their own chosen hell.

I give thanks to Jesus that he has not allowed me to fall into any of these groups, thus ending my life. All I can do is give thanks to him that up to this moment he has shown himself so loving and merciful to me.

Then I close with an Our Father.

Draw Me into Your Friendship by David L. Fleming, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **Bondel’s Dilemma; The Eternity of Hell, (pp. 89-104)** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



April 16, 2022

Agenda Meeting _4_

**Bondel's Dilemma;
The Eternity of Hell, (pp. 89-104)**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

The Love of God

1 Praise the LORD, my soul!
All my being, praise his holy name!
2 Praise the LORD, my soul,
and do not forget how kind he is.
3 He forgives all my sins
and heals all my diseases.
4 He keeps me from the grave
and blesses me with love and mercy.
5 He fills my life with good things,
so that I stay young and strong like an eagle.

Psa. 103, GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Understand the contradiction of Hell and God who loves without**
limit and God who is not limited by human concepts of time.

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Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine God’s love will win in the end and the fire of wrath we perceive is really the heat of His love which will cleanse me, but... I could be wrong.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

(234)

The Take, Lord, Receive prayer is an offering made in freedom. We have been praying for indifference throughout the retreat: to become free of disordered loves. Now we focus on why this freedom is necessary: we become free from excessive attachments so that we can love and serve God and others *more*. Basking in the love of God, we are empowered to love as God loves.

The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life by Kevin O’Brien, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **The Self-Consumption of Evil?; Satan; Justice and Mercy, (pp. 105-123)** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



April 16, 2022

Agenda Meeting _5_

**The Self-Consumption of Evil?;
Satan;
Justice and Mercy, (pp. 105-123)**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

“10 Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. 11 Put on all the armour that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand up against the Devil's evil tricks. 12 For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. 13 So put on God's armour now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground.” Ephesians 6, GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: _____ **Understanding our enemy and the Power of God over Evil** _____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine myself in a valley with two standards (flags), one of Satan, and one of Christ. I choose the standard of Christ my King.”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

(136)

“Deadly Enemy of our Human Nature”

Although we tend to put humanity and divinity in separate categories, Jesus shows us that they are one. Remember one of the central insights of the Second Week: the path to divinity is *through* our humanity, not around it. In the Meditation on Two Standards, Ignatius refers to Satan as the “enemy of our human nature.” The enemy wants to dehumanize and devalue us. In contrast, Jesus empowers us to embrace our humanity in all of its beautiful complexity. The more we express our humanity in loving, healing, forgiving, serving, and rejoicing, the more our divinity or holiness is revealed.

The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life by Kevin O’Brien, SJ

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **On the Situation; Christian Faith, (pp. 129-140)** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



April 16, 2022

Agenda Meeting _6_

**On the Situation; Christian
Faith, (pp. 129-140**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

13 Then the sea gave up its dead. Death and the world of the dead also gave up the dead they held. And all were judged according to what they had done. 14 Then death and the world of the dead were thrown into the lake of fire. (This lake of fire is the second death.) 15 Whoever did not have their names written in the book of the living were thrown into the lake of fire. Rev. 20, GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: _____ **Accepting Mystery and trusting in God's Justice and Mercy** _____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: "I imagine when this body is gone, and another spiritual "body" houses my soul that now, whereas I see through a dark glass, then my soul will be seeing purely and clearly the Presence of God's love, justice, and mercy."

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe "Listening Book" notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

5 You prepare a banquet for me,
where all my enemies can see me;
you welcome me as an honoured guest
and fill my cup to the brim.

6 I know that your goodness and love will be with me all my life;
and your house will be my home as long as I live. Psa. 23, GNBK

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **The Directives of Scripture; Hell for Others, (pp. 141-140)** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



April 16, 2022

Agenda Meeting _7_

**The Directives of Scripture;
Hell for Others, (pp. 141-149)**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to announce these things to you in the churches. I am descended from the family of David; I am the bright morning star."

17 The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!"

Everyone who hears this must also say, "Come!"

Come, whoever is thirsty; accept the water of life as a gift, whoever wants it.

Rev. 22, GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: _____ **Hope for all who have died, that they may be saved** _____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: "I imagine when all is finished, and God returns to the earth with New Jerusalem, that the Spirit and the Bride, His Church, will cry out for all Eternity, "Come," not forcing those in Hell to come to salvation, but imploring them of their own free will to eventually join us forevermore, and come in from outside the gates of New Jerusalem!"

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe "Listening Book" notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

“Many passages could be added here, I do not at all deny that their force is weakened by the series of threatening ones; I only dispute that the series of threats invalidates the cited universalist statements. And I claim nothing more than this: that these statements give us a right to have hope for all men,... But, in return, I would like to request that one be permitted to hope that God’s redemptive work for his creation might succeed...the Church, which has sanctified so many men, has never said anything about the damnation of any individual. Not even about Judas,...Who can know the nature of the remorse that seized Judas when he saw that Jesus had been condemned (Mt 27:3?” *Dare We Hope*, (p. 149).

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

**Joy over Damnation; “Accursed and Cut Off from Christ for the Sake of My Brethren;”
The Obligation to Hope for All (pp. 158-177)**

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper &
John Lochman



April 16, 2022

Agenda Meeting _8_

**Joy over Damnation;
“Accursed and Cut Off from Christ for the Sake of My Brethren,”
The Obligation to Hope for All (pp. 158-177)**

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

37 No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! 38 For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, 39 neither the world above nor the world below — there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8, GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Willingness to sacrifice my desires and even my life, if God wills,**
for the salvation of my brothers and sisters. Who is not my brother? _____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: “I imagine when all is finished, and I see others I have known in this life, that I will know that my desire for others to be saved will have been effective and I will know then whom I have helped!”

Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

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Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

(023)

In the Principle and Foundation, Ignatius presented his view of God, world and self. An emerging new cosmology shifts the perspective on theological questions pertaining to that opening consideration. At least seven implications flow from the new cosmology in reference to the Principle and Foundation:

- Classical dualisms are no longer tenable. The hierarchical, patriarchal dualisms of humans over earth, men over women, and spirit over matter are obsolete.
- Human beings are radically interconnected with all other creatures. Quantum physics insists on the fundamental interrelationships of the world of matter.
- God is not distant from the universe but a sustaining presence in all of creation. . . . The universe is pregnant with the presence of God whose creative action is at the heart of the evolutionary process.
- A human-centered norm of progress must give way to a biocentric focus. Humans are within the cosmos, not apart from or above it.
- Cultivating a renewed sacramental vision is the richest way of recovering both a sense of reverence for and companionship with all of creation.
- Salvation is planetary and global as well as personal. A shift from other-worldly to this-worldly redemptive hope flows from the new paradigm. Persons no longer seek simply their own redemption but that of all creation, including the earth itself. The life and death of Jesus must be lived out salvifically by all Christians. The universe, the sacred body of God, also needs salvation (Rom. 8:18–23).
- Humans are called not to dominate nature, but to be cocreators within the evolutionary process.

The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women by Katherine Dyckman, Mary Garvin, and Elizabeth Liebert

_____ Spontaneous Prayer as desired _____

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

_____ **Definition and Context; Possible Responses, (pp. 181-204)** _____

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper & John Lochman



April 16, 2022

Agenda Meeting _9_

Definition and Context; Possible Responses, (pp. 181-204)

Notation for non-Catholics Re Sign of Cross, etc.

Make Sign of Cross or gesture of reverence recognizing Holy Spirit is guiding us.

Preparation: 2 Minutes of Silence... (Apophatic) Read Preparatory Prayer text: (Kataphatic)

Prayer Text:

... 9 You are also God's building. 10 Using the gift that God gave me, I did the work of an expert builder and laid the foundation, and someone else is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds. 11 For God has already placed Jesus Christ as the one and only foundation, and no other foundation can be laid. 12 Some will use gold or silver or precious stones in building on the foundation; others will use wood or grass or straw. 13 And the quality of each person's work will be seen when the Day of Christ exposes it. For on that Day fire will reveal everyone's work; the fire will test it and show its real quality. 14 If what was built on the foundation survives the fire, the builder will receive a reward. 15 But if anyone's work is burnt up, then he will lose it; but he himself will be saved, as if he had escaped through the fire.

16 Surely you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you! 17 So if anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you yourselves are his temple.

GNBK

Desire: I ask for the Grace of: **Willingness to hold the mystery of life, death, and resurrection in**

tension, knowing I cannot know absolute answers with my human mind to these mysteries._____

Imagination: Prayer of Imagination: "I imagine some of the suffering I experience in this human life will be a credit for cleansing for eternal salvation and this cleansing process will be completed after my death and only my better self will remain forever."

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Each person shares as desired.

Spiritual Conversation and Listening: Describe “Listening Book” notations for these Chapters or whatever the Spirit moves you to share. Listen attentively to others who are sharing and also share.

Prayer: Prayer from *Ignatian Prayers* booklet, Colloquy, or other sources and inspirations.

(237)

Everything should be attributed to God in a song of praise. Whoever can do that, whoever can say the “Suscipe” with his whole heart and soul and mean every word of it, whoever is capable of that because he is free from sin and has broken away from himself in the following of Christ, he has arrived at that point where St. Ignatius wants him to be at the end of the spiritual Exercises. He is the kind of person St. Ignatius can send back into the world of daily life so that he can find the living God of love there in his work, in his destiny, in his gifts and sufferings, in life and death, in using and leaving the things of this earth. If he truly attains such love, he will possess God, not in opposition to the world, but as the only One who gives value and dignity to the world.

Spiritual Exercises by Karl Rahner, SJ

Spontaneous Prayer as desired

Silence:

Blessing and Farewell:

Reference _____ (Spiritual Director will bring this blessing to meeting) _____

Reading and time for next meeting:

Final Meeting will be a meal and celebration with commissioning

Time and Date: _____

Grace & Peace,

John Cooper & John Lochman



April 16, 2022

Epilogue

I happen to be finishing this textbook for givers of Christian Spirituality for the Final Third of Life on Holy Saturday, April 16th, 2022. This is a day to silently reflect upon Jesus as he lays in the tomb and look forward to his resurrection. This morning as I meditated with today's readings, I read the reflection below written by Andy Alexander, S.J. I cannot think of a better reflection as conclusion to this small group course textbook:

“On Good Friday, there was no Eucharist - simply a communion service, with the Body of Christ from the Holy Thursday Eucharist. On Holy Saturday, there is no liturgy at all. The liturgy this evening is the vigil - the preparation for and entry into the celebration of Our Lord's Resurrection. It is an Easter Sunday liturgy.

On Holy Saturday we enter into the mystery. Today we contemplate Jesus, there in the tomb, dead. In that tomb, he is dead, exactly the way each of us will be dead. We don't easily contemplate dying, but we rarely contemplate being dead. I have had the blessed experience of being with a number of people who have died, of arriving at a hospital shortly after someone has died, of attending an autopsy, and of praying with health sciences students over donated bodies in gross anatomy class. These were powerful experiences because they all brought me face-to-face with the mystery of death itself. With death, life ends. Breathing stops, and in an instant, the life of this person has ended. And, in a matter of hours, the body becomes quite cold and life-less - - dramatic evidence, to our senses, that this person no longer exists. All that is left is this decaying shell that once held his or her life.

Death is our ultimate fear. Everything else we fear, every struggle we have, is some taste of, some chilling approach to, the experience of losing our life. This fear is responsible for so much of our lust and greed, so much of our denial and arrogance, so much of our silly clinging to power, so much of our hectic and anxiety-driven activity. It is the one, inevitable reality we all will face. There is not enough time, money, joy, fulfillment, success. Our physical beauty and strength, our mental competency and agility, all that we have and use to define ourselves, slip away from us with time. Our lives are limited. Our existence, in every way we can comprehend it, comes to an end. We will all die. In a matter of time, all that will be left of any of us is a decomposing body.

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Today is a day to soberly put aside the blinders we have about the mystery of death and our fear of it. Death is very real and its approach holds great power in our lives. The "good news" we are about to celebrate has no real power in our lives unless we have faced the reality of death. To contemplate Jesus' body, there in that tomb, is to look our death in the face, and it is preparation for hearing the Gospel with incredible joy. That we are saved, from the ultimate power of sin and of death itself, comes to us as a great relief, as a tremendous liberation. If Jesus lives, you and I will live! The mystery of death, which we contemplate today, will be overcome - we will live forever!

Today's reflection will lead us to the vigil of Easter. This night, communities from all over the world will gather in darkness, a darkness that represents all that we have been reflecting upon today.

The God who created us, who led a chosen people out of slavery, raised Jesus from death. We can rejoice that death has no final victory over us. Then we celebrate the Easter Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Tonight we celebrate our faith -- that we have been baptized into the death of Jesus, so that we might have everlasting life with him.

As we behold the body of Jesus in the tomb today, and as we contemplate the mystery of our death, we prepare our hearts to receive the Good News of life. We know that tomb will be empty and remain empty forever as a sign that our lives will not really end, but only be transformed. One day, we will all rest in the embrace of Jesus, who knows our death, and who prepares a place for us in everlasting life. Our reflection on this holy Saturday, and our anticipation of celebrating the gift of life tonight and tomorrow, can bring immense peace and joy, powerful freedom and vitality to our lives. For if we truly believe that death holds no true power over us, we can walk each day with courage and freedom, in the grace being offered us - to give our lives away in love.

Brothers and sisters:

*Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus
were baptized into his death?*

*We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death,
so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,
we too might live in newness of life.*

*For if we have grown into union with him
through a death like his,
we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.*

Rom 6:3-11²

Grace and Peace be with you forever!

John Cooper
Tuscaloosa, AL

² <https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/041622.html>