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“Whoever Serves Me Must Follow Me”

Fr. Thomas Quinn

Hello friends, Father Tom Quinn here with you again. It's very good to be with you for our second session on this Pray More Lenten Retreat. Last time we began our session together by entrusting ourselves to Our Lady, she who is the spouse of the Holy Spirit. So now for our second session together, we'll entrust ourselves to her divine spouse, to the Holy Spirit, as we pray the prayer to the Holy Spirit written by Saint Josemaria Escriva.

So let us begin. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Come, O holy Spirit! Enlighten my understanding in order to know Your commands, strengthen my heart against the snares of the enemy; enkindle my will. I have heard Your voice and I do not want to harden my heart and resist, saying, "Later...tomorrow." Nunc coepi! Right now! Lest there be no tomorrow for me. O Spirit of truth and of wisdom, Spirit of understanding and of counsel, Spirit of joy and of peace! I want what You want, because You want it, as You want, when You want it. Our Lady, spouse of the Holy Spirit, pray for us. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Well friends, in our first time together, we talked about the possible need for ourselves to hit the reset button, as it were, on our Lenten journey, and adjust our focus, taking our cue from our Eastern Christian brothers and sisters. This adjustment focused on walking our Lenten journey not so much as a test of endurance, but as an opportunity to receive, to receive God's healing. We asked ourselves "Where do I stand in need of God's healing? What areas of my heart, of my inner life, may God be inviting me to open up more fully to Him? Are there any dark corners of my heart that I have left closed to the light of God's face? Whether out of shame, or fear, or pain."

To answer these questions, we looked at the need for that encounter with Christ, for that intimate face-to-face encounter with the Lord. We saw that the gospels present this crucial dynamic to us over and over throughout their texts. In the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus in last week's gospel passage, as well as in other episodes too, especially accounts of the Lord's healing someone, in the interest of receiving God's merciful healing, I left you with some homework too. And I challenged you to receive this sacrament of reconciliation, to go make a good confession, and to spend some time each day in prayer, seeking that intimate encounter with Christ.

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I even gave you an acronym for this as well: “EAR.” Encounter, Acknowledge, Receive. To encounter, to carve out some time in our day, to make time for prayer, right. For an encounter to happen, right, between two people, right, it needs to have a time and a place. And so too our encounter with our Lord, right. We need to have a time and a place, right. We have to carve out that opportunity in our busy schedules, and come before the Lord in prayer. Come before His face. To acknowledge, right, we have to acknowledge what’s going on in our hearts, right, to pray. You know, certainly we can pray more what the church calls vocal prayers, right, like the Hail Mary, or the Rosary, right. But we can also pray using the stuff of our hearts, right, to acknowledge what’s going on in our inner life, or all the craziness that’s going on in our external life that might be affecting our inner life, right. But to bring all that stuff to the Lord, right. Those are... that’s the stuff from which we can have the words to pray to God, right.

Vocal prayers give us the words of the prayer, right, the Our Father, the Glory Be, right, the words are given to us. But in this sort of more conversational prayer, what the church calls mental prayer, the stuff, the words comes from the matter of our lives, right. From the surgings of our hearts. And so we must, when we encounter the Lord in prayer, we can acknowledge all that stuff, and bring it before Him. And then lastly, to receive, right. After we have conversed with the Lord, to then have that open heart to patiently and trustingly receive all that He wishes to give us. His inspirations, His strength, His grace, to continue on that path of discipleship with Him.

For our time together today, I want to stay with this concept of prayer, looking a little bit at its nuts and bolts, all in interest of furthering our desire to receive the Lord’s healing. In particular, we’ll take a seat in the classroom of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, and learn about his own method of contemplation and praying with sacred scripture. In Saint Ignatius’s spiritual exercises, he gives us his own variety of contemplation, of praying using our imaginations. If you’re intrigued, well, you should be. Last week, I confessed to you that I have a bit of a coffee obsession. How did I get that way? Primarily, primarily, it’s because the stuff is pleasing to the senses, you know. Coffee smells good, it tastes good, right, it can be a comforting sort of thing, right, on a cold, cold day, right. It’s, as I film this, it’s winter time, so it’s cold out for most parts of our country in the United States, and so coffee, a hot beverage on a cold day can be a comforting thing, right. It elicits sort of the affection of my senses, right.

Well, our senses can be powerful things, right. We have these powerful physical capabilities for hearing, or for smelling, or for seeing, or tasting, right, or touch, right. These powerful capabilities within us. And Saint Ignatius recognized that. He also recognized that those abilities have non-physical counterparts as well, we

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might say, right. We can all utilize our senses in non-material ways as well. Well, what might be just one example of that? Well, here in New Jersey, where I am, where I live, if you're not from our state, we have a beautiful coastline. The New Jersey tourist board isn't paying me to say this, but we do. We have a beautiful coastline, and it's very common for many people in New Jersey and the surrounding area to go to the beach, right, during the summer. To go to the beach for a day, or for a week, even my own family, since I was very young, we've always gone to the beach for a week every August, and we still do.

Here in New Jersey, we have a colloquial saying. We don't say we're going to the beach, in New Jersey we say we're going down the shore. And so here in New Jersey it's very common for many of us to go down the shore in the summers. And, just as an aside, if your only notion of the New Jersey coastline is from the MTV program *Jersey Shore*, I just invite you to jettison any notions you have, or any preconceived ideas you have based on a show. I've never seen the show, but I can tell you it's probably not accurate. And from what I understand, many of the people in that show, when it was on, aren't even from New Jersey, they're from New York. So just jettison any of those images or ideas you have of the Jersey coastline from that program.

Well, alright. So I'm at the beach, right. Well, here it's cold out today, and just recently here in New Jersey we had a bit of a snowstorm with some ice and sleet, sort of nasty weather, made for a hazardous commute for some people, and it was cold out, right. So I'm not going to go to the beach in this kind of weather. Nevertheless, there is, in a sense, you know, I can go to the beach in a sense. I can use my imagination, right. And in using my imagination, I can also elicit these non-physical counterparts, these non-physical counterparts in my senses, right. So what does that look like?

Well, I can close my eyes, right, and I can imagine myself at the particular shore town here in New Jersey, where my family goes, right, and I can imagine myself standing on the beach. I can feel the sand in my toes, between my toes, I can imagine myself reaching down and grasping a clump of sand, and letting it fall through my fingers, right, I can feel the sensation of that in my imagination. I can see the ocean, I can imagine myself in the water, you know, I can feel the water, I can taste its saltiness, I can smell the sea air, right, I can hear... I can hear seagulls, right, flying overhead, and all that, right. So, using my imagination, I can kind of recreate this place for myself. I can make this place very visible within my interior life, and I can utilize these sort of non-physical counterparts of my senses.

And so Saint Ignatius, Saint Ignatius recognized that, and he puts it to use in his own style of contemplation. That word in the spiritual theology of the church can

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mean different things to different people. Ignatian contemplation is a little different than what we might look at if we were studying the Carmelite spirituality and how they use contemplation. But for Ignatius, contemplation, particularly our contemplation with sacred scripture, utilizes our imagination, it utilizes our sort of the non-physical counterparts of our senses. And really, and a better way, I guess, to phrase it is it allows the Holy Spirit to utilize our imaginations in order for the Lord to speak to us as we pray with sacred scripture, particularly, most commonly, with one of the gospel scenes, right. Through the harmonious working of grace in our imaginations, God utilizes those things, and He can speak to our hearts, right.

Right, isn't this true though, right? Because the word of God is, as Hebrews 4:12 says, you know, ***The Lord of God is living and active, right, it's sharper than any two-edged sword***, right. And so when we pray with sacred scripture in this way, right, it's a living reality that we're drawn into, right, that God draws us into His living word, right. We seek to enter that living reality, you know, even moreover, right, because of our baptism, right. We become those dwelling places of the Holy Spirit, right, those temples of the Holy Spirit, right, and we're incorporated into the Lord's own very divine life, we're incorporated into the saving mysteries of Christ's life, to His Paschal Mystery, right. And so because of baptism, Christ's mysteries, as the great Benedictine Abbot Blessed Columba Marmion always liked to say, "Christ's mysteries are our mysteries," right. And so when we pray with sacred scripture, we are drawn into a living reality, because the word of God is living. But also because of our baptism, Christ's mysteries, those living mysteries are our mysteries as well.

And so, again, in this form of prayer, in Ignatian contemplation, we allow the Holy Spirit to draw us into His active presence, to speak to us through the living word of sacred scripture. And so when we pray in this way, we want to enter into, say, we'll enter into a gospel scene, you as vividly as we can. It's not that we do it in a sense of sort of recreating an historical event, right, but we enter into it as if it were happening right before us, right, and we ourselves having an active part, right. It's not like we're civil war reenactors, right. We're not that, we're not, say, the field of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania, and sort of recreating that battle of the civil war. We're not recreating some historical event, we're entering into a present reality, a living reality, and the Holy Spirit will utilize that, and utilize our imaginations, and that gospel scene to speak to us. We have an active part in what's happening.

Alright, so that means, if I'm praying with, say, Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, right, if I'm entering into that scene through prayer, well, we'd ask ourselves, I'd ask myself, you know, "Well, what are the sights, and the sounds, the smells and the tastes, or the sensations around me?" Right, we kind of set up the scene, right. What does it look like? You know, what's the weather like? Is it cool out, or is it

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warmer? Is it humid, right? Am I sweating? What does Gethsemane look like itself, right? What does the garden look like, right? And we set up the scene before us. You know, what does the Garden of Gethsemane look like, you know, drawing upon the text of the gospel passage, right. What are the sounds around me, right?

What do I hear, right? Do I hear people speaking? Can I hear the whisperings of Jesus praying, right? What does Jesus's facial expression look like as He's praying? Where am I in all of this, right? Perhaps I'm one of the disciples, right. Maybe I'm one of the sleepy disciples who keeps falling asleep, or maybe I'm myself, right, or maybe I'm, eventually, maybe I'm one of the soldiers who will come and arrest Jesus, right. Who am I? Where am I in this gospel scene? Maybe I myself am praying alongside of Jesus on the ground, right. Well, what does the ground feel like? Can I feel the dirt, the sandiness, or the grittiness of the dirt on my hands, right? Or on my knees? We have to set it up, set up the scene, drawing upon the text of the gospel, and utilizing our senses, our spiritual senses and our imaginations, right, trusting that the Holy Spirit will use these things to speak to us.

So, alright. So if we're going to pray in this way, how might this prayer, in a practical way, sort of take shape? I think we can briefly look at sort of 5 considerations as we seek to pray in this way. We can look at place, we can look at time, we can look at duration, and we can also look at subject matter as well. So, I lied. I wasn't very good at math when I was a child, so there's only four considerations. Well, place, right. So, we want to pray in this way. Well, where am I going to pray, right? Where will I pray? Will I pray at home? Will I pray in church? Will I go maybe, if the weather is nice, you know, maybe I'll go, will I go pray in the park? In a quiet spot in the park somewhere? On the park bench, or underneath a tree or something? You know, where am I going to pray this? You know, needless to say, it needs to be a spot that affords a sufficient amount of silence, so we can enter into prayer effectively, right Silence is so crucial for prayer.

Alright, the second consideration, the second of the four: time. Right, well, maybe I've chosen a place for prayer, you know. Well, what time am I going to pray, right? Sometimes that might be determined by the previous consideration of place, right. If I'm going to go pray in church, I have to make sure the church is open, right. So I'm not going to go to the church at 11 o'clock night and expect, in most places at least, expect the church to be open. So time is a consideration as well. But also for our own personal reasons too. Maybe I pray better in the morning, right, or maybe I pray better in the evening, or maybe the afternoon is the best time for me to pray, right. Time for prayer, right. When is most effective for me to enter into prayer? That might change on a daily basis.

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Alright, so we saw place and time for prayer. Next we have to look at duration of prayer, right. The length of my prayer time is a related factor as well. Ideally, with this form of prayer, one makes a holy hour. But perhaps, you know, perhaps your state in life doesn't afford this, or perhaps maybe you're not accustomed to making a full hour of prayer. That's okay. You know, do what you can. Sometimes we have to work our way up to maybe doing a full hour, so maybe start in 15, 10 or 15 minute increments as we you see fit. You know, or maybe, you know, if you're a busy husband or wife, right, and you have a family to take care of, you have children, right, that determines duration of prayer too, right. Maybe you don't have a full hour during your day, or maybe you only have, you know, 15 minutes from the time that you get the kids to bed, and before you pass out from utter exhaustion, maybe you only have a 15-minute window. Alright, well that's okay. God is omnipotent, right, He's all-powerful, and He can make of those 15 minutes more than we can ever imagine, right. He just asks for a generous and an open heart, right.

Alright, and so lastly then, the fourth consideration is subject matter, right. What is the stuff of my prayer? That is, what gospel event am I going to make the focus of my contemplation? Will it be the raising of Lazarus? Or maybe it's the Lord's baptism in the Jordan, right, or maybe it's the crucifixion, right. What is the gospel scene I'm going to pray with? We have to choose one. Choose one. Alright.

So once we've looked at those practicalities, I think, you know, we can go about... we can set about praying, right, doing the important part. Now, what Saint Ignatius gives us, he gives us some guidelines for this type of prayer period. He gives us a few steps. Step one, in his... in number 75 of his spiritual exercises, Saint Ignatius says that as we enter into prayer, that a step or 2 before the place where we're about to pray, that we should stand there for the space of an Our Father. And for that space of time, that length of time, you know, certainly we can pray the Our Father, or we can pray another prayer in our words, right. But we stand before the place about which we're going to pray. Maybe that's the pew in the church, or maybe it's a favorite chair in our living room or bedroom, right. We stand before that place for the space of an Our Father. And during that Our Father, we reflect on how God looks upon us, how God beholds us, and we lift up our heart to Him, right. We lift up our heart for that space of an Our Father, and consider how our loving God looks upon us, how He gazes upon us, right.

And then, then we'll make an act of reverence, right, whatever that might be. You know, maybe if I'm in church, or maybe it'll be in a genuflection, right, before we enter the pew and pray, or maybe if I'm at home, and maybe I have an image on the wall in my living room or bedroom, and maybe it's an icon or an Holy Image, and maybe I'm sort of directing my praying towards that, using that as sort of an

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orienting factor, maybe I make a bow to that, right. We make some sort of act of reverence as we finish that space of an Our Father and we set about our prayer.

Alright, so what have we seen? We've seen in this step that, as we come into prayer, we lift up our hearts to God, we lift up our hearts and our minds to God for that Space of an Our Father, and we pray for that space, a step or 2, as Saint Ignatius says, before the actual place where we are going to pray, right, wherever that might be.

Alright, so the second step he gives us. Saint Ignatius tells us to ask for grace. For some particular gift or fruit that we desire to receive from our time of prayer. So, for example, you know, that might be "Lord, give us a deeper appreciation of Your love for me." Or perhaps you struggle. Perhaps you struggle with the first step, right, in how God beholds us, right. How does God look upon us? So maybe the grace that you need to ask for is the grace to be able to see yourself as God sees you, right. He sees you as His beloved son, His beloved daughter. And so maybe that's the grace we need to ask for. Maybe we struggle with how God looks upon us. We might think we're ugly before God, and we need to ask for the grace to allow ourselves to see ourselves as God sees us, or to see how God truly looks upon us, right, His gaze of mercy, His gaze of love.

Alright, so step 2. We ask for a particular grace. Step 3, alright, then step 3 is we go about the hard part, right, we go about the business of the prayer. That is we actually pray. We pray with our chosen scripture passage, and we utilize what we have spoken about already. We imagine the scene as realistically as possible, right. And remember, this is not a simple historical recreation, right, we're not sort of, again, we're not impersonating some historical occurrence, we're not, again, we're not recreating a civil war scene or something, right, but we're participants, we're participants in the scriptural scene before us. And we trust, we trust in the Holy Spirit to work through our imaginations. You know, this might be a difficult thing at first, right, and that's okay. Maybe we're not used to praying this way, or maybe we have to develop our imaginations a little more. That's okay. Just take it slowly, and make sure to employ your... those spiritual senses, right, those non-physical counterparts to our physical senses, right. So "What am I seeing? What am I feeling? What am I wearing? You know, am I hearing something, right, am I speaking something, right." Employ the sort of the nitty gritty of the scene, put yourself in there as realistically as possible.

And again, take it slowly, right. We should read the chosen gospel passage slowly, right. Read it once, read it a second time even more slowly, even read it a third time if we have to, but read it slowly, and let the words really permeate your being,

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right. Let them permeate. We have to let them permeate as deeply as possible. So take it slowly.

Alright. So the fourth step that we have. As I'm in the scene, and as the events unfold, then what is striking my heart, right? The beautiful thing about Ignatian spirituality is that it drives us to live from the heart. It drives us inwards, right. In our day and age, right, there's so much that pulls us out of our ourselves, right, that distracts us. We have endless electronic gadgets, right, we have constant noise, wherever that might be. It's a very hectic and a rushed sort of culture we live in, right. But Ignatian spirituality challenges us to go deep and to live from the heart, to live in that interior space, where God wishes to speak to us, right.

Remember that beautiful passage, right, from the Old Testament. God is not in the rushing wind, or the whirlwind, right, He's in that still, small voice. And so we need to live in that interior life, and to allow ourselves for that silence, and to pay sufficient attention to the stirrings and the movements of our hearts.

Alright, so the fourth step, you know, what is striking my heart as I pray with this gospel scene, right. And what am I feeling? What am I thinking? And what am I desiring as I pray, you know, as I pray with this gospel scene. Maybe, you know, maybe I'm praying with one of the healing miracles, right, of Jesus, and maybe in the gospel scene I'm myself, and I see how Jesus so tenderly and lovingly cares for this sick person. Maybe in my own life I feel like I haven't received that from that Lord, so maybe in my heart there's stirring a sense of sadness, or a sense of longing, that I may experience that same sort of mercy, that same sort of gentleness from the Lord, as this person in the gospel scene is receiving, right. So this fourth step is quite important, right. We have to pay attention to what's going on in our hearts, the movements of our interior life, as we pray in this gospel scene, right. What is striking my heart with love, or joy, you know, or maybe even fear, right. What is striking my heart as I pray?

The fifth step follows upon and builds upon our previous step. As our time of prayer comes to a close, Ignatius exhorts us to engage in what's called a colloquy. That is a simple, loving conversation with either our Lord Jesus, or maybe it's with another of the divine persons, or maybe it's with Our Lady, right. He calls us to colloquy, to have a loving and simple conversation as we end our prayer time.

And so, as we do that, you know, we can draw upon our time of prayer. Well, what happened in the prayer We can draw upon that stuff, that matter, and we can speak to the person with whom we're colloquying, right. Maybe it's the Holy Spirit, maybe it's God the Father, right, and we can draw upon that and colloquy with that person, right. In simple, familiar terms. A colloquy is a simple prayer, it's a simple, familiar conversation, right, as if we were between 2 friends, right. It's a simple

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conversation, right. Imagine yourself, you can imagine yourself on a park bench, or in your living room, just having that simple one-on-one conversation with a friend. That's what colloquy is, except, you know, our conversation is with God.

So we draw upon what happened in the prayer, and we colloquy with that, with our Lord, right, bringing to Him all of our desires, all of our fears, all of our longings, we bring all of that stuff before Him. Maybe not much has happened in the prayer. Okay, well bring that before the Lord, right. Speak to the Lord about that. You know, "Why Lord? Why has this prayer time been so dry? Why hasn't, you know, anything really happened?" And that's okay. A colloquy about it, right. Ignatius calls us to end our prayer time with that.

It's also good to reflect upon our time of prayer after it's happened, right. So perhaps this can be done through means of journaling, journaling about it. Sometimes getting things on paper helps us to process experiences more fully and more effectively. So, after the fact, after our prayer time, to maybe journal about this, to get on paper, certainly for the benefit of our own memories, to get on paper, you know, what has happened in prayer, and what the Lord might be inviting us maybe to bring again to Him in prayer, right. We can always repeat these prayer times as well, these gospel passages, right. We can never exhaust the word of God, so we can always maybe repeat. Maybe we can pray for a week with the same passage, and see how the Lord might use that to speak to us.

Okay. So why am I speaking to you about this form of prayer? This Ignatian contemplation? Well, take into account again our focus on receiving the Lord's healing. This prayer can be very effective in terms of receiving the Lord's healing. To pray in this way, and to encounter the Lord in a very vivid way, to encounter the Lord in a very real and living way, Ignatius gives us this form of prayer, which can be so fruitful for that.

So, alright. 2 points I want to make as we wrap up our session today, and that is, the first point is to be aware of 2 vocabulary words, which Ignatius gives us in his rules for what he calls discernment of spirits. He gives us 2 very important vocabulary words. The first word is "consolation." What is consolation? Consolation, Ignatius says, is all those interior movements of joy and of peace, those movements in our souls that cause us even to shed tears, right, out of love for God, those good tears, right. They can be tears of repentance, they can be tears of sorrow for our past sins, in recognition of God's unfathomable love for us. All those good movements that attract our soul, that pull it upwards, right, and give us peace and contentment in the Lord. So be aware of that, be aware of that sensation as you pray, right. Consolation, right. What strikes my heart with that interior joy, and that peace which encourages me and drives me on in service of my Lord.

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The second vocabulary word is “desolation.” Desolation are those movements of our soul that move in the opposite direction of consolation. Ignatius describes desolation as a darkness of soul, or a disturbance of soul. So just as consolation gives us peace and peace and a restful soul, desolation disquiets us, it agitates us, right, we find ourselves in desolation moving towards a lack of faith, hope, and charity. We find ourselves spiritually sluggish, and we feel we have that sensation like we’re separated from God in some way, or that God is very far away. Now, God is never really, you know, far away, right. You know, certainly through our own sinfulness, right, we can injure our relationship with God, or we can cut it off altogether, right. So, certainly, we can move away from God, but even in our sinfulness, right, where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. Even in our sinfulness, God is always seeking to draw us back.

But in desolation, we can have that sensation of God feeling very far away, and it can leave us in this place of confusion and this place of sadness, you know, especially if we’ve had experiences of God’s joy in our lives, right, where God feels very close. Those times of desolation can be very painful. But just always be aware that God is never the cause of desolation, right. Certainly, we can cause desolation by our sinfulness, but God is never direction causing desolation, right. He might allow it for our greater benefit, right, He might allow the unpleasantness of desolation to kind of finally wake us up. Maybe we struggle with habitual sin, and desolation might be a means by which God kind of wakes us up and says “Alright, it’s time to start reforming your life.” God might allow desolation, but He’s never directly causing desolation, right.

So just, for our purposes here, be aware of those movements, right. And also be aware that those movements act upon our souls in different ways, right. Saint Ignatius says, you know, that for those of us who are sort of just starting out in the spiritual life, and maybe we’re setting out on a more virtuous path of life, where we’re working on receiving the Lord’s grace to reform our lives, to move away from sinfulness, right. Consolation and desolation are going to act upon our souls in different ways during this time, right. God is going to, during those times, during those difficult times, where we seek to leave a path of vice and walk in a path of virtue, the Holy Spirit is going to encourage us and draw us on, right, with consolation and choosing the right thing. And our enemy, right, the devil is going to cause us to have sadness of soul, to strike us with things that will try to deter us from walking that path of virtue.

And just so, maybe if we’re moving away from virtue and into vice, we’re moving away from the Lord, right, so too the dynamic is going to be reversed, right. It is then that the devil is going to entice us with these false consolations, these false pleasures to try to keep us in that path of vice. And the Holy Spirit then will sting

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our consciousness, He will try to make us turn around, right, with the truth, right, and walk in the truth. So be aware of that too as you pray, those movements and those alternating movements of consolation and desolation. And certainly in our daily lives too, to always to have that recognition of our interior life, you know, those alternating movements of consolation and desolation in our spiritual lives, which is a totally normal thing. But we have to kind of be able to recognize it, and then to try to understand it and make sense of it. So be aware of that as well.

Alright. So, lastly then, we have our vocabulary words, and the second thing is that I'm going to give you some more homework. In the interest of receiving the Lord's healing. So, with this in mind, I want you to give Ignatian contemplation a try. Specifically utilize it with the gospel passage of the healing of Bartimaeus, the blind man, and use Mark's gospel, chapter 10 verses 46-52. Pray with this gospel scene, right. And the grace to pray for, pray for a deeper experience of the Lord's healing. Say "Jesus, give me a deeper experience of Your healing love." That's the grace I'd like you to pray for, and that's the gospel scene I'd like you to pray with. The healing of Bartimaeus. Again, Mark chapter 10 verses 46 to 52.

Okay. So, until then, let us continue to pray for each other, that our Lent may continue to be a fruitful time through which the Lord draws us always closer to Himself, and always have those open hearts to receive the Lord's healing. And for that, we'll end again with our prayer from Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman, his prayer to the Sacred Heart.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Most sacred, most loving Heart of Jesus, You are concealed in the Holy Eucharist, and You beat for us still. Now as then You say, "With desire I have desired." I worship You with all my best love and awe, with fervent affection, with my most subdued, most resolved will. For a while You take up Your abode within me. O make my heart beat with Your Heart! Purify it of all that is earthly, all that is proud and sensual, all that is hard and cruel, of all perversity, of all disorder, of all deadness. So fill it with You, that neither the events of the day, nor the circumstances of the time, may have the power to ruffle it; but that in Your love and Your fear, it may have peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.