

Diocese of Tyler Spiritual Companion Program – April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer
2. Review of Prayer
  - Spiritual Check-In
  - The Principle & Foundation
  - Praying My Dossier
3. Review of Barry & Connolly chapter 7
4. St. Teresa of Calcutta
5. Rules for the Discernment of Spirits
  - Brief Review of Rules 1 & 2
  - Spiritual Consolation
  - Spiritual Desolation
  
  - Case-Studies & Role Play

May 'assignments'

Read: 'God's Voice Within' (Thibodeaux) Part 1; Chapters 1 & 2 (pages 15-56)  
'Characteristics of Desolation and of the False Spirit & Characteristics of Consolation and of the True Spirit.'

Pray: The Principle & Foundation & (if you feel like it...) Prayer on my Dossier.

Write: Prepare 1 case study that you believe is addressed by the 'Rules for the Discernment of Spirits' as we discussed in April.

calvin and hobbes



Janis retired last year after working as a high school counselor. She has been in spiritual direction for a couple years with me. She prays daily, attends weekly mass a couple times a week and had started going to weekly adoration a few months ago. Janis said that at adoration she has felt a certain warmth and closeness to the Lord. At one point she says she was moved to tears thinking about Christ's passion. She says she feels a certain joy or peace that remains throughout the day since stating adoration and has noticed an increase in her faith and charity. Janis is involved in several organizations in the parish but told me that she felt called to do more to serve God in some special way that uses her skills and talents. She discerned that she was called to volunteer to work with pregnant women at a local crisis pregnancy center. Janis said that helping at the center is emotional taxing, but she feels that she is becoming even closer to Christ by working with these women. She has been helping at the center for 3 months.

At our last monthly meeting, Janis lacked energy and seemed sad. She had found out that one of the women she was working with had gone on to have an abortion. She knew this young woman was particularly troubled and she had been praying for her. Janis is having self-doubts about her ability to counsel these women. Additionally, there is some trouble in her prayer life. She has found prayer dry recently and has little desire to pray. She is still going to adoration but says it seems pointless—she is not sure that God is listening. Janis has started thinking she is not worthy of God's love because of things she did in her youth. Although she still goes to help at the shelter, she wants to stop.

How should I counsel Janis?

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
St Mary's -Longview

A parishioner, (Call her Laura) from St Anthony called and would like to speak with someone to discuss something personal.

At the first meeting, Laura said she once believed in God but has determined there is no God. To believe in God, she simply stated, it's a waste of time. She believes, if there were a God, there would be less suffering and many young people would not die, like her son Charles.

She found out her son was ill with leukemia 12 months earlier and died to within 2 years of burying her husband and Charles dad, John.

She said her son believed in God and in-fact prayed often the Divine Mercy Chaplet. She heard Charles once tell Father during his visit that he would offer up his sufferings for his dad and family. She never thought of it again.

However, she heard on a protestant radio station that came on unexpectedly, that Catholic's believe his or her sufferings can be a means of helping someone get into heaven or help someone alive on Earth.

Although it seemed like this belief was silly back then when she first heard it from her son to Father, but to hear it again on the radio brought back the memory of hearing her son's conversation with Father and father used the term, redemptive suffering.

She stated that since the death of her son, she knew there wasn't a God. But now, after hearing the radio station and recalling the conversation her son had with Father about suffering and her son's belief in God.... She's just wondering; exploring.

She said there might be something I am not seeing and asked if we can help her find the answers she seek.

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## Review of Prayer

*After you have finished reciting the Our Father at the end of your prayer time, take a brief time for another exercise: Review of Prayer.*

*You already know what a Review of Prayer is like. Imagine that you sit alone after a long visit with a great friend. The two of you covered a lot of ground. You might have talked a bit about politics. About other friends. About your own long-established friendship. As you sit remembering, you can recall certain sentences that one of you said, and identify definite feelings you had at certain junctures. You know "what you talked about" and can name the general feeling of your time together—good, or wonderful, or painful. You know there are things still unresolved or unfinished, things still to be said. When you make a Review of Prayer, you do very much that same thing.*

- Jotting down in a notebook what occurs to you, look back over your prayer time to see what you did and what you experienced. Understand, you need not do and experience over again; that's a different exercise. You need only note what you did and experienced.
- For instance, note how you started. Note the major idea or ideas that occurred to you.

What conviction or convictions did you come to? Did you have any strong feelings or emotions? Were those feelings peaceful, creative, or holy? Were they rather disturbing, or even fearful? Did you feel love for God? resentful toward God?

- You may find only one or other thing to note, or you might find a great deal. God will deal with you variously at various times.
- Try to be careful to note any thoughts, affects, convictions that were particularly strong. Did something make you really fearful? fill you with disgust? make you doubt your belief somehow? Or did something make you feel very happy in God? give you greater sureness in your choices? make you sense how deep your life in Christ goes? Note each of those carefully, particularly the movements that were very strong—the black holes and the volcanoes.
- Take the "climate" of your prayer. A still summer afternoon? A stormy winter night? A breezy morning? A very, very long and dull afternoon? ♦

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## Three Little Ways of Praying

• **The First Little Way of Praying:**  
Recall the commandments or any list such as the Cardinal Virtues or the Capital Sins. Take each in turn, consider the beautiful divine invitation it expresses, and ask yourself how you are living it out. Thank your Creator and Lord for all your good and beg God to make up for your lacks and failures.

• **The Second Little Way of Praying:**  
Pray any prayer you know—the Our Father, Apostles' Creed, Hail Mary—and consider it one word at a time, savouring each word until you are finished with it, and then moving to the next. Thus, you would wonder what it

means that you call the Father "Our," and how you live out that meaning; then when you are done with that word, move on to "Father," and so the "Amen."

• **The Third Little Way of Praying:**  
Pray any prayer you know rhythmically, saying one word or phrase each time you breathe in or take a step walking or hear the subway wheels hit a track divider.

Of course, in any way of praying you begin coming to self-concentration in God, ask the Lord for what you want, and end by talking with your Creator and Lord. ♦

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## Active Indifference

- My life world offers me a welter of wonderful things—careers, places to live, consumer goods, travel, various educations. After I have set my face against anything sinful, how will I decide which among them to go for?
- I could choose in several ways. First, I could simply follow fad and fashion. Hanking after the latest clothes and activities and trips, I could do what everyone else is doing right now.
- Or second, I could simply follow my own native taste. If I grew up loving open country, I could choose to live in a suburb simply because I prefer it and for no other reason. If my natural preferences lead me to pursue some profession, I could simply follow that lead, figuring that God would not make me hanker for something that would do me harm.
- Or third, I could set some definite goal for myself, to bring me to transcend myself, reach fulfillment, and do some real good for others. For example, I could ambition being a federal judge or having total financial security or making some important discovery in genetics. Then I could aim everything toward that goal.
- A fourth way would be more difficult. I could begin with the premise that I will never do anything to break my relationship with God my Lord, but will choose only what my conscience freely allows. Then I will wait to find out what God hopes for in me.
- To achieve this mind-set, I have to believe that I can know what God hopes in me, and I have to hope that I can find that out.
- I will also have to hold tremendously careful balance among all the welter of wonderful things that my life world offers me. I will not

let myself get so stuck on any of them that it will incline me to this or that decision. That would mean that I would not follow the first or second way of choosing—by doing what everyone is now doing, or by merely following my own native preferences—and not even the third—by setting my own life goal for myself without asking God what my Creator wants in me. To put that another way: I would not try to tell God what will make me happy (that judgeship or a heap of money or a brilliant scientific career). I will wait to find out what God has been hoping in me—and live confident that it will make me happy.

- Of course, I cannot sit back and expect God to strike me the way God struck Paul of Tarsus. I have to pray, and consider, and take counsel with trusted friends. I have to attend to what the whole Church now engages in and hopes for, and what the official teachers (bishops and theologians in their own ways) are teaching. I have to try this or that and see how it goes. But I will always be hoping to find God desiring in me, God shaping my life world, God bringing the Reign to reality. I hope to find what God wants first, and then I will decide what I let myself want and what I will choose.
- Holding this kind of indifference among God's almost infinite number of gifts makes a person a great force for good. What a power she is who does not much care where she lives as long as God's hopes are being realized! What a power he is who does not much care whether he lives wealthy or not, only as long as God's justice is being done! Such a person truly finds God in all things—God creating, God raising up justice and peace in all things, God working busily so that no one will be lost, but everyone brought to the Reign. ❖

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