

God in Others

Forth Week of Lent

3

Retreat for Journeying through Lent Everyone

Retreat for The Father Everyday



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Introduction and Programme



Introduction

The retreat is now in its third week. Again look at how you are doing - perhaps you could get hold of a new candle to celebrate getting this far. Look at how the retreat went last week, make the necessary adjustments to the programme for you. Perhaps you will need to adjust the time to suit you, maybe choose a different place, maybe decide the television should be switched off.

Things that help

Choose one place to pray.
Choose a time and keep to it.
Invite others to share in your prayer.

Tip for the Week

Why not take time this week to meditate the mysteries of Jesus life by praying the Holy Rosary. You will find this prayer on Page 14.

For further details please read the introduction in Book 1

Meditation

God in my Life

One of the best known faces of the century just completed was that of Mother Theresa. She died just a few days after Princess Diana. One was called the “Queen of Hearts” the other was the Mother of the Poorest of the Poor. A face of God’s mercy and compassion. Through people like Mother Theresa we start to know more about God because we see that these people show how God has worked within them. We can say that we see God in them. God in others. We could go through a whole list of prominent people, who have been noted for a significant amount of public good. Sometimes there might be some confusion because we know of the good they do, however their life-style might not be in-keeping with what we would recognise as Christian values or a Christian way of life: A pop star who organizes Aid for starving children, or a footballer who trains children who would otherwise not have the opportunity, might have weaknesses in other areas of his life. In these cases we can see that God is working, but it is an “imperfect reflection” of his working and of his presence in others. The amazing thing is that we can see God in others, even when that picture is not a perfect one. It’s better to do good and have weaknesses rather than wait until we are perfect before starting to do good.

Seeing God in others is not just a matter of seeing the good that they do. The good that others do is the evidence that God is near them, it bears witness to this nearness. However there is a way of looking at each person that is even more far-reaching: As the high-point of God’s creation, each person who comes into being, has an innate dignity which is always a reflection of the God who created us. At the beginning of the Bible we read that when God created human beings, he created them as man and women in his own likeness. This source of our dignity is the deepest reason

for the sanctity of human life and the inalienable right to life and to strive for quality of life. The basis for all Human Rights stems from the reality that we all belong to God as his creation.

If we go a step further we see in the eyes of our faith, that through Baptism each of us enters into a new relationship with God which allows us to be called members of Christ's Body, Temples of the Holy Spirit and Children of the Father. This is an entirely different way of looking at each other - because we belong to the Father, we belong to each other and find a deep-rooted respect for each other. This respect is not based on talents, good looks or good works. It is the way in which God himself sees us. Jesus no longer calls us slaves or servants. He calls us friends. The Father does not look on us as strangers, who need to earn his love. He sees that his Son lives in our heart and so he loves each one of us as his children. He cannot forget us. Even if a mother could forget her baby, God cannot forget us.

When we start to look at one another in this light, seeing God in each other - at least searching to find the God within the person opposite me - then we start to put things in a different perspective: Seeing God in others means that their lives and my life have a deeper meaning. The successes, the joys the talents and achievements, I encounter in others, belong to sharing in God's Life in them and the blessings that they mean to me are God's Blessing; just like Abraham was promised that he would become a Blessing for a people that seemed lost, rejected, cursed. The suffering, sadness or struggle I meet within others, becomes their participation in Christ's suffering for his people.

What about the set-backs, wrong decisions, hurtful things I may experience in others and through them? What can these experiences tell me about God? We cannot always easily understand the way in which God leads us. In any case we can always say, that God does not want evil to happen to us, however he does allow such wrong things, even sinful things to happen. If we try to

find an answer to this we see that the mystery of evil can only be approached from Calvary. The mystery of the cross and death of Jesus takes up the unfathomable mystery of sin and death. "God loved the world so much that he gave up his only Son..."

When a mother and Father look on their newly born child, they see God in the gift of this child. When a child grows strong in the care of his parents and finds happiness and life through them, he sees God in his parents. When a country is lead by a statesman, they find themselves particularly blessed and can see God in that leader. Jean Vanier brought together in one house a group of mentally and physically handicapped persons and looked after them and helped them to look after themselves. It was the beginning of the L'Arche Community which now cares for handicapped people in many family homes through out the world. Our Holy Father lead all the leaders of the religions of the world to pray in Assisi. He wanted that this new millennium should bring the birth of Christ into our world so that a new civilization of love with Christ at the heart could begin. The more we see God in others the better we can discover his plan of love and together we can make a difference.



Story

God in Others

The Story of How God works in People

His name was Fleming and he was a poor Scottish farmer. One day while trying to make a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog. There, mired to his waist in black mud, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself.

Farmer Fleming saved the lad from what could have been a slow and terrifying death.

The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up the Scotsman's sparse surroundings. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy Farmer Fleming had saved.

"I want to repay you", said the nobleman. "You saved my son's life."

"No, I can't accept payment for what I did," the farmer replied waving off the offer.

"Is that your son?" the nobleman asked.

"Yes," the farmer replied proudly.

"I'll make you a deal. Let me take him and give him a good education. If the lad is anything like his father, he'll grow to be a man you can be proud of."

And that he did.

In time, Farmer Fleming's son graduated from St Mary's Hospital Medical School in London, and went on to become known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of Penicillin.

Years afterward, the nobleman's son was stricken with pneumonia. What saved him? Penicillin. The name of the nobleman? Lord Randolph Churchill. His son's name? Sir Winston Churchill.

Sunday Liturgy

God in Others

Greeting

Let us begin our prayer together.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Opening Prayer

Let us pray

God with us.

in your conversation with Nicodemus you tell us how much you love the world and everything in it. Allow us to see God in others and treat them as we ourselves would like to be treated. Give us the strength this Lent to reconcile our differences with one another and so prepare to celebrate Easter with an open heart.

Amen

During this prayer a candle can be lit.

Gospel Reading

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

God send his Son so that through him the world might be saved

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

'The Son of Man must be lifted up

as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,

so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.

Yes, God loved the world so much

that he gave his only Son,

so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost

but may have eternal life.

For God sent his Son into the world

not to condemn the world,

but so that through him the world might be saved.

No one who believes in him will be condemned;

but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already,

because he has refused to believe
in the name of God's only Son.
On these grounds is sentence pronounced:
that though the light has come into the world
men have shown they prefer
darkness to the light
because their deeds were evil.
And indeed, everybody who does wrong
hates the light and avoids it,
for fear his actions should be exposed;
but the man who lives by the truth
comes out into the light,
so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in
God.'

Gospel Meditation

*Take some time to think about the Gospel you have just heard.
Perhaps the following questions might help you - but don't let
them distract*

- * Do you see God in others? Think of examples and why you are able to see God in them?*
- * Do you judge others?*
- * When you see others are you looking for God in them?*

Time for Quiet

Personal Bidding Prayers

Jesus said where two or three are gathered in my name - I am with them. Gather all your prayers together either aloud or in the quiet of your own heart.

*Join your prayers with the prayers of Mary as you say-
Hail Mary, full of grace...*

Moment of Prayer

Choose one of the prayers from the collection on Page 14

Blessing Prayer

Father,

as we journey toward 2014,

help us to remember that You are always close to us.

May we welcome You into our lives and homes this Lent.

Let us create a unique place where we can speak to You each day and gain the strength and confidence to live life with You.

Give us Your continued love, and help us to never lose faith.

In this Year of Grace may your Church grow through our prayer.

With Mary we journey in faith in our home where you are Lord, living and reigning for ever and ever.

Amen.



Thoughts for the Week

God in Others



Greeting

Let us begin our prayer together.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Opening Prayer

Let us pray

God with us.

in your conversation with Nicodemus you tell us how much you love the world and everything in it. Allow us to see God in others and treat them as we ourselves would like to be treated. Give us the strength this Lent to reconcile our differences with one another and so prepare to celebrate Easter with an open heart.

Amen

Thought for the Week

Read the passage from scripture for the day. Spend some time in quiet. Gather all your prayers and offer them to God.

Blessing Prayer

Father,

as we journey toward 2014,

help us to remember that You are always close to us.

May we welcome You into our lives and homes this Lent.

Let us create a unique place where we can speak to You each day and gain the strength and confidence to live life with You.

Give us Your continued love, and help us to never lose faith.

In this Year of Grace may your Church grow through our prayer.

With Mary we journey in faith in our home where you are Lord, living and reigning for ever and ever. Amen.

Monday - Thus says the Lord: Now I create new heavens and a new earth, and the past will not be remembered, and will come no more to men's minds. Be glad and rejoice for ever and ever for what I am creating, because I now create Jerusalem 'joy' and her people 'Gladness'. (From: *Isaiah 65*)

Tuesday - The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Come, consider the works of the Lord the redoubtable deeds he has done on the earth. (*Psalms*)

Wednesday - Does a woman forget her baby at the breast, or fail to cherish the son of her womb? Yet even if these forget, I will never forget you. (From: *Isaiah 49*)

Thursday - "How can you believe, since you look to one another for approval and are not concerned with the approval that comes from one God?" (From: *John 5*)

Friday - Then as Jesus taught in the Temple, he cried out:
"Yes, you know me and you know where I came from.
Yet I have not come of myself:
no, there is one who sent me and I really come from
him,
and you do not know him
because I have come from him
and it was he who sent me." (From: *John 7*)

Saturday - The Lord revealed it to me; I was warned. Lord, that was when you opened my eyes to their scheming. I for my part was like a trustful lamb being led to the slaughter-house, not knowing the schemes they were plotting against me, "Let us destroy the tree in its strength, let us cut him off from the land of the living, so that his name may be quickly forgotten!" (From: *Jeremiah 11*)

Common Prayers

God in Others

A Lifelong Sharing

Love cannot remain by itself- it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action and that action is service. How do we put the love for God in action? By being faithful to our family, to the duties that God has entrusted to us. Whatever form we are, able or disabled, rich or poor, it is not how much we do but how much love we put in the doing, a lifelong sharing of love with others. Mother Teresa

They have their Dignity

Today our poor of the world are looking up at you. Do you look back at them with compassion? Do you have compassion for the people who are hungry? They are hungry not only for bread and for rice, they are hungry to be recognised as human beings. They are hungry for you to know that they have their dignity, that they want to be treated as you are treated. They are hungry for love.

Mother Teresa

Bitterness an Infectious Disease

We must have the courage to pray to have the courage to accept. Because we do not pray enough, we see only the human part. We don't see the divine and we resent it. I think that much of the misunderstanding of suffering today comes from that, from resentment and bitterness. Bitterness is an infectious disease, a cancer, an anger hidden inside. Mother Teresa

The Holy Rosary

I. THE FIVE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

1. The Annunciation.
2. The Visitation.
3. The Nativity.
4. The Presentation in the Temple.

5. The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple.

II. THE FIVE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

1. The Prayer and Agony in the Garden.

2. The Scourging at the Pillar.

3. The Crowning with Thorns.

4. The Carrying of the Cross.

5. The Crucifixion and Death of our Lord.

III. THE FIVE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

1. The Resurrection.

2. The Ascension of Christ into Heaven.

3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles.

4. The Assumption.

5. The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Heaven and the Glory of all the Saints.

Then is said:

All: Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy; hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile, show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Leader: Pray for us, O holy Mother of God

All: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Leader: Let us pray. O God, whose only-begotten Son, by his life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life; grant, we beseech you, that meditating on these Mysteries in the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may both imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Pilgrimage Prayer 2014

Dear Mother and Mother of our Lord!
With great joy we start out on our pilgrimage to your shrine.

Father Kentenich's faith inspired you
to set up your home in Schoenstatt.
In the shadow of this shrine
a family was born,
a new spiritual way within the Church,
a charisma in the midst of our time.

Today we want to fill the jars with our gifts,
with our gratitude and repentance,
with our surrender and longing.
With every step we take on our pilgrim way we ask you:
Enkindle in us anew the fire of love for you,
for our father and for our family.
Mother, give us the strength to spread a covenant culture in our world
today
and educate us to be your true missionaries for this century.

Prepared by

Schoenstatt Fathers UK

Fr. Andrew Pastore

Schoenstatt Shrine and Pastoral Centre

St. John Fisher, Manchester Road, Kersley, Bolton BL4 8QQ

Tel: 01204 572077 Mobile: 07958 780649

E-Mail: fr.andrew@schoenstatt.org.uk

Web: www.schoenstatt.org.uk

