

Structured Notes for the Making of an Ignatian Retreat

Retreat	Contemplations	Complimentary Poems
Day 1	The Presupposition; Principle and Foundation; Examination of Conscience; General Confession; and Holy Communion Week 1: on Our Own Sins	(in silence and without aid) An Open Letter; with Tropars
Day 2	Week 1: on Hell Week 2: on the Nativity	Feast of the Holy Innocents
Day 3	Week 2: on the Kingdom of Christ Week 3: from Pilate to Herod, from Herod to Pilate; from Pilate to the Crucifixion, and Christ on the Cross	Work on the Sacred Heart
Day 4	Week 3: from the Cross to the Sepulchre Week 3: on the Passion as a Whole	Ancient Homily on Holy Saturday
Day 5	Week 3: on Gethsemane Week 3 (revisited): Christ on the Cross Week 3: Deposition from the Cross (The Pietà)	Memorare—First Triptych (Hymn: <i>Though I Know Well</i> , on the Immanent Giving of All) Memorare—Second Triptych Memorare—Third Triptych

Day 6	Week 2: Christ Calls the Apostles Week 4: on the Attainment of Love Week 2: the Hidden Life and Finding in the Temple	Sermon to the Fishes: Anthony's Appeal to the People of Rimini (Hymn: <i>Behold, I Shall Save My People</i>, Christ's call to discipleship) Sermon to the Fishes: Anthony's Eclogue: In Praise of All Creation Sermon to the Fishes: The People's Response (St. Anthony's Peace)
Day 7	Week 2: the Multiplication of Fishes and Loaves Week 4: Christ Appears to Our Lady	Ephrem's Prayer Leo's Exultation (Hymn: <i>Ephrem's Prayer</i>, denouement of retreat, thanksgiving for work ahead, on the Road to Emaus)
Day 8	Week 3: on the Last Supper Week 2: on the Incarnation On the Mysteries of the Life of Christ	Anselm's Prayer Ode to the Incarnation Work on the Trinity; Pearls of Hildegard; and Ode to All Saints (Responsory: <i>For Thee, O God, Let Hearts Be Glad</i>)
Alternate Exercise	Prayer for humility, on Three Ways of Being Humble Incremental movements of spirit; and the making of an election (on freedom)	The <i>Suscipe</i> or the <i>Anima Christi</i> (upon which a retreatant may be encouraged to compose their own personal verses prayer)

Notes on Structure:

1. A trinitarian structure is revealed throughout these days, which may not be apparent to a retreatant at the onset, but which will emerge as they move through the structured experience:
 - (a) Day 1. An opening contemplation on the nature of our own fallenness is best situated in the context of contemporary world events—social injustice, disparity, displacement, war, etc.
 - (b) Days 2-4. This sequence of versified letters and sermons, composed upon those non-biblical readings of the Divine Office, forms a poetical movement, which (as a whole) increases in order of magnitude.
 - (c) Day 5. The Memorare on is a triune movement that could well be augmented by the additional visual artworks or iconography. This suggestion can be made by a director should the retreatant need help with their visualization and affect.
 - (d) Day 6. The three-fold movement upon St. Anthony's Sermon to the Fishes accentuates a more outward, service-oriented, and apostolic movement of spirit, versus the internally-bound disposition that is so much the work of spiritual contemplation.
 - (e) Day 7 should function as a denouement and give the retreatant greater breadth of unstructured time in which they can take stock of the days prior; namely, a person should account for, and give thanks for, any blessings received and shared insights. Day 7 allows time to contemplate in what manner a person wishes to give thanks, what action they wish to form upon the ground of their gratitude. Day 7 is preparatory for the final day of retreat.

- (f) Day 8. The revisitation of the Last Supper (Eucharist) and of the Act of Incarnation is supplemented by the briefest of poems, that Work on the Trinity. This poem presents an unadorned image of repletion—a pomegranate seed, its flesh and rind within the hand of God—the human person held and beheld in adoration and in pure potential by the Divine One. As we place ourselves before God and reflect upon this icon of our very self, we are encouraged to contemplate and gain sense of whether our action of thanksgiving is whole or partial, unconditionally or incremental, free or unfree. By contrast, the Ode to All Saints gives a sense of uncontainable and overflowing joy—a beatific vision of a world family; and, together with the Pearls of Hildegard, a sense of at-homeness and viridity of all creation.
2. Optionally, if introducing an exercise on the Suscipe or the Anima Christi, a director should remain mindful to have the retreatant form and purpose their own composition. Above all else, care should be taken for a retreatant to be honest in relation to their own affect, so as to avoid mere mimicry of the work of art, as opposed to that deeply drawn and sponged up understanding of its essence (which is manifest in more authentic expressions). A person can be sincere in their effort yet lack authenticity. It is not necessary that a director have a retreatant compose their own prayer, and a director might almost avoid the suggestion, as what a person chooses to write upon as much, if not more, a matter of self-selection. It is enough to contemplate the Trinity, and let the retreatant be moved as God wills them.
 3. The hagiography is left entirely for the retreatant's discovery and edification, to help them "connect the dots" through passive reading. Biographies on the lives of the saints helps garnish a retreatant with various forms of discipline and acts of self-sacrifice performed by other seekers of truth throughout the Christian ages. Again, inspiration (and not mimicry) is encouraged; albeit true that all art is imitation of a kind, no less our imitation of Christ.

On Perichoresis:

4. *Perichoresis* [fr. Greek, περιχώρησις, rotation]. Consider a perichoretic study not only upon the movement of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, but also the study upon any three commonly born interests:
5. Further consider the root meaning of *integrare* [fr. Latin, to make whole, to renew, repair, to begin again].
6. We may, then, take the integration of any three commonly born interests—e.g. the study of rhetoric and composition; the study of poetic exposition; and the study of aesthetic theory in praxis—itself as the making of a spiritual retreat.
7. Trinities, as do studies, abound; however, by logical extension we can say that among all trinities (i.e. trinitarian relationships), at any given moment in time, there is (was and shall be always) only one among them that is Most Holy; for our logical extension, it is sufficient to hold this as a matter of faith (as it is entry into the mystery of faith that we seek).
8. Consider also how the general social and historical tide of *aggiornameto* [fr. Latin, to bring up to date], that modernization of language within the Church, is informed by, and relates to, a trinitarian integration.
9. Perichoresis is a poet's cause to discern and weigh the use of any word.

Suscipe

I have striven to displace myself
in small and subtle ways,
not in catholicity, but when in need,
so as to mean more clearly
and more greatly understand:
that poetry is prayer, except for food;
that hearts are made for richness—
be they glad!

And where I find myself
in service of another's poorer form,
their word grown now
—less bland, then more—
my work jests not at You, my God,
but for the grace of time.