
CONTINUING THE GRACES OF THE EXERCISES

Question: How do I continue in the graces of the Exercises now that they are ending?

Answer: Don't stop! This is only a beginning. Continue on in the same direction! Jesus invites you to keep walking with him in this way.

Question: How do I keep going in this way?

Answer: Continue to pray at least half an hour daily. Discern your form of prayer with the Lord, and in conversation with your spiritual director.

Question: How can I find a spiritual director?

Answer: The person leading you through the Ignatian Exercises is a director. See if they have availability to continue in spiritual direction. If they don't, they can recommend a spiritual director who knows the Exercises and can walk with you as you continue to follow Jesus and live into them.

Continue practices from the Exercises:

- **Continue spending time in God's loving Gaze.** God is always looking upon you with a gaze of love and you have experienced the benefits of receiving it. Whenever you pray, why not spend some time soaking in God's love?
- **Continue praying colloquies, heart-to-heart conversations with Jesus.** Ignatius invites us to talk with Jesus as with a friend. Take time to say what is on your heart and mind, and then listen to what the Lord might say. A regular practice of talking with the Lord in this way will continue to bear much fruit in your prayer life.
- **Continue praying the Examen.** If you embraced the Examen during your journey through the Exercises, continue that practice. If you struggled, now would be a good time to reengage with it. Ask your director for resources to go deeper in this important prayer.
- **Continue to be open to Experiential Invitations.** The Exercises offered you experiential invitations for prayer. At times the Lord gave you spontaneous prayer invitations. Stay open, and on the lookout, for more experiential invitations God may offer to you. When you receive them, respond with anticipation for what God will do.

How to continue the graces of the Exercises:

- **Review and pray through your journals.** You experienced many graces and then just moved on. Return to savor them using the Ignatian prayer structure as you did when praying with scripture. Read 2-4 journal entries from the Exercises. Look to see where God was at work. See how God speaks to you now through these journal entries. Conclude with a colloquy.
- **Pray repetitions of significant prayer times.** Return to significant prayer times throughout the Exercises. Go back and repeat the ones that seem significant. Remember that repetition is not starting over with a passage but going back to where the Lord met you and seeing what additional graces God will give you there.



- **Don't forget the considerations.** Pray periodically with considerations from the Exercises such as the First Principle and Foundation, the Call of the King, The 3 Phases of Humility, the Contemplatio, etc. There are riches here that will take you deeper into key aspects of Ignatian spirituality, such as finding God in all things, receiving everything as a gift, Ignatian indifference, Ignatian discernment, etc.
- **Pray with passages you missed or additional scriptures given for the themes.** There are lists of additional scripture passages you could pray with for the different themes of the Exercises. Your retreat director may have given you a list.
- **Pray with a book of the bible.** Choose a gospel or the book of Acts and continue your prayers. Continue to use the structure of Ignatian prayer you learned. Note: The Ignatian way of prayer works best with narrative passages rather than with didactic statements. When you pray, choose a narrative section of scripture to pray with, and don't feel like you must cover every verse.
- **Pray through the Exercises again.** Some people choose to pray through the Exercises again on their own the next year, talking monthly with their spiritual director. Others wait for a number of years to pray through them formally with a retreat director. Some directors offer groups where all the participants have previously prayed the Exercises.
- **Pray with *Beloved: A Journey of Prayer* by Dale Gish.** You may have prayed with this as you prepared for the Exercises. If so, you could pray it again. If you didn't get to, treat yourself.
- **Get involved in The Ignatian Center.** The Ignatian Center www.theignatiancenter.org Is a place to go for ongoing support and resources.
- **Join periodic Ignatian gatherings.** The Ignatian Center offers monthly gatherings for those who have prayed the exercises. Each has a different theme and provides an opportunity to learn, pray, and share with others who have experienced the graces of the Exercises. Join the Ignatian Center's email list to be informed.
- **Participate in Ignatian retreats.** Consider doing a 3, 5, or 8-day Ignatian retreat. The Ignatian Center or your spiritual director may be able to connect you to these resources.
- **Get training to offer the Exercises to others.** Dale Gish and The Ignatian Center offer a yearly training cohort, supervision, and peer support groups for Ignatian directors.
- **Read additional books on Ignatian spirituality.** The Ignatian Center has a recommended book list for you to explore.

If you have questions about any of these items, talk with your retreat director or contact Dale Gish at dalemgish@gmail.com.