

Prayer in Preparation for Chapter 2018
Week XXV Theme: Contemplation on God's Love
April 8 - 14, 2018

Grace: Ask for interior knowledge of all the great good I have received.

April 8 I will call back into my memory the gifts I have received – my creation, redemption, and other gifts particular to myself. I will ponder with deep affection how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much God has given me of what God possesses; and consequently how God desires to give me even God's very self, in accordance with the divine design.

Then I will reflect upon myself, and consider what I on my part ought in all reason and justice to offer and give to the Divine majesty, namely, all my possessions, and myself along with them. I will speak as one making an offering with deep affection, and say:

*Take Lord, and receive
all my liberty, my memory, my understanding,
and all my will -- all that I have and possess.
You, Lord, have given all that to me.
I now give it back to You, O Lord.
All of it is Yours. Dispose of it according to your will.
Give me nothing more than your love and grace;
these alone are enough for me. (Sp Ex 234)*

April 9 The *Take Lord, Receive* prayer is an offering made in freedom. We have been praying for 'indifference' throughout the retreat: to become free of disordered loves. Now we focus on what this freedom is for -- we become free from excessive attachments so that we can love and serve God and others more.

Basking in the love of God, we are empowered to love as God loves.
We ask: *What are my particular gifts, talents, and other blessings that I want to offer for the service of God and others?*

April 10 I will consider how God dwells in creatures: in the elements, giving them existence; in the plants, giving them life; in the animals, giving them sensation; in human beings, giving them intelligence; and finally, how in this way, God dwells also in me, giving me existence, life, sensation, and intelligence; and even further: making me a temple, since I am created as a likeness and image of the Divine majesty.

Then once again, I will reflect on myself, in the manner described in the first point, or in any other way I feel to be better (SpEx 235).

Conclude with the "Take, Lord, Receive" prayer.

April 11 With the eyes of faith, we realize the infinite depths of reality. We begin to understand how much of heaven is here on earth. God is with us.
Ask: How have I encountered God dwelling in me, in others, and in creation?
Be very concrete.

April 12 I will consider how God labors and works for me in all the creatures on the face of the earth: that is, he acts in the manner of one who is laboring.
For example, He is working in the heavens, elements, plants, fruits, cattle, and all the rest -- giving them their existence, conserving them, concurring with their vegetative and sensitive activities. Then I will reflect on myself. (SpEx 236)

God is not static. God -- revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit -- is dynamic, alive, always stirring, and always laboring to bring life to God's beloved creation. God, in other words, is love overflowing. In your prayer, consider the activity of God in your life and your world. Marvel at how God creates in, through, and with us.

Conclude with the "Take, Lord, Receive" Prayer.

April 13 I will consider how all good things and gifts descend from above: for example, my limited power from the Supreme and Infinite Power above: and so of justice, goodness, piety, mercy and so forth -- just as the rays come down from the sun, or the rains from their source.

Then I will finish by reflecting on myself. (SpEx 237).

Behold in all things, all creation, and all people the reflection of God's very self. Appreciate how we cooperate with God's dream for the world when we act justly, kindly, mercifully, wisely.

Conclude with the "Take, Lord and Receive" prayer.

April 14 Savor the graces of the week. Let gratitude permeate your prayer. Gratitude is freeing, for it opens us up to give what we have so abundantly received. Grateful people are happy people.

Lord, you have made us for Yourself...

and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.. - Augustine