

**Zion Lutheran Church, Harrisburg, PA /October 11, 2023**  
**WOW (Worship On Wednesday) – FALL SERIES - 12:10pm Service of the Word**  
**“KNEELING WITH GIANTS – Learning to Pray with History’s Best Teachers”**  
*Based on the book of the same name by Gary Neal Hansen*  
**Praying with Ignatius of Loyola: The Prayer of the Senses**

## Welcome & Announcements

### Opening Versicles

L O Lord, open my lips.

C **and my mouth shall declare Your praise.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.**

### Confession and Forgiveness

L Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence for self-examination*

C **I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed; wherefore I pray to God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.**

L The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins. Amen.

### Prayer

L The Lord be with you,

C **And also with you.**

L Let us pray: Heavenly Father, in whom we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may never forget you, but remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

### Scripture Readings:

#### **Exodus 20:1-4,7-17**

And God spoke all these words, saying,

<sup>2</sup>“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

<sup>3</sup> “You shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>4</sup> “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ...

<sup>7</sup> “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

<sup>8</sup> “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

<sup>12</sup> “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>13</sup> “You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup> “You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup> “You shall not steal.

<sup>16</sup> “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup> “You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.”

### **John 2:1-11**

On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup> Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. <sup>3</sup> When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” <sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

<sup>6</sup> Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. <sup>9</sup> When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup> and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” <sup>11</sup> This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

### **Readings from *The Spiritual Exercises* by St. Ignatius of Loyola**

The persons who receive the Exercises will benefit greatly by entering upon them with great spirit and generosity toward their Creator and Lord, and by offering all their desires and freedom to him so that his Divine Majesty can make use of their persons and of all they possess in whatever way is according to his most holy will. ...

The Preparatory Prayer is to ask God our Lord for the grace that all my intentions, actions, and operations may be ordered purely to service and praise his Divine Majesty...

A colloquy is made, properly speaking, in the way one friend speaks to another, or a servant to one in authority – now begging a favor, now accusing oneself of some misdeed, now telling one's concern and asking about them...

## Homily

### The Prayers

L Show us your mercy, O Lord,

**C and grant us your salvation.**

L Clothe your ministers with righteousness.

**C Let your people sing with joy.**

L Give peace, O Lord, in all the world,

**C for only in you can we live in safety.**

L Lord, keep this nation under your care.

**C and guide us in the way of justice and truth.**

L Let your way be known upon the earth;

**C your saving health among all nations.**

L Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten,

**C nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**

L Create in us clean hearts, O God,

**C and sustain us with your Holy Spirit.**

L *Additional petitions offered...*

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **C Amen.**

### The Lord's Prayer

L Lord, remember us in your kingdom and reach us to pray:

**C Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

## **Benediction**

L Let us bless the Lord.

**C Thanks be to God.**

L The Lord almighty bless us and direct our days and our deeds in his peace.

**C Amen.**

## **Additional Teaching on *The Prayer of the Senses***

### ***From Kneeling with Giants by Gary Neal Hansen***

Bringing life into prayerful conversation with the Ten Commandments and other passages of Scripture will leave anyone aware of at least one issue that needs work to live as God calls us to. That awareness is just what we need to see the value of the second form of the examen, the “daily particular examination of conscience.” Here we are not trying to reform our whole life all at once. We pick that one thing we know we need to work on, and we pay attention to how we are working on it. ...

In a newer form of the examen, we focus on the task of discernment by examining what Ignatius calls “motions of the soul” – inner nudges that draw us toward God or away from God. He calls these tuggings “consolations” and “desolations,” things that give us a sense of the gracious presence of God or the seeming absence of grace, the absence of God. ...

The process is quite simple: we give thanks to God and quiet our hearts to reflect on the past day or week. In God’s presence, we bring to mind both the consolations and desolations, in prayerful silence or writing them in a journal. We ponder their significance. We close with a prayer thanking God for being present in our experiences and offering ourselves to God anew. This form of examen can be done individually or as a gentle, conversational way to pray with a friend or in a group. ...

From places of persistent and surprising consolation come discoveries of God at work making us new. From repeated desolations come awareness of ways we need to grow and wounds that need healing. Or careful attentions to desolations may reveal the underside of grace – that God is present and working even in the darkness. We will know where we have problems or questions, and we will be much more prepared to hear God speak.

Once we have looked prayerfully at our lives in conversation with Scripture, we probably have some things to talk to God about. ... With our question in hand, we are ready for Ignatius’s most fascinating prayer practice: he called it “the prayer of the senses” or the application of the senses.” We meditate on a biblical story using our imaginations to experience the text with all our senses, finally entering the scene and conversing with the characters. As we bring our whole selves to both Scripture and prayer, Ignatius gives us a way to bring to Jesus our concerns and actually listen for his replies.

## **A Guide to the Prayer of the Senses – quotes [with some adaptation]**

Get to know the text. Read it a few times. Consider where it falls in the flow of the Gospel. Get to know its outline and actions. Think about what it shows about Jesus and what it implies about God's purposes. Listen to what it teaches you personally.

Start by coming to God in prayer, ready to speak and listen. "The Preparatory Prayer is to ask God our Lord for the grace that all my intentions, actions, and operations may be ordered purely to service and praise his Divine Majesty." ...

**Our first journey through the narrative is trying to "see the persons by meditating and contemplating in detail all the circumstances around them."**

Who is there? What time of day might it be? Are people standing or sitting, talking or moving?

The imagination brings details into view that would never come up through standard exegesis, leading to insight and new perspectives...

**Then we go through the text again, applying our sense of hearing. Using our imagination, we "listen to what they are saying or might be saying."** ... if there is little explicit dialogue, we need to listen for unrecorded conversation. Listening to words spoken in the text, we try to hear the tone of voice, the volume, the emotions carried between the lines. Then we listen to the environment: What are the sounds of this place? Is there music? Animal sounds? Are there other sounds?

**We go through the scene again with the senses of smell and taste. In one exercise, Ignatius mentions tasting the "sweetness and charm of the Divinity"**

Even if I do not gather a clear lesson from this, the process takes me still deeper into the biblical story, adding feeling and engagement.

**By this time, Ignatius intends us to find ourselves fully inside the story. In one example he says, "Using the sense of touch, I will speak, embrace, and kiss the places where the persons walk or sit."**

**Exploring the text with the senses forces us to be there. The question is, who are we? Maybe we take the role of a named character, or perhaps we are a servant or a guest. What do we feel in our bodies as we walk through the narrative? ...**

**The process invites us to something deeper, though, when we move to the final stage. Ignatius calls it the "colloquy." As we are fully immersed, he tells us to talk with the people in the scene. In our assumed role, we come to Jesus, a disciple, anyone. We ask the question we brought to the exercise. And then, still in the story, we listen for what Jesus or another character says in response.**

Ignatius's plan has been to get us deeply involved with the events of the gospel, face to face with Jesus himself. ... We are ready to ask, ready to listen in the presence of the one who can answer. ... And we are praying, with the Holy Spirit as our guide for the journey. Once they get into it, some can carry on a whole conversation.

However, we should not assume that we have heard a direct word from God, even if the exercise brings a rich and vivid response. Really hearing God requires discernment, and that takes place over time, in an ongoing dialogue with prayer and Scripture. We need to return to the text to listen again; then we bring our question to another text, and another. We must weigh today's word alongside what we know of God, Christ, and Scripture as a whole.