



Faith in 52

A yearlong parish retreat based on the work *I Believe in Love*
by Father Jean C. J. d'Elbee

Week 7: December 17th through December 23rd, 2012

For Individuals

(pages 37-40 of the book *I Believe in Love*, stopping at the ☞ symbol)

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

1. Speaking to the Holy Spirit, say: *“O Holy Spirit, soul of my soul, I adore You. Enlighten, guide, strengthen, and console me. Tell me what I ought to do and command me to do it. I promise to be submissive in everything that You ask of me, and to accept all that You permit to happen to me. Only show me what is Your will”* (Cardinal Mercier).

STEP 2: PRAYERFUL READING

1. Prayerfully read **ONLY** the weekly assigned pages of *I Believe in Love*.
2. While reading, pay careful attention to the phrases, ideas, or images that might bring about comfort or even those that are challenging. Rest on these a while and speak with the Lord about them, receive His graces, and ponder what has been laid out before you.

STEP 3: MEDITATION

1. Keeping your imagination quiet, figuratively or literally shutting your eyes to all the things of sense, and closing your ears to all the sounds of earth, so as to be able to withdraw into the sanctuary of your baptized soul, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, do the following:

- “Your confidence will be in proportion to your humility, because it is to the extent that we realize our need of Jesus that we have recourse to Him, and we sense this need to the extent that we justly realize our unworthiness” (p. 37). Think about these words and the true nature of humility. When do you “need” Jesus? Are you surprised by the frequency or infrequency of such necessity? In what ways is Jesus a Savior to you? From what has He rescued you?
- Read and pray upon the story of the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:22-28. Bring to Jesus an urgent need in your heart. Specifically tell Him what you expect of Him and then hear him say the words to you: “the bread of the children is not to be thrown to the dogs.” How do you react? At times it may seem that the Lord rejects your prayers, even humiliates you, but is that



Jesus and the Canaanite Woman

(Continued on page 2)

Faith in 52

Week 7: December 17th through December 23rd, 2012

For Individuals

(pages 37-40 of the book *I Believe in Love*, stopping at the ☞ symbol)

(Continued from page 1)

enough for you to give up on Christ and to leave Him? Or would you make your request more emphatically, more confidently? Which approach won over Jesus' heart? Now read Jesus' parable in the Gospel of Luke 11:5-8; do not give up on your Saving Lord but confidently make your desires known once more to Him.

- Mustering as much confidence as possible, say: *"I am not worthy to receive You; I merit nothing; I am an abyss of weakness and cowardice; I make resolutions and do not keep them; I fall over and over again. But Jesus, say only one word, and my soul shall be healed"* (p. 39).
2. Finish by saying the *Our Father* prayer once.

STEP 4: REREAD

1. If possible, repeat these steps or reread these pages throughout the week but do not read any further. This is not a book study but prayer; trust that He will speak to you in these pages.

Catechism Corner: Faith

From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1814 Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself. By faith "man freely commits his entire self to God." For this reason the believer seeks to know and do God's will. "The righteous shall live by faith." Living faith "work[s] through charity."

1815 The gift of faith remains in one who has not sinned against it. But "faith apart from works is dead": when it is de-

prived of hope and love, faith does not fully unite the believer to Christ and does not make him a living member of his Body.

1816 The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it: "All however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross, amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks." Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salva-



Abraham, "our father in faith," is called by the Lord

tion: "So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven."

Faith in 52

Week 7: December 17th through December 23rd, 2012

For Group Sharing

(pages 37-40 of the book *I Believe in Love*, stopping at the ☞ symbol)

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

1. Gathering with your spouse, family, or a group of friends at a time of your choosing, though preferably on the following Sunday, make the Sign of the Cross and then say together to the Holy Spirit: *"Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, your well-beloved Spouse."*

STEP 2: PUBLIC READING

1. Depute or invite a competent reader among the group to read aloud the weekly assigned pages of *I Believe in Love*. All should be encouraged to listen attentively; any distractions, i.e., cell phones, televisions, etc., should be turned off or removed during this time.

STEP 3: PRAYERFUL DISCUSSION

1. After the public reading, someone should facilitate the public discussion. This facilitator should read aloud the questions below. Considering the constraints of time or the particular audience, not every question need be asked nor discussed. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you when in doubt.
2. Everyone may speak but should not speak over others, should not dominate the conversation, and should not ridicule others. All should try to be like Christ who is "gentle and humble of heart." Moreover, all should be asked to keep confidential the contents of the discussion. No one should reveal more than what they feel comfortable sharing or be forced to speak.

- In the Gospel of Matthew 15:22-28 we learn about Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman, a pagan. It is difficult for many to reconcile Jesus' seemingly insulting attitude towards her and an all-loving, forgiving God. What is Fr. d'Elbée's explanation of the paradox (p. 37-38)? How does this relate to Proverbs 11:11-12: "The discipline of the Lord, my son, do not spurn; do not disdain his reproof; for whom the Lord loves he reproves, as a father, the son he favors"? Why does our faith need to be tested? What are Jesus' final words to the woman?



The Canaanite woman implores the Lord's help

(Continued on page 4)

Faith in 52

Week 7: December 17th through December 23rd, 2012

For Group Sharing

(pages 37-40 of the book *I Believe in Love*, stopping at the ☞ symbol)

(Continued from page 3)

- Before receiving Holy Communion, the whole congregation says: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.” From where does this expression originate (p. 39)? Why do you think it is said at that precise moment in the Mass? Do you believe that the Lord could heal you with one word?

STEP 4: RESOLUTIONS & VIRTUES

1. The facilitator leads the group in praying the following prayer a few times: “*Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.*”

STEP 5: CLOSING PRAYER

1. When finished with the discussion, the entire group should conclude with a Marian prayer, preferably the *Alma Redemptoris Mater* or *Loving Mother of the Redeemer*.

Loving Mother of the Redeemer, gate of heaven, star of the sea, assist your people who have fallen yet strive to rise again. To the wonderment of nature you bore your Creator, yet remained a virgin after as before. You who received Gabriel’s joyful greeting, have pity on us poor sinners.

- V.** The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Communion

Before the distribution of Holy Communion, those at Mass reiterate the words of the Centurion from Sacred Scripture: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.” The statement is not only an act of humility but it also embodies the specific desire of those who cannot receive the Body and Blood for whatever reason. These souls are invited to receive Christ in what is known as Spiritual Communion.

“In the Eucharist ‘unlike any other sacrament, the mystery [of communion] is so perfect that it brings us to the heights of every good thing: here is the ultimate goal of every human desire, because here we attain God and God joins himself to us in the most perfect union’. Precisely for this reason it is good to cultivate in our hearts a constant desire for the sacrament of the Eucharist. This was the origin of the practice of ‘**spiritual communion**’, which has happily been established in the Church for centuries and recommended by saints who were masters of the spiritual life. Saint Teresa of Jesus wrote: ‘When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you’” (Bl. John Paul II, *Ecclesiae de Eucharistia* [April 17, 2003], §34).

Next Eucharistic “Hour of Power” in English

- Saturday, Jan. 5th, 7-8 p.m., St. Peter Church

Next Parish Dessert Potluck*

Hosted by TBD

- Saturday, Jan. 5th, 8-9 p.m., McMahon Hall

**All attending are asked to bring a dessert or an appetizer to share that would feed at least 15 other people.*