



# Faith in 52

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

*Week 22: April 1st through April 7th, 2013*

## For Individuals

(pages 135-140 of the book *I Believe in Love*)

### **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:
  - "The fruit of this peace is supernatural calm. The Devil fishes in troubled waters. Whoever lets himself be troubled does not see clearly anymore, stumbles, falls into a panic, and ceases to judge rightly. We can be very shaken, very upset, as long as it is only on the surface, but the depths of our souls must remain tranquil as the depths of the ocean, even during the greatest storms. Weep in bereavement or misfortune, but weep in peace. You may lose everything, but you do not have the right to lose your peace" (p. 136). Does this sound like you? Have you ever thought of peace as something you must maintain, something you actually allow to be stolen away? Refuse the Devil and hold on to

### **To Follow God's Will** **by Thomas Merton**

**M**y Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following Your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that desire to please You does in fact please You. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this You will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust You always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for You are ever with me, and You will never leave me to face my perils alone.

- from *Thoughts in Solitude*, p. 81. ■

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your peace and confidence in Jesus Christ.

- St. Paul boldly said “that all things work for good for those who love God” (Rom. 8:28) and “my grace is sufficient for you” (2 Cor. 12:9). Meditate upon these statements, and let them heal your unbelief. “Peace does not necessarily mean sensible joy. But it is the happiness of him who knows he is where he ought to be and who asks for nothing but what he has, who is always joyous because Jesus, who is all his joy, is always with him” (p. 138).
- Finish by saying the *Our Father* in a spirit of complete abandonment. ■

## Catechism Corner: Safeguarding Peace

### From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**2302** By recalling the commandment, “You shall not kill,” our Lord asked for peace of heart and denounced murderous anger and hatred as immoral.

Anger is a desire for revenge. “To desire vengeance in order to do evil to someone who should be punished is illicit,” but it is praiseworthy to impose restitution “to correct vices and maintain justice.” If anger reaches the point of a deliberate desire to kill or seriously wound a neighbor, it is gravely against charity; it is a mortal sin. The Lord says, “Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment.”

**2303** Deliberate hatred is contrary to charity. Hatred of the neighbor is a sin when one deliberately wishes him evil. Hatred of the neighbor is a grave

sin when one deliberately desires him grave harm. “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.”

**2304** Respect for and development of human life require peace. Peace is not merely the absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of powers between adversaries. Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among men, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the assiduous practice of fraternity. Peace is “the tranquility of order.” Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity.

**2305** Earthly peace is the image and fruit of the peace of

Christ, the messianic “Prince of Peace.” By the blood of his Cross, “in his own person he killed the hostility,” he reconciled men with God and made his Church the sacrament of the unity of the human race and of its union with God. “He is our peace.” He has declared: “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

**2306** Those who renounce violence and bloodshed and, in order to safeguard human rights, make use of those means of defense available to the weakest, bear witness to evangelical charity, provided they do so without harming the rights and obligations of other men and societies. They bear legitimate witness to the gravity of the physical and moral risks of recourse to violence, with all its destruction and death. ■

# Faith in 52

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## For Group Sharing

(pages 135-140 of the book *I Believe in Love*)

### **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.
- "To lose confidence (in Jesus) is to draw back from His arms, and at the same time it is to lose peace" (p. 136). Is the amount of interior peace that you experience directly proportionate to your confidence in Christ? Can you feel utterly angry and simultaneously trust in the Lord's love?
  - Are you generally a pessimist that believes the glass is always half empty, an optimist that believes that the glass is always half-full, or a peaceful soul that believes that because of Jesus the glass is always full and even spilling over? "Peaceful souls are neither pessimists nor neurotics. They are not smug optimists, but have a wise and legitimate optimism, based on the Heart of Jesus, for they know that nothing happens but what God wills and that for the man who lives in faith, everything is grace, everything is love" (p. 137).
  - "Trouble, sadness, and bitterness after a sin often come from offended self-love. We regret less the sin as such than the fact that it humiliates us" (p. 138). Are you troubled after committing a sin, even after confessing it in Reconciliation? What is the cause of such anxiety: the sin itself or anger directed at self?
  - Discuss the claim that "the world shrinks the heart without ever filling it. Jesus makes it grow continually and fills it continually" (p. 138-139). What does this mean? Does it bear out in your experi-

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## For Group Sharing

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ence?

- Popular entertainment, like talk shows, reality television, and soap operas, are filled with bickering, loutish behavior, backstabbing, and gossip. Does this “entertainment” calm your soul or agitate it? Who truly seems more mature: the man at peace or the man of “drama”?
- Jesus declared: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Mt. 5:9). Why do you think peacemakers are most fittingly called “children of God”? Have you ever benefited from or witnessed the efforts of a peacemaker in your life?
- There are lots of political attempts to address wars and strife; do you agree with the author that “the first way to work for peace in the world is to let Jesus establish it in our souls” (p. 140)? How are “each one of us ... partly responsible for” discord and war “because of our pride” (p. 139)?

### **STEP 4: CLOSING PRAYER**

1. When finished with the discussion, the entire group should conclude with the *Regina Caeli* or *Queen of Heaven*:

**Q**ueen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia. • For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia. • Has risen, as he said, alleluia. • Pray for us to God, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

R. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen. ■

### **Ignatian Indifference**

by St. Ignatius of Loyala

**W**e are created to praise, reverence and serve God. All the other things on the face of the earth are created to help us fulfill this purpose. It follows that we are to use all other things in as much as they help us fulfill our purpose and we ought to refrain from using these things in as far as they are a hindrance.



St. Ignatius of Loyala

Therefore, with respect to all things in which we have some influence or control, it is necessary to become indifferent (free, detached). Consequently, on our part, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, a long life to a short one, status to rejection and so for all other things. Our constant desire and consequent choices should be always harmonious with the goal for which we are created.

- from the *Spiritual Exercises*, #23. ■

### **Next Eucharistic “Hour of Power” in English**

- Saturday, April 6th, 7-8 p.m., St. Peter Church

### **Next Parish Dessert Potluck\***

- Saturday, April 6th, 8-9 p.m., McMahon Hall