



Faith in 52

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

Week 29: May 20th through May 26th, 2013

For Individuals

(pages 167-174 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:
 - Meditate “upon this scene in the Gospel: Jesus comes back to Nazareth, which He had left shortly before. He enters the synagogue, arises to read, unrolls the book of the prophet Isaiah, and begins to expound it. His numerous hearers, struck with astonishment, say, ‘Is not this the Son of Joseph? How came this Man by this wisdom and miracles?’” (p. 168). Immerse yourself in the humility and intentional obscurity of Jesus’ first thirty years on earth. How truly little did Jesus become for us?
 - “What is the center and source of the life of the Church? The Host in the tabernacle, the little, silent Host, the praying Host, the loving Host. The apostles preach, but from the tabernacles of the world come forth rays of divine light, parts of the sun of love, which touch and enlighten souls” (p. 174). Meditate upon the humility of the Eucharistic Lord, the meekness of the Host’s outward appearance. Ask the Lord to become small like Him. “Be a praying and loving host, and you will send forth rays like the Host, and God will give you all those who ‘voyage’ with you, your neighbors, all those whom you love and whose salvation you ardently desire” (p. 174).
 - Finish by saying the *Our Father* in a spirit of complete abandonment. ■



Eucharist in Fruit Wreath
by Jan Davidsz. de Heem

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True Poverty

“To own nothing and to await all from God.” How disarmingly simple and yet how disarmingly full! The words sum up all that poverty can be. Without research, without recourse to books, Jeanne Jugan precisely states the very essence of all Christian poverty. This is precisely what gives poverty the right to call itself Christian; without this, it can never in honesty bear the name...

The resignation of oneself into the hands of God is obviously not what most people would regard as the first, or principal, still less indispensable, aspect of poverty... To this crucial aspect, they are completely indifferent. Either they think of poverty as material deprivation or, if any motive for this is envisaged, they talk of love: love for the poor, love for Christ. To be poor is to want to be detached from one’s possessions; to want to identify with the poor in the life they live and to want to imitate Christ in love.

Admittedly, neither of these notions is false. But where people go wrong is in ignoring the essential quality of poverty, which consists in “finding God enough” for our life, in trusting him to support us, in

refusing to rely on material things for the props that they are naturally supposed to afford us; it means making God the sure foundation which we need if we are to keep our balance and make progress along the road of life. Such an attitude, it must be obvious, cannot be maintained without some real privation, whether occasional or permanent, whether partial or absolute. It is hard to imagine how poverty can be sincere if no opportunity is ever taken of putting it into effect, be it that grace invites or that disposition itself impels. Clearly, too, abandonment to God for our means of subsistence is one of the deepest, most delicate expressions of a true love for God. At what other time and in what other way shall we be most truly children of God, can we most truly call him by his rightful name of Father, than at that moment when we consent to risk everything in absolute reliance on him; when we believe so firmly in his love that we abandon *terra firma* and cast off into the unknown, confident that the hand of God will sustain us? Whoever then talks of poverty talks in some degree about privation. Whoever talks about poverty in the Christian



Portrait of St. Jeanne Jugan, foundress of the Little Sisters of the Poor (1792-1879; canonized on Oct. 11, 2009).

sense, talks in some degree about love. But the essential thing about poverty does not lie even in real material deprivation. Hear what St. Paul says: his brand of poverty consists in “knowing how to abound” as well as in “knowing how to lack”; the essence of poverty does not lie in loving, though loving is what inspires it and forms its basis, but in the act of “faith”, in the grand biblical sense, in the fatherhood of God as sufficient for sustaining our existence.

- from Gabriel-Marie Cardinal Garrone, *Poor in Spirit: The Spirituality of Jeanne Jugan* (Great Britain: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 2005) p. 26-28. ■

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For Group Sharing

(pages 167-174 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.

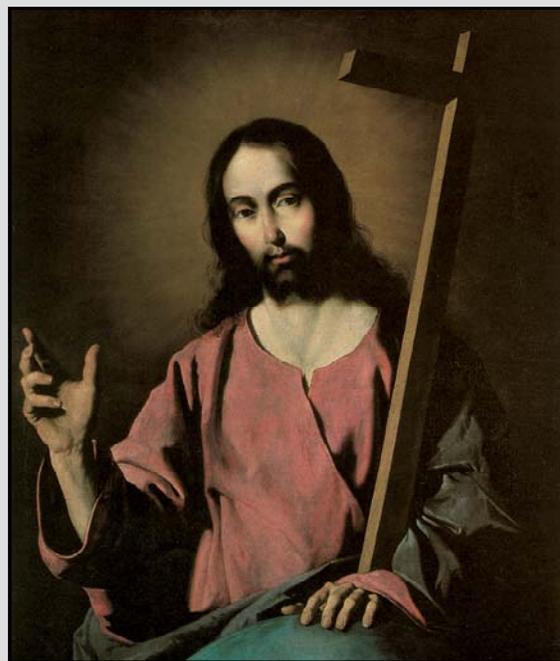
STEP 3: PRAYERFUL DISCUSSION

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.

Go to Him by St. Jeanne Jugan

We have Him (the Eucharist) in all our houses. Go and find him when your patience and strength give out and you feel alone and helpless. Jesus is waiting for you in the chapel. Say to Him: "You know, dear Jesus, what is going on... You are all I have... Come and help me." And then go... and don't worry about how you are going to manage. That you have told God about it is enough. He has a good memory.

- from Gabriel-Marie Cardinal Garrone, *Poor in Spirit: The Spirituality of Jeanne Jugan* (Great Britain: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 2005) p. 58. ■



The Savior Blessing by Francisco de Zurbarán

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(Continued from page 3)

- Before Christ began His public ministry, “for thirty years Jesus did not make a single gesture, did not say a single word which could have revealed who He was” (p. 168). Why did Jesus do this? What lesson can we take from His intentional hiddenness and silence? What is the “secret of Nazareth” (p. 169)?
- A woman, desiring to become a cloistered nun, met with great rejection from her brother. He didn’t mind if she became a Sister in an active apostolate like teaching or medical care, but he didn’t understand the desire, as he put it, “to be buried away like a dead person... what good would it do?” How much do we judge actions and a life because of their perceived “efficacy”? Should utilitarian values be the greatest concern? Why is there “no doubt that little Bernadette of Lourdes served the Blessed Virgin much better by retiring to a convent than if she had continued to receive visitors or if she had given conferences on her visions” (p. 169)?
- “Nothing extraordinary on the outside, everything extraordinary on the inside” (p. 171). How did St. Jeanne Jugan, St. Therese of Lisieux, and St. Margaret Mary typify this principle (p. 169-173)?
- How do we judge people, by their outward appearances or by their interior life? Do we even know that vast and beautiful universe contained within the human soul?
- “My brothers, if anyone among you should stray from the truth and someone bring him back, he should know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:19-20). Has God ever used you to bring someone back from the brink of sin, from the threshold of despair and death? Has anyone ever saved you in a similar way? “Because of one saint, all were saved” (p. 174).

STEP 4: CLOSING PRAYER

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

Queen 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. ■

Disturb Us, Lord

attributed to Sir Francis Drake

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves, when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little, when we arrived safely because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess we have lost our thirst for the waters of life; having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity and in our efforts to build a new earth, we have allowed our vision of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas where storms will show your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars. We ask You to push back the horizons of our hopes, and to push into the future in strength, courage, hope, and love. ■



Next Eucharistic “Hour of Power” in English

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

Next Parish Dessert Potluck*

- Saturday, July 6th, 8-9 p.m., McMahan Hall