



# Faith in 52

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

*Week 33: June 17th through June 23rd, 2013*

## For Individuals

(pages 185-190 of the book *I Believe in Love*, stopping at "...confidence; I have overcome the world'.")

### **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 your active life and review your day so far: Where has the Lord loved you? Where have you loved other people? How was Christ in them? Was there anyone to whom you refused charity, gentleness, or humble service? Apologize to Christ for it was He who was denied your care, and ask the Lord to make up for any of your shortcomings, that the people who may have been neglected or hurt by your choices will be doubly blessed.
  - Thank the Lord for the Catholic Church, for her hierarchy, for the Faith passed down to you. Love the Church!
  - Finish by saying the *Our Father* in a spirit of complete abandonment. ■

### **Everything on Prayer**

**M**any years ago, as I reflected upon Our Lord's way of doing things, I came to the conclusion that the apostolate, of whatever kind it be, must be an overflow of the interior life. This is why the passage which relates how Christ decided to choose the first twelve seems to me to be so natural and at the same time so supernatural. St. Luke tells us that before choosing them "he spent the whole night in prayer". Think also of the events at Bethany. Before he raises Lazarus from the dead, after having wept over his friend, he lifts his eyes to heaven and says, "Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer." This is his message for us: if we wish to help others, if we really wish to encourage them to discover the true meaning of their life on earth, we must base everything on prayer.

- from St. Josemaria Escriva, *Friends of God: Homilies* by Josemaria Escriva (Scepter, London: 1981), #239. ■

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## The Keys of Peter

Out of the whole world one man, Peter, is chosen to preside at the calling of all nations, and to be set over all the apostles and all the fathers of the Church. Though there are in God's people many shepherds, Peter is thus appointed to rule in his own person those whom Christ also rules as the original ruler. Beloved, how great and wonderful is this sharing of his power that God in his goodness has given to this man. Whatever Christ has willed to be shared in common by Peter and the other leaders of the Church, it is only through Peter that he has given to others what he has not refused to bestow on them.

The Lord now asks the apostles as a whole what men think of him. As long as they are recounting the uncertainty born of human ignorance, their reply is always the same. But when he presses the disciples to say what they think themselves, the first to confess his faith in the Lord is the one who is first in rank among the apostles.

Peter says: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replies: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and

blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in heaven." You are blessed, he means, because my Father has taught you. You have not been deceived by earthly opinion, but have been enlightened by inspiration from heaven. It was not flesh and blood that pointed me out to you, but the one whose only-begotten Son I am.

He continues: *And I say to you.* In other words, as my Father has revealed to you my godhead, so I in my turn make known to you your pre-eminence. *You are Peter:* though I am the inviolable rock, the cornerstone that makes both one, the foundation apart from which no one can lay any other, yet you also are a rock, for you are given solidity by my strength, so that which is my very own because of my power is common between us through your participation.

*And upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* On this strong foundation, he says, I will build an everlasting temple. The great height of my Church, which is to penetrate the heavens, shall rise on the firm foundation of this faith.



Christ Handing the Keys to St. Peter (detail) by Master of the Legend of the Holy Prior

The gates of hell shall not silence this confession of faith; the chains of death shall not bind it. Its words are the words of life. As they lift up to heaven those who profess them, so they send down to hell those who contradict them.

Blessed Peter is therefore told: *To you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth is also bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven.*

The authority vested in this power passed also to the other apostles, and the institution established by this decree has been continued in all the leaders of the Church. But it is not without good reason that what is bestowed on all is entrusted to one. For Peter received it separately in trust because he is the prototype set before all the rulers of the Church.

- from Pope St. Leo the Great, *Sermo 4 de natali ipsius*, 2-3 (PL 54), 149-151. ■

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## For Group Sharing

(pages 185-190 of the book *I Believe in Love*, stopping at "...confidence; I have overcome the world'.")

### **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.

- The Apostle St. James said: "So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17). What do you think he means by "works" and how are they related to faith?
- "The active apostolate of the laity is not an optional thing, a luxury, but an obligation, an imperious necessity" (p. 186). What is the "active apostolate of the laity?" Where in Scripture does Christ speak of the necessity of the active apostolate?
- "Pope Pius XI said, 'Your bishop and the Pope are the golden chain which connects you to the Divine Redeemer. You must be with the Pope, because whoever is with him is with the very foundation of the Church; for it is

### **On the Love of God**

When you love a person, you show him the more or less affection according as the ardor of your love for him is more or less great. See, my children, what the saints were like, who were all filled with the love of the good God: nothing cost them too much; they joyfully made the greatest sacrifices; they distributed their goods to the poor, rendered services to their enemies, led a hard and penitential life; tore themselves from the pleasures of the world, from the conveniences of life, to bury themselves alive in solitude; they hastened to torments and to

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against him, and the Church founded on him, that the gates of Hell shall not prevail” (p. 188). Do people take seriously obedience to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church? Why or why not? Is such authority oppressive or a blessing?

- What happened to Simon when the Lord changed his name to Peter? What did the Lord give to him (Mt. 16:15-19)?
- Have you ever entered “into dialogue with our separated brethren (Protestants)” (p. 189)? How did it go? Would you have done anything differently? Do you approach ecumenical opportunities as a moment to “win” or a chance to “win over souls”?
- How does St. Therese typify the missionary spirit (p. 189)? What did she desire most? Do you share her desire?
- Do you love the Catholic Church? What do you do when you are in the company of people or entertainment that insult the Church?

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

1. When finished with the discussion, the entire group should conclude with the *Memorare*:

**R**emember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen. ■

*On the Love of God* (Continued from page 3)

death, as people hasten to a feast. Such were the effects which the love of the good God produced in the saints; such ought it to produce in us. But, my children, we are not penetrated with the love of God; we do not love the good God. Can anyone say, indeed, that he loves the good God, who is so easily frightened, and who is repulsed by the least difficulty? Alas! what would have become of us if Jesus Christ had loved us only as we love Him? But, no. Triumphant over the agonies of the Cross, the bitterness of death, the shame of the most ignominious tortures, nothing costs Him too dear when He has to prove that He loves us. That is our only model. If our love is active, it will manifest itself by the works which are the effects of love, because the love of the good God is not only a love of preference, but a pious affection, a love of obedience, which makes us practice His Commandments; an active love, which makes us fulfill all the duties of a good Christian. Such is the love, my children, which God requires from us, to which He has so many titles, which He has purchased by so many benefits heaped upon us by His death for us upon the Cross. What happiness, my children, to love the good God! There is no joy, no happiness, no peace, in the heart of those who do not love the good God on earth. We desire Heaven, we aspire to it; but, that we may be sure to attain to it, let us begin to love the good God here below, in order to be able to love Him, to possess Him eternally in His holy Paradise.

- from St. John Vianney

*Catechetical Instructions: Explanations and Exhortations; Ch. 15. ■*

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

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

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

- Saturday, July 6th, 8-9 p.m., Upper Room Library