OCTOBER 2011 RECOLLECTION GUIDE

Theme:
A SPIRITUALITY OF SENTIRE CUM ECCLESIA
("Thinking and Feeling With the Church")

Sub-Theme:
DEVOTION TO THE CHURCH

PRAYER THEME:
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Sub-Theme:
DEVOTION TO THE CHURCH

Opening Song: In God Alone (Andersen, MSC)

Refrain:
In God alone can my spirit find rest!
My help shall come from God alone!
For He is my rock and my salvation!
My fortress on high! My lasting peace!

1. In God is my safety! My mountain secure!
   Come into His presence and sing with me. (Refrain)

2. Take refuge in God! All nations come near!
   Lay your heart before Him in constant hope. (Refrain)

Opening Prayer:
Heavenly Father,
look upon our community of faith
which is the Church of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Help us to witness to his love
by loving all our fellow creatures without exception.
Under the leadership
of the Holy Father and the Bishops
keep us faithful to Christ's mission
of calling all men and women
to your service so that there may be
"one fold and one shepherd."
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.
Amen!
Prayerfully read the Background and Basic Meaning of “Devotion to the Trinity.”

BACKGROUND

The sixteenth century was Spain’s Golden Age. Spanish art, music, literature, and architecture flourished greatly during these years. By this time, her army and navy were among the best anywhere. As a world power of this age, much of Europe was under her control.

Religiously, Spain remained “pure Catholic” despite Protestant Reformation in Europe. The Spanish Inquisition had been strongly in place. Established by the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand (d. 1516) and Isabella (d. 1504), this ecclesiastical court exerted much effort to defend Catholic orthodoxy and to combat heresies so as to keep Spain united, not only religiously but politically as well. Owing to these events, the Church in Spain was both very “Spanish” and “Catholic” during this period.

Ignatius was a man of his time and place. Like his Church, he too was firmly “Spanish” and “Catholic.” Most of his brothers had been in the service of the kings of Castle, either bearing arms or taking part in the conquest of the Americas. He himself served in Arevalo as page to Juan Velazquez de Cuellar, chief treasurer of King Ferdinand. When the Velazquez household visited the royal court, Ignatius went along to accompany them. Prior to his being a page, he already had been tonsured. This meant that his father likely had considered a priestly career for him just like his brother-cleric Pedro Lopez. Like any practicing Catholic of his time who was “much attached to the faith,” he was not unfamiliar with the different religious devotions and practices of his Church. However, although he regarded himself as a Catholic, “he did not live in keeping with his belief or guard himself from sins.”

The quality of Ignatius’ faith prior to his conversion at Loyola (1521) was far from “mature.” As we indicated earlier, he was “particularly careless about gambling, affairs with women, and the use of arms” (see Prayer Theme 4). Nevertheless, his fondness for the Catholic Church never waned. On the contrary, his devotion to the Church of Rome particularly as a hierarchical Church (SE no. 353) would deepen all the more as his own personal faith matures. Thus, like a “true” Catholic (catolico cerrado) of his time and place Ignatius not only acknowledged and esteemed the Church and her traditions, teachings and practices. He also recognized and revered much her fragile, sinful human ministers and leaders, i.e., her deacons, priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes.

The kind of affection and reverence Ignatius manifested to the Church and to her ordained ministers we can see from his various dealings with different Church people as early as his pilgrim years (1522). For example, after Loyola, he went to Montserrat (1522) and entrusted himself to Benedictine priest Jean Chanones (Auto. no. 17) asking for his spiritual guidance and making his general confession with him. In truth, wherever he traveled, he always sought the spiritual assistance of clergy people (ex. Auto. nos. 23; 36; 64). In Jerusalem, he had this encounter with the Franciscan provincial who told him that he could not remain in the holy city. Initially, he resisted. All the same, upon learning that the provincial had full authority from Rome to supervise pilgrims from Europe and to excommunicate anyone who disobeyed, Ignatius meekly submitted himself to the Franciscan superior (Auto. no. 46). In Villadolid, he went out of his way to visit the Archbishop Alonso de Fonseca of Toledo and to seek the bishop’s advice regarding his future (Auto. no. 63). When the archbishop suggested that he study in Salamanca, without much delay, he did what was recommended to him and proceeded to this university town. Even with the Inquisition in Alcala (Auto. no. 58), Salamanca (Auto. nos. 68-72), and Paris (Auto. no. 86), he was most docile and open to the tribunal’s counsels, not excluding her admonitions.
Ignatius’ love for the Church and her hierarchy reached its high point when he and his companions finally decided to go to Rome (November, 1538). There they placed themselves at the disposal of the pope (Auto. no. 98). By this time, it had become evident that they no longer could go to Jerusalem to work there for the conversion of the Turks. As a result, they chose to offer themselves to Pope Paul III so that he could mission them whenever he judged to be more for God’s glory and the good of souls (Auto. no. 85). By doing this, Ignatius and his companion affirmed their indomitable faith in the Catholic Church and her intrinsic link to the person and authority of the pope – the Vicar of Christ himself. Later, this steadfast faith in the Church under the Holy Father would be known as the Jesuits’ “fourth vow” of special obedience to the pope.

With respect to the Ignatian sentiment that Christ’s Church is essentially conjoined to the person and authority of the pope, Candido Dalmases has this to say:

(Ignatius) was fully convinced that the spirit of Christ and that of the Church are one and the same. But the Church is not only a community of predestined persons but also a body organized under the authority of the pope. That is the reason why he states in his First Rule “We must put aside all judgment of our own, and keep the mind ever ready and prompt to obey in all things … the hierarchical Church” (SE no. 353). The distinguishing adjective “hierarchical” explains the entire Rule. In his Latin version of the Exercises he had added another adjective, “Roman.”

BASIC MEANING

Ignatius used various names and metaphors to describe the Roman Catholic Church like: the Church militant (SE no. 352); the true Spouse of Christ; our holy Mother; the hierarchical Church (SE no. 353); the Church … under the Roman Pontiff (Formula of the Institute); the mystical body of the Catholic Church (Letter to Emperor Claude, February, 1555); body of the Church in her head, Jesus Christ (Letter to the Whole Society, June 1553).

From these metaphors we can determine that Ignatius’ primary model of the Church was not simply “hierarchical” or “institutional” (or even “monarchical”). His basic Church-model also was very much “charismatic,” i.e., a truly Spirit-driven, Spirit-led Church. This being the case, he characterized the Roman Church as that institution which “is ruled by the Holy Spirit … to which Christ promised His assistance” (Letter to Claude, February, 1555). And because the Church is far from simply being a human institution, he regarded that she cannot but be “the Church of the living God” (1Tim 3:15) whose origin is divine and which upholds “the purity of the Christian faith and religion” (Letter to the Whole Society, June, 1553). Accordingly, for Ignatius, everyone ought to give “the true Spouse of Christ” all the fidelity and love due her.

To foster this faithful love for the Church, people following Ignatian spirituality, not excluding Jesuits, have used a celebrated phrase. This phrase is *sentire cum ecclesia* (SE no. 352). This means that we all need to think and feel with the mind and heart of our Holy Mother Church. We all need to be one with her in her Creed (life of believing), Code (life of compassionate loving and witnessing), and Cult (life of praying and celebrating sacraments). We all need to love her as “Church” in every sense of the word, be it ecclesia as “people of God” or as “Body of Christ” or as “hierarchical Church.”

To stress the necessity for quality devotion for the Church, Ignatius even went to the extent of declaring this radical statement found in the Exercises. He said, “To maintain a right mind in all things we must always maintain
that the white I see, I shall believe to be black, if the hierarchical Church so stipulates” (SE no. 365). However, Jerome Nadal (see Prayer Theme 2) later tempered this strong statement of Ignatius by assessing that, “Although the men of the Society are papists, they are this only when they absolutely have to be and in nothing more; and even then, only with an eye to the glory of God and the general good.”

Not that Ignatius had been lacking in sensitivity to the weaknesses of the Church hierarchy. Quite the opposite, he was all too familiar with her many defects, including the abuses of her ordained ministers, starting with Paul III himself who had four children, and as pope, favored his family even naming two of his nephews cardinals at the age of 14 and 16. In the face of this undeniable “sinful” dimension of the Roman Catholic Church, he continued to believe in her “holy” nature unconditionally trusting that despite all her imperfections she still indeed is Christ’s Spirit-governed Church (SE no. 365). Thus, the need to maintain this ideal of sentire cum ecclesia which insists that faithful obedience and devotion to the Catholic Church ultimately is nothing else but faithful obedience and devotion to Christ our Lord himself.

What points draw your attention?
What points do you find significant and inspiring?
Take them and ponder them in prayer.

Prayer Exercises
• Take time to quiet down before the Lord.
  Behold him beholding you with much love.
  When ready, beg repeatedly for The Grace I Desire and Seek.

The Grace I Desire and Seek
I beg for a heart that is reverent and obedient to Christ and to our Holy Mother Church so that I can always learn to think and feel with their mind and heart and be guided by the Holy Spirit into all truth.

Scripture Readings
a) Ps 139 (The All-Knowing and Ever-Present God)
b) 1 Pet 2:1-10 (“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people he claims for his own to proclaim the glorious works.”)
c) Acts 20:17-38 (“Shepherd the church of God which he has acquired at the price of his own blood.”)
d) Mt 16:13-28 (“You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.”)

Prayer Period I
• Below is Rule 13 of the Rules for Thinking with the Church taken from the Spiritual Exercises (SE n. 365). From this Rule, we can see Ignatius’ enormous respect for the hierarchical Church. Take it and prayerfully reflect on it.

If we wish to proceed securely in all things, we must hold fast to the following principles: What seems to me white, I will believe black if the hierarchical Church so defines. For I must be convinced that in Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and in His Spouse the Church, only one Spirit holds sway, which governs and rules for the salvation of souls. For it is by the same Spirit and Lord who gave the Ten Commandments that our holy Mother Church is ruled and governed (SE no. 365).

• One name Ignatius gives to his God is Guide (Letter to Jesuits in Europe, December, 1552).

Pray over Ps 139.
Here the psalmist declares, “Even there (at the farthest limits of the sea) your hand shall guide me, and your right hand hold me fast” (v. 10).
Like Ignatius and the psalmist, how has God played the role of *Guide* in your life? How has the Church played the role of *guide* in your life?

Take time to clarify these in prayer.

- What do you value and appreciate *most* about the Catholic Church today? Why these in particular?

What do you value and appreciate *least* about the Catholic Church today? Why these in particular?

**PRAYER PERIOD II**

- We said that the Catholic Church, not excluding her hierarchy, is “sinful” and “holy.”

What “sinful” elements do you see in the Catholic Church today that you find discouraging?

What “holy” elements do you see in the Catholic Church today that you find encouraging?

Take these and reflect on them in prayer.

When ready, take and embrace the Church as she is, with her “sinful” and “holy” elements, and present her to the Lord for his blessing.

- Ignatius Kung (1901-2000) was not a Jesuit but he was close to them. As a boy, he attended St. Ignatius High School in Shanghai. As a diocesan priest, he even was appointed principal of two Jesuit schools, Aurora and Gonzaga High Schools. He was ordained bishop in 1949. On September 8, 1955, he was arrested by the Communists, along with other church leaders and priests.

Bishop Kung was asked to denounce the Holy Father and to cooperate with the Patriotic Association, the government sanctioned group that renounced the pope and appointed its own bishops. His reply was, “I am a Roman Catholic Bishop. If I denounce the Holy Father, not only would I not be a Bishop, I would not even be a Catholic. You can cut off my head, but you can never take away my duties.” For refusing to go against the pope and the Catholic Church, he stayed in prison for 30 long years.

In 1985, Kung was granted an “audience” with Cardinal Jaime Sin of Manila who visited China that year. The Chinese government held a special dinner for Sin. Kung was allowed to attend the dinner, but the officials arranged the whole event in such a way that the two were not able to speak to one another. They were made to sit at opposite ends of a long table separated by more than 20 people.

When the dinner party was about to end, Cardinal Sin suggested that each person in the long table sing a song of his choice to celebrate. When the time came for Kung to sing, he chose a Latin song based on Mt 16:18 ff.: “You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church.” As he sang, he just kept his gaze fixed on Cardinal Sin until he finished his song. In the end, through his song, Kung was able to communicate to Sin and to the whole world that even after 30 years of imprisonment he still was ever faithful to the Catholic Church and to the pope.

Kung was secretly named cardinal in 1979 by Pope John Paul II. He was released from prison in 1988. He eventually died of stomach cancer at the age of 98 in America.

Reflect on Cardinal Ignatius Kung’s deep “devotion” to the Roman Catholic Church.
How has our story on Kung helped you understand and appreciate more this Ignatian ideal of “devotion” to the Church?

For Cardinal Kung his faithfulness and devotion to the Church and to the pope were values worth living for and worth dying for.

Right now, what are your top 10 core values? What in your life is worth living for or even worth dying for? Take time to clarify these in prayer.

**PRAYER PERIOD III**

- Do a contemplation on Peter’s Profession of Faith on Christ (Mt 16:13-28).

Imagine Caesarea Philippi and enter prayerfully into the Gospel scene, beholding Peter and the other disciples there.

What do you see? hear? smell? touch? taste?

Spend time going into the details of the story on Peter’s Profession of Faith. Slowly, in the end, focus on the Lord and gaze lovingly at his face.

- Here in Mt 16:13-28, our Lord asks Peter and the other disciples, “And you, who do you say that I am?” Peter replies, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

What would you answer if our Lord were to ask you this same question today?

- Fr. John Hardon (1914-2000) was a Jesuit who authored over 40 books, including the *Catholic Catechism* that sold more than a million copies. He worked for the Vatican for 33 years, and he was an advisor to the Second Vatican Council.

He was spiritual director to countless souls including Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Below is a prayer of Fr. Hardon describing the Catholic Church as Christ’s “Spouse.” Take it and pray it with much fervor.

Lord Jesus, you foretold that your Church would suffer opposition and persecution, even as you did.

You declared that, so far from being anxious or worried, we should actually rejoice when the world hates us and says all manner of evil against us, for your Name.

Give us the courage we need to resist the onslaught of seductive untruth. Above all, give us the confidence to realize that the trials of this life are a prelude to the glory that waits us, provided we have remained unshaken in our allegiance to you and your Spouse, the Holy Catholic Church, of which you are the Teacher and the Guide.

Amen!

- Take time to dialogue with the Lord on our points above. End by thanking our Lord and resting in him.

- End the Recollection with shared prayer.
NOTES


5. Below are additional excerpts on “devotion” to the Church.

   • By this time they had all decided on what they would do, that is, go to Venice and Jerusalem, and spend their lives there helping souls, and if permission be not granted them to remain in Jerusalem, they would return to Rome and offer themselves to the Vicar of Christ so that he could use them wherever he judged it would be for the greater glory of God and the good of souls. They had likewise made plans to wait an entire year in Venice before sailing, and if there were no sailings to the East that year they would be free of their vow of going to Jerusalem and would go and see the pope (Auto. no. 85).

   • Among the cases about which all candidates (to the Society) ought for good reasons to be questioned, the first is this: Has the candidate separated himself from the bosom of the Holy Church by denying the faith, or by falling into errors against it in such a way that he has been condemned for some heretical proposition or declared suspect of one by public verdict, or by being excommunicated in infamy as a schismatic after he has spurned the authority and guidance of our holy mother the Church? (Constitutions no. 22).

   • The order of charity by which we should love the whole body of the Church in her head, Jesus Christ, requires a remedy to be applied, especially to that part which is more seriously and dangerously affected. Therefore, it seems to us that we should, as far as our slender resources allow, bestow with special attention the help the Society is able to give to Germany and England and the northern nations which are so grievously afflicted with the disease of heresy.

   Though many of us have already carefully attended to this by other means, applying Masses and prayers for many years now, still … we enjoin on all rectors and superiors, who are placed over others, to celebrate, if they are priests, and to have those under their authority celebrate one Mass each month to God; and those who are not priests, their prayers for the spiritual needs of Germany and England, so that at length the God of these nations and of all others that are infected with heresy may have pity on them and deign to lead them back to the purity of the Christian faith and religion (Letter to the Whole Society, July, 1553).

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