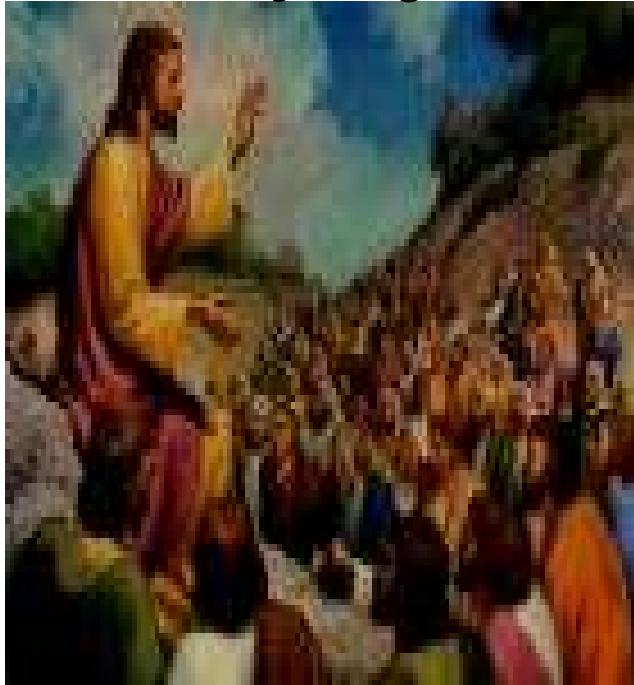


Year II - Sharing our Ignacian Legacy: Touching Lives as  
Contemplatives in Action

*"Who is my neighbor??"*



**Theme: TOUCHING LIVES IN OUR SERVICE TO  
OUR NEIGHBOR**

*(Putting names to faces)*

**October 2007 Monthly Recollection**

**Year II - Sharing our Ignacian Legacy: Touching Lives  
as Contemplatives in Action**

**Theme: TOUCHING LIVES IN OUR SERVICE TO  
OUR NEIGHBOR**

Common Grounding Activity

*(Play soft music as the Sisters are preparing to gather in the  
prayer room, or chapel or oratory)*

INTRODUCTION:

It is now the fifth month since we started reflecting on  
"Touching Lives as Contemplatives in Action." Who have  
we reached-out to? Mother Foundress, our Sisters, our lay  
partners and women and friends of Mother Ignacia del  
Espiritu Santo.. Who else? This month, we will reflect on  
how we have touched lives and how we can continue  
touching lives in our service to our neighbour.

Most Saints, practically many holy people exhibited heroic  
love – love of God and love of neighbor. Their charity has  
no frontiers. It is always boundless, beyond measure. This  
reminds us of an adage: "The measure of love is love  
without measure." Indeed, it is this unconditional love that  
they have experienced from the God who loves all that urge  
them to give and share love generously to all. It is this  
gratuitous love of God that intensified their own response to  
love others – their neighbors.

Pope Benedict XVI mentioned in his 'Deus Caritas Est',  
*"seeing with the eyes of Christ, I can give to others much  
more than their outward necessities; I can give them the look  
of love which they crave. Only my readiness to encounter  
my neighbour and to show him love makes me sensitive to*

*God as well. Only if I serve my neighbour can my eyes be opened to what God does for me and how much He loves me.”*

Let us sing our opening song, SAP 208 “Dakilang Pag-ibig”

Scripture Reading: Matthew 22:34-40

Henri Nouwen strengthened this conviction of the great commandment when he himself noted that Jesus’ actions flowed from His interior communion with the Father. He said, “when we love God with all our heart, mind and strength, and soul, we cannot do other than love our neighbour, and our very selves. It is by being fully rooted in the heart of God that we are creatively connected with our neighbour as well as with our deepest self. In the heart of God we can see that the other human beings who live on this earth with us are also God’s sons and daughters, and belong to the same family we do. There, too I can recognize and claim my belovedness, and celebrate it with my neighbors.”

Don’t these statements sound familiar? Our being called to a “deep intimacy with Jesus is what impels us to a humble and courageous, generous and creative service to the Church, especially the poor?” Is this how we express our being contemplatives in action? (pause for reflection)

Prayer:

You give us two commands and let them merge into one.

We are to love you with all our heart  
and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

More simply, we are to love always and everywhere:  
our friends and our enemies,  
the skies above and the earth under our feet.

For you are love, and those who abide in love abide in you.

It could not be plainer, more sharply focused:

The greatest of your gifts is love;

Love is our only crucial obligation.

I love you, God, and have for all my adult life.

I love you badly, distractedly, impurely,

But from the first I knew what your name meant,

First received the slightest inkling,

I knew you were all I needed or wanted

And my life gained purpose and order.

What shall I return to you

for all the favors that loving you has brought me?

I shall dwell in the thought of you, the hope for you,

the trust in your care for me,

and the love you pour forth in my heart

All the days of my life and all your heaven to come. Amen.

*After some moments of quiet, the Sisters may disperse to pray individually the Prayer Hours suggested.*

### **First Hour of Prayer - WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?**

**Grace: I beg for the grace to see with the eyes of God that I may recognize Him in every person (neighbour) He sends me.**

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:25-37

Focus Point: Anyone who needs me, and whom I can help is my neighbor. Compassion to be real must issue in deeds.

Let us consider what St. John of the Cross says about loving our neighbor: It is an evident truth that compassion for our neighbors grows in as much as our soul unites itself out of love to God. The more we love, the more we desire that God be loved and honoured by everyone. And the more we desire this, the more we work for it, be it by prayer or by any

other necessary acts. Then, being in God, the zeal and power of our charity becomes always stronger, to the point that which we gain for ourselves seems too little; it just seems insufficient to go to heaven alone. So, with celestial affection and diligent care we will be able to bring many others along with us. This all stems from our great love of God, and is the fruitful effect of prayer and contemplation.

Journaling:

I can feel that God calls me to practice compassion when . . .

I seek and find God . . .

End prayer: Colloquy with the Father, Son or the Holy Spirit (or as the prayer-er is inspired)

### **Second Hour of Prayer – WHO ARE THE “ELIZABETH’S” OF TODAY?**

Grace: I beg for the grace that I may have Mary’s radical openness to the will of God; that I, too may know how to lovingly respond to what God asks of me.

Scripture Reading: Luke 1: 39-40

Focus Point: I always see the needs of others as greater than mine. It is time I learn how to prioritize my needs.

We know the story well. Young Mary, pregnant with Jesus, hastened over the Judean hills and valleys to be with Elizabeth, pregnant in her old age. Mary went quickly. She hurried to go, to be with someone who needed her. Mary had a good excuse not to go on that journey: her own health and preparations for birth. But she risked the road. She took the time. She spent the energy. All of Mary’s life was guided by the Spirit of God. Mary knew Elizabeth needed her and so she went.

Mary is a woman who lived her life bringing goodness to others. In our world of hurry and worry, we can legitimately have plenty to do just to care for ourselves, the other members of our community and people in our ministries. But there are “Elizabeths” everywhere who need our visits. What a difference a phone call, a letter, or a “stopping by” can make for a lonely, ill or aged person. What joy can bring to children by paying full attention to them. What happiness we offer friends and colleagues when we affirm their successes and celebrations. We need only to look and we will easily find an “Elizabeth” today.

Journaling:

Right now, the “Elizabeth” I have to minister to is . . .

Mary, my Mother has taught me . . .

End prayer: Colloquy with our Blessed Mother (or as the pray-er is inspired)

### **Third Hour of Prayer – MOTHER IGNACIA’S LOVE RESPONSE FOR NEIGHBOR**

Grace: I beg the Lord to touch my inner core that I may be inspired by Mother Ignacia’s response to the needs of the people during her time and to put into action in my own lifetime my own response to the needs of others.

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor 13:1-7

Focus Point: Love for God is what impelled Mother Ignacia to respond with love for neighbour, particularly those in need during her time. It is also love for God and His people that the daughters of Mother Ignacia continue to discern how to courageously and creatively respond to mission.

The “finger of God” calling Mother Ignacia to religious commitment was also a call to apostolic service as a response to the needs of the times. The first of this involvement was in the retreat for women, followed by education of young girls.

The invitation to serve in the mission gave an opportunity for Sor Agapita Domingo, Sor Bibiana Zapanta and Sor Balbina Rivera to become the first missionaries to Mindanao in 1874.

Chronologically, Sacramento, California, was the first overseas mission child of the Religious of the Virgin Mary. It addressed the need of the Filipino workers in California. Over the years, mission work moved to Canada and the American Samoa.

To our Asian neighbors, the daughters of Mother Ignacia reached-out to missions in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Taiwan and Pakistan.

In Europe, the pastoral needs of the increasing number of migrant workers brought the RVMs to Italy while the ministry of presence was a response to a need in Switzerland.

The farthest love response is in Ghana, West Africa where the Sisters first engaged in pastoral work, followed by health care program and hospital work.

At present, our challenge is to continue to discern how best to serve the Lord in our different ministries, education, retreat, dormitory, social ministry, special apostolate and all kinds of services in the overseas missions. We even envision to venture into more new paths through our life and ministry for the transformation of society.

Journaling:

I am very intense or passionate in my own love response . . .

I see myself in the future as . . .

End prayer: Colloquy with Mother Ignacia  
(or as the prayer-er is inspired).

### A Challenge: A TIME TO GIVE

It is time to give, for I have been given so much  
and now it is time to give in return

I have seen pleasure and sorrow, triumph and defeat

I have seen the joys of life and watched the face of death

I have walked the road which sometimes seemed  
unbearably wrong, hard and unbending.

I have seen it  
path of glory,  
and giving



suddenly become a  
rich, fertile, lush

Whatever I  
come back to  
deed.

have passed on has  
me in word and in

Whatever I have given I have gained

And now I shall start the cycle again.

When you let me take I'm grateful, when you let me give  
I'm blessed.

*Day after day passes as I wonder what next?*

*What shall I do next?*

*What shall I begin to try to do to challenge myself?*

*Finally the answer comes simply, clearly.*

*Do something for someone else, some surprise, something.*

*Some unexpected something which says I thought of you  
I care about you. I wanted to do something for you.*

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