

A. Charlotte Experience

Slide 1

B. Ignatian spirituality not just Ignatian Contemplation

- A personal experience of God
- Finding God in all things
- Contemplatives in Action
- Discernment
- Men and Women for others

Slide 2

C.. John of the Cross via Gerald May

- Dryness and Impotence in Prayer and Life
 - Lack of Desire for the Old Ways
 - A Simple Desire to Love God

D. Brian O'Leary – 3rd and 4th Weeks

Slide 3

1. Note the different tone – activity to passivity; doing vs being
 - a. “for an intimate knowledge of our Lord, who has become man for me, that I may love him more and follow him more closely” to

- b. “sorrow with Christ in sorrow, anguish with Christ in anguish, tears and deep grief because of the great affliction Christ endures for me.”
- c. “to be glad and rejoice intensely because of the great joy and glory of Christ our Lord”

2. Closest to John of the Cross

- a. Nothing – no thing – but a presence vs dawn
- b. Dawn “To experience the pinnacle of the journey, the dawn after the night, is to realize the union with God that has always existed.”

3. Life Cycle

- a. Four Weeks
- b. O’Leary – between 3rd and 4th weeks

E. . Prayer – Centering, etc.

1. Centering Prayer:

a. being with the presence of “no thing” in faith and hope – role of the Examen

b. Allow me to quote Cynthia Bourgeault whom I will discuss at length in a few minutes on the method and purpose of Centering prayer. **Slide 4**

“As I see it, the purpose of Centering Prayer is to deepen your relationship with God (and at the same time your own deepest self) in that bandwidth of formless, objectless awareness that is the foundation of nondual consciousness. There you discover that you, God and the world “out there” are not separate entities, but flow together seamlessly in an unbreakable dynamism of self-giving love, which is the true nature of reality and the ground of everything.”

Another author, Gerald May, expresses it this way. [Slide 5](#)

One of the developments that the morning light reveals is growing freedom, experienced as the energy of desire is liberated from the attachments that have kept it restrained. A second change is the classical transition from meditation to contemplation in prayer and the equivalent movement in the rest of life: a metamorphosis of the soul from autonomous self-determination to self-giving willingness to be led. A third change is the awakening itself: the dawning realization of our essential union with God and all creation. (May, THE DARK NIGHT, 183-4)

It seems that we could , in an analogous sense, associate this experience with a way of amplifying the grace received by the retreatant in the 4th week of the Spiritual Exercises. -

F. . Cynthia Bourgeault

Ignatius concludes The Spiritual Exercises with The Contemplation to Attain the Love of God. For the retreatant, this is hopefully unitive prayer with the commonwealth of being and finding God in all things. Today I would like to suggest that this movement manifests itself during life lived primarily in the context of the 4th Week grace. It is a dawning awareness of one's essential union with God and all creation. Cynthia Bourgeault, an Episcopalian priest and distinguished theologian of the spiritual life offers a poignant metaphor which enhances our appreciation for Ignatius's Contemplatio.

She offers the metaphor of the divine exchange which is both horizontal – finding God in all things and people as well as vertical.

Slide 6

In this teaching, we learn how, in the great exchange of giving and receiving, we are fed by and feed other realms outside our earthly reality. We come to see the relationship among the visible and invisible realms not as a ladder of hierarchical steps to climb and escape lower states of being, but as an inter-abiding round dance of self-giving love. As we allow ourselves to participate in this freely flowing exchange of Divine creativity, love is made manifest. Moreover, we humans, as the embodiment of consciousness, are responsible for making that [Divine love](#) manifest in this time/space realm. In following Jesus' way, we release our essential Self as we help fulfill the deep yearning of the Divine.

In Bourgeault's view, Jesus radically envisions a cosmos in which the Father, the Son and the disciples – the infinite and the finite – are all continuously indwelling one another, exchanging their life blood in a single unbroken transfusion. Employing the image of the vine and the branches from Chapter XV of John's Gospel as well as the thought of Teilhard de Chardin, for Bourgeault, the vine represents the evolutionary process which will end with all things being one in and through Christ. Rather than being called branches, we as human beings are co-creators with God in this evolutionary progression. The closer we remain to the vine, the greater the participation and sharing we enjoy in that love of God drawing everyone and everything into His embrace. The secret is that we have to be willing to receive God's generous love and having received it, to allow it to flow again. The moral issue lies with any kind of constrictive motion – taking, defending, hoarding, clinging – which render us spiritually blind and as a result thwart this process.

G. Emerging level of human consciousness

I would like to close by suggesting that through relying heavily on the thought of Teilhard de Chardin, the spiritual theology of Cynthia Bourgeault enhances the foundation of Ignatian spirituality – Finding God in All Things. Furthermore, her mindset offers us as spiritual directors in the Ignatian tradition, an additional framework to utilize in listening to the religious experience of our directees. Slightly over a year ago I went to a week long workshop she was facilitating in North Carolina the

content of which I am still digesting and assimilating. There were 250 participants there, the vast majority far younger than myself. Bourgeault left there to facilitate a four day workshop at Ignatius House Retreat Center in Atlanta which she was totally subscribed to months before it occurred.

H Slide 7

Inhabitation

Oh Eden, foreclosed home, filament memory.

I gasp, grasp to be in her, of her.

Seeing her, tasting her, plunging into her,
burrowing into her, covered in her.

An earthworm in her dirt, a minnow in her creek.

A worker bee in her pollinating life.

Her gardener.

And to live it all with you, my love

This one, at last . . . your Adam, my Eve, my Adam, your Eve.

Bones of our bones and flesh of our flesh.

God in a chair on the porch.

Ecstasy.

Heaven

H. Bibliography Slide 8

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