

Session 4



Renunciation

① *Opening Prayer (5 minutes) - Psalm 16*

The opening prayer of each session is modelled after the *Liturgy of the Hours*, the collection of Psalms recited daily by priests, religious, and many laity.

Side 1: Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.
I say to the Lord: "You are my God.
My happiness lies in you alone."

Side 2: He has put into my heart a marvelous love
for the faithful ones who dwell in his land.
Those who choose other gods increase their sorrows.
Never will I offer their offerings of blood.
Never will I take their name upon my lips.

Side 1: O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.
The lot marked out for me is my delight:
welcome indeed the heritage that falls to me!

Side 2: I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.

Side 1: And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.
For you will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let your beloved know decay.

Side 2: You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

② Video Presentation (25 minutes)

Works quoted and cited:

“God wrote on the tables of the Law what men did not read in their hearts.”
(St. Augustine, Quoted in CCC 1962)

“So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)

“All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity.” (Second Vatican Council, Quoted in CCC 2013)

“The entire matter of reaching union with God consists in purging the will of its appetites and emotions so that from a human and lowly will it may be changed into the divine will, made identical with the will of God... When these emotions go unbridled, they are the source of all vices and imperfections, but when they are put in order and calmed they give rise to all of the virtues.” (St. John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, III, 16, 3-5)

“Now those who belong to Christ [Jesus] have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires.” (Galatians 5:24)

“The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails the asceticism and mortification that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes...” (CCC 2015)

Priest: Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?

All: I do.

Priest: Do you renounce the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you?

All: I do.

Priest: Do you renounce Satan, the author and prince of sin?

All: I do. (Renewal of Baptismal Promises, Roman Missal)

Now someone approached him and said, “Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?” ... Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions. (Matthew 19:16—22)

③ Small Group Discussion (30—60 minutes)

1. St. Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians says that Christians should “take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5 RSV2CE). What do you think this means? Why is this challenging? How might we make this a habit?

2. Imagine that your friend Sally says, "Ann is such a good person. I wish more people were like her." You don't know Ann, but you start to feel sadness that Sally complimented her instead of you. Is this feeling reasonable? Is it charitable? What do you think God would want you to do with this feeling?

3. Read the following passages. What do they reveal about our passions and the path to peace?

A. **Catechism of the Catholic Church 1767** In themselves passions are neither good nor evil. They are morally qualified only to the extent that they effectively engage reason and will. Passions are said to be voluntary, "either because they are commanded by the will or because the will does not place obstacles in their way." It belongs to the perfection of the moral or human good that the passions be governed by reason.

B. **Catechism of the Catholic Church 1775** The perfection of the moral good consists in man's being moved to the good not only by his will but also by his "heart."

C. **Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium 2** The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless. That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God's will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ.

4. How do our own passions sometimes draw our will away from God's will? What practical steps can we take to rein in these passions when they do? How do our passions find their proper purpose in God?

5. Jesus said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:13). How do our sins tend to enslave us? Why do we keep returning to them anyway?

6. What kinds of lies do you think the devil tends to use to stir up our passions and draw us away from the peace of God's will? What kind of lies might we need to renounce in order to experience the peace and freedom of Christ more fully?

7. Mother Teresa used to hand out business cards that said, "The fruit of silence is prayer, the fruit of prayer is faith, the fruit of faith is love, the fruit of love is service and the fruit of service is peace." Why are silence and prayer essential to growing toward peace?

④ Closing Prayer of Discernment (5 minutes)

As a group, spend three to five minutes in silent personal discernment. Ask God to prayerfully guide you in answering this question: **What is God calling me to do this week based on what I've heard today?** Afterward, pray together the Lord's Prayer slowly.

God is calling me to:

I will do this on _____(date) at _____(time)