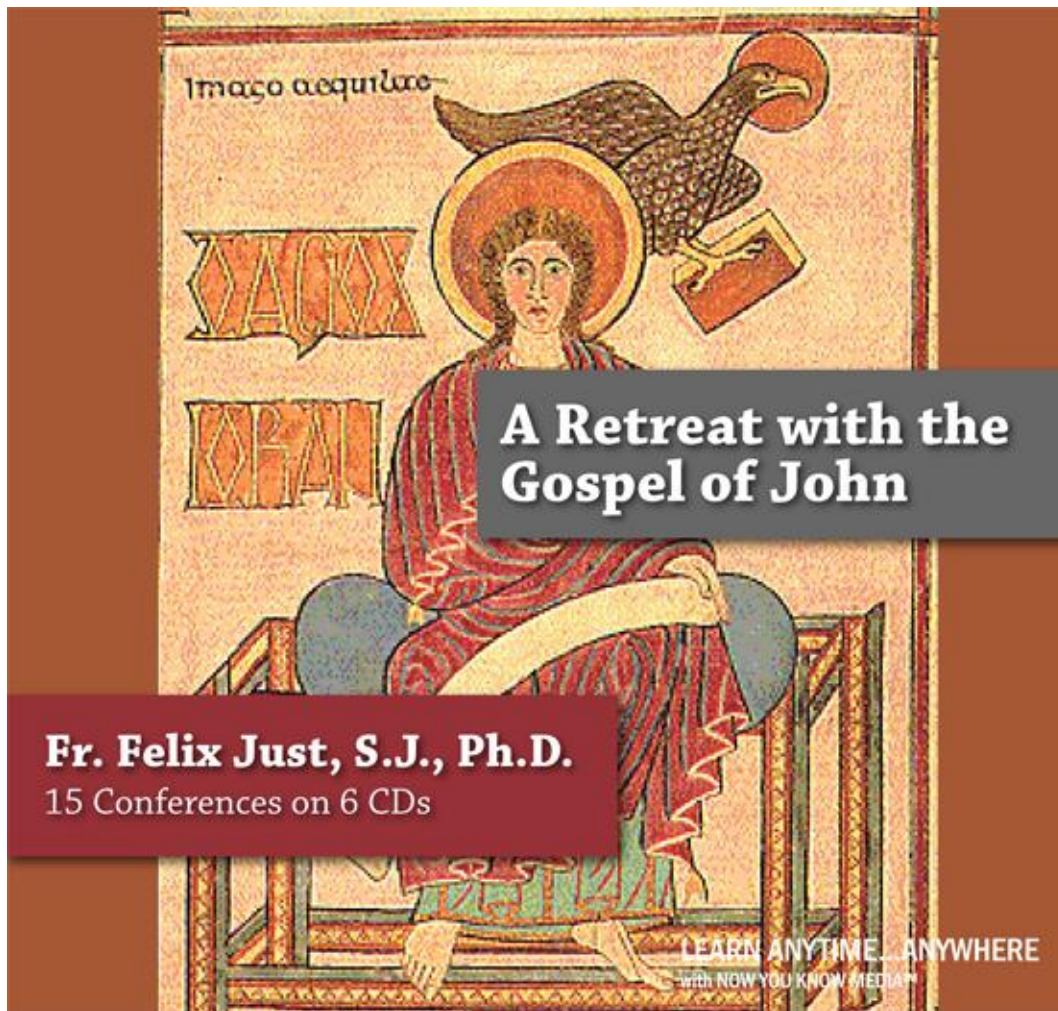


A
NOW YOU KNOW MEDIA
— WRITTEN GUIDE —

A Retreat with the Gospel of John

Presented by Fr. Felix Just, S.J., Ph.D.



Now You Know Media Copyright Notice:

This document is protected by copyright law. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. You are permitted to view, copy, print and distribute this document (up to seven copies), subject to your agreement that: Your use of the information is for informational, personal and noncommercial purposes only. You will not modify the documents or graphics. You will not copy or distribute graphics separate from their accompanying text and you will not quote materials out of their context. You agree that Now You Know Media may revoke this permission at any time and you shall immediately stop your activities related to this permission upon notice from Now You Know Media.

Table of Contents

Program Summary	4
About Your Presenter.....	5
<i>Conference 1:</i> Beginning Our Retreat with John's Gospel	6
<i>Conference 2:</i> Jesus, the Word of God (John 1:1-18).....	11
<i>Conference 3:</i> John, Jesus, and Disciples (John 1:19-51)	16
<i>Conference 4:</i> Jesus Begins His Signs (John 2).....	21
<i>Conference 5:</i> Jesus, the Only-Begotten Son (John 3)	25
<i>Conference 6:</i> Jesus Gives Living Water (John 4—5)	29
<i>Conference 7:</i> Jesus, the Bread of Life (John 6—7).....	34
<i>Conference 8:</i> Jesus, the Light of the World (John 8—9)	39
<i>Conference 9:</i> Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10)	44
<i>Conference 10:</i> Jesus, the Giver of Life (John 11—12)	48
<i>Conference 11:</i> Jesus, Teacher and Lord (John 13—14).....	52
<i>Conference 12:</i> Jesus, the Father, and the Paraclete (John 15—17).....	57
<i>Conference 13:</i> Jesus, Exalted and Glorified (John 18—19)	61
<i>Conference 14:</i> Jesus, Risen Lord and God (John 20)	67
<i>Conference 15:</i> Jesus, Loving and Forgiving Lord (John 21)	71
Recommended Readings and Resources.....	75
Appendix A: Three Methods of Biblical Prayer	77
Appendix B: The Fourth Gospel in the <i>Lectionary for Mass</i>	80

Program Summary

Welcome to *A Retreat with the Gospel of John*!

This program combines an insightful examination of John's Gospel with three methods of biblical prayer: reflective meditation, imaginative contemplation, and centering prayer. Using prayerful reflection, outstanding biblical scholarship, and an engaging presentation style, Fr. Felix Just, S.J., Ph.D., expertly guides you through an unforgettable retreat experience. Discover for yourself why Fr. Just is one of our beloved presenters.

In this 15-conference audio retreat program and its accompanying written guide, you will learn about the Gospel of John and grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

John's Gospel presents a portrait of Jesus that is powerfully distinct from the image of Jesus contained in the three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). John's highly developed and deeply spiritual theology vividly portrays Jesus as the incarnate Word of God. In John, we clearly see Jesus as the only-begotten Son of the Father, the great "I Am" who is equal to God and united with the Holy Spirit. Through all His words and works, the Johannine Jesus reveals God to the world and invites us to believe and trust in Him, so that we might become children of God and thereby receive eternal life.

You can use this program to make a spiritual retreat alone in your car, at home, or in a small group setting with opportunities for communal prayer and sharing. After listening to each talk, you are invited to use the carefully crafted written guide accompanying this series to prayerfully reflect on what you have heard. The questions for reflection and the suggestions for personal prayer that are given at the end of each retreat conference will help you grow closer to Jesus.

If you are looking for a thoughtful and uplifting biblical retreat to help you deepen your relationship with Jesus, you will love *A Retreat with the Gospel of John*. You will treasure the time spent each day with Fr. Felix Just and the Gospel of John.

About Your Presenter



Fr. Felix Just, S.J., Ph.D., is the Director of Biblical Education at the Loyola Institute for Spirituality in Orange, California. After receiving his Doctorate in New Testament Studies from Yale University, he taught at Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles), the University of San Francisco, and Santa Clara University. He was also director of the Center for Religion and Spirituality at LMU, and dean of the Lay Ecclesial Ministry and Deacon Formation Programs for the Diocese of Las Vegas. He regularly teaches courses, gives public lectures, and leads biblically-based days of prayer, parish missions, and weekend or weeklong retreats. He maintains a large internationally recognized website, Catholic Resources (<http://catholic-resources.org>).

Conference 1: Beginning Our Retreat with John's Gospel

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) Thanks for choosing this program to guide your prayer
- B) Possible formats for your retreat with the Gospel of John
 - 1) One-Week Retreat (two conferences per day)
 - 2) Extended Retreat (one conference per day)
 - 3) Condensed Retreat (three or four conferences per day)

II. Biblical Retreat: Praying with the Scriptures

- A) Have a biblically-based spiritual retreat, not just academic Bible study
- B) Goal (encountering Jesus) is primary; means (using the Bible) are secondary
- C) Leave aside historical issues, e.g., composition of John's Gospel
- D) Audio Conferences and Written Guide can assist your own prayer
- E) I will quote the NRSV translation; you can use any Bible translation
- F) "Suggestions for Prayer and Reflection" at the end of each conference
- G) Suggestions for biblical art and liturgical music
 - 1) "Biblical Art and Music": <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/>
 - 2) "That You May Have Life" by Marty Haugen (G.I.A., 2005)
 - 3) "Recommended Readings and Resources" on pages 75 – 76 below

III. What is Prayer? Communication with God!

- A) How do we communicate with God?
 - 1) Conversation/Dialogue: *both* speaking *and* listening
 - 2) No "right or wrong," but "clearer" vs. "noisier"
 - 3) Many forms of prayer: vocal and mental; rational and imaginative

B) Speaking to God (A.C.T.S. + I.)

- 1) Adoration / Praise
- 2) Contrition / Penance
- 3) Thanksgiving / Gratitude
- 4) Supplication / Petition
- 5) Intercession / Solidarity

C) Listening to God (see Vatican II: *Dei Verbum*)

- 1) Creation / Natural World
- 2) Humanity / Art and Creativity
- 3) Sacred Scripture / Holy Bible
- 4) Prayer of the Heart / Interior Silence

IV. Various Styles of Prayer for this Biblical Retreat (see Appendix A)

A) For personal reflection times, use any prayer style you like, especially

- 1) **Reflective Meditation** – thinking about the words/meanings of biblical texts
- 2) **Imaginative Contemplation** – imagining yourself with Jesus in the stories
- 3) **Centering Prayer** – being quietly open to God's presence; mystical union

B) *Journaling* – listening to God; expressing your own thoughts and feelingsC) *Journeying* – walking with Jesus; exploring nature togetherD) *Creative Expression* – letting God speak to you in art, music, dance, etc.

E) Take time on retreat not just to listen to these audio conferences, but also for

- 1) reading the sacred scriptures, esp. the Gospel of John
- 2) personal prayer after listening to each conference
- 3) relaxing silence (in your room, taking a walk, enjoying nature, etc.)

v. Structural Outline of John's Gospel

- A) Prologue (1:1-18)
- B) The Book of Signs (1:19—12:50)
- C) The Book of Glory (13:1—20:31)
- D) Epilogue (21:1-25)

vi. Preview of Literary Features of John's Gospel

- A) Fewer but longer pericopes than in the Synoptic Gospels
- B) Less action, more dialogues, longer monologues by Jesus
- C) Simple but highly symbolic language
- D) Dualistic vocabulary: opposition between light/dark, good/evil
- E) Poetic style: rhythmic, repetitious, solemn, “divine language”
- F) “Amen, Amen” pronouncements
- G) Misunderstandings and multiple meanings
- H) Ironical statements and broader irony
- I) Parenthetical explanations (Evangelist addresses the reader directly)
- J) Literary threads: hour, glory, believe
- K) Repetitious sections: for emphasis of important points
- L) Representative individuals: Nicodemus, Peter, Judas, esp. women
- M) Prominent female characters: Samaritan woman, Martha & Mary, Mary Magdalene
- N) Conventions of ancient theater (two active characters); courtroom drama
- O) Chiasms / Chiastic Structures (explained in the next conference)
- P) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Themes-LiteraryFeatures.htm>

vii. Theological Features of John's Gospel

- A) Is John a “Spiritual Gospel”? (as claimed since Clement of Alexandria, 2nd Cent.)
- B) All four Gospels are both historical and spiritual
- C) Johannine Theology: God as Father
- D) Johannine Christology: Jesus as the divine revealer (in words and works)

- E) Johannine Discipleship: believing/trusting, living/dwelling/remaining
- F) Johannine Pneumatology: Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth, Paraclete
- G) No Miracles, but many “Signs” and “Works”
- H) Conflicts with religious authorities; harsh polemics on both sides!
- I) Opponents predominantly called Pharisees, Chief Priests, “Jews”
- J) Extensive use of Old Testament: events and characters, “fulfillment quotations”
- K) Replacement theology: no longer need for temple or sacrifices; Jesus replaces them!

VIII. Creative Resources for Prayer

- A) Read or listen to all of John’s Gospel (put aside what you know from the Synoptics)
- B) Reflection Questions (see below)
- C) Biblical Art: <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art.html>
- D) Sacred/Liturgical Music: *That You May Have Life*, by Marty Haugen

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Questions for Personal Reflection Beginning a Retreat

- a. How has your life been lately (easy, hard, calm, chaotic, smooth, rough, peaceful, confusing, joyful, sad)? How has your relationship with God been (have you been moving closer or more distant, more trusting or more skeptical, more loving or not)?
- b. In the past year, who has Jesus been for you (Christ, Son of God, Lord, teacher, friend, guide, brother, etc.)? Who is He for you right now? How has your perception of Jesus changed lately?
- c. What do you desire from this retreat? (pay attention to your deeper desires; be specific, but also be realistic in your expectations)

2. Reading the Gospel: Read the entire Gospel of John in one sitting, or with as few breaks as possible.

- a. For now, just read the text, not any introductions or footnotes in your Study Bible.
- b. If you have read all of John before, read it again now, as you begin your retreat!
- c. Consider reading it out loud, or listening to an audio recording of this Gospel.
- d. Reading the entire Gospel of John will take the average reader about two hours.

3. Reflecting on the Gospel: After reading the whole Gospel, consider the following questions:

- a. What stood out most for you? What episodes, themes, or aspects of John's Gospel affected you most strongly, either positively or negatively?
- b. How would you summarize the main message that the author/evangelist was trying to convey to his first-century readers?
- c. What was the main message that you received while reading this Gospel? What is God saying to you through this text, here and now?

4. Reflective Meditation for Extra Prayer

- a. Focusing on John 3:16-17, reflect on the meaning of each word and each phrase of this key passage.
- b. Focusing on John 20:30-31, reflect on the meaning of each word and each phrase of this key passage.

Note: You do *not* need to answer *all* of the above questions; but *at least read the entire Gospel of John* and reflect on *some* of the questions and suggestions given here, before moving on and listening to the next conference. You might also find it helpful to write down some of your reflections in a prayer journal after each exercise.

Conference 2: Jesus, the Word of God (John 1:1-18)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) John's Prologue: not just an intro, but a summary of this Gospel's main points
- B) Beautifully poetic; highly theological; deeply inspiring, esp. if understood well
- C) First read the Prologue; then look at its structure and meaning more closely

II. Structural Outline of John's Prologue

- A) 1-2: The Divine LOGOS/WORD was with God eternally.
- B) 3: All things came into being through it/him (the Word).
- C) 4-5: In him was life and light, which darkness did not overcome.
- D) 6-8: [*John was not the light, but came to testify about the light.*]
- E) 9-10: The True Light was in the world, but the world did not recognize him.
- F) 11: He came into his own realm, but his own people did not accept him.
- G) 12: THOSE WHO DO BELIEVE IN HIM BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD.
- F') 13: These believers are not ordinary human offspring, but are born of God.
- E') 14: The Incarnate LOGOS/WORD reveals God's glory, full of grace and truth.
- D') 15: [*John testified about the priority of the one coming after him.*]
- C') 16: Out of his (the Word's) fullness, we all received grace upon grace.
- B') 17: Grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ.
- A') 18: The only-begotten SON has revealed God.

III. Literary Features of John's Prologue

- A) Poetic/Hymnic Form
 - 1) Simple vocabulary, yet highly symbolic meanings
 - 2) Not rhyming, but rhythmic (short phrases of approx. same length)
 - 3) Repetitions and stair-step progressions (esp. near beginning)

B) Chiastic Structure

- 1) Greek CHI: shaped much like a Latin/English X
- 2) Chiasm: a text structured so the second half balances the first half
- 3) Outline: not just A/B/C/D/E, but A/B/C/B'/A'
- 4) Climax or focus of a chiastic text is not at the end, but in the middle
- 5) Chiastic texts can be very short or very long
 - (a) A / B / A'
 - (b) A / B / C / B' / A'
 - (c) A / B / C / D / C' / B' / A'
 - (d) A / B / C / D / E / F / G / F' / E' / D' / C' / B' / A'
- 6) Chiasms used often in John's Gospel; this Written Guide shows indented outlines (like the left half of an X) for many Johannine texts
- 7) Not a modern discovery; ancient authors were taught to write texts using chiastic patterns

iv. Reflections on John's Prologue (look at parallel sections in 1st & 2nd halves together)**A) Verses 1-2 & 18 – Logos & God**

- 1) "In beginning" – without article "the" (cf. Gen 1:1)
- 2) "Logos" = word, phrase, sentence, speech, reasoning
- 3) Logos with God; Logos was God (v. 1)
- 4) OT parallels: Torah, Wisdom, Face, Hand of God; cf. Wisdom 9:1-4
- 5) No one has seen God; but Son/Logos/Jesus has revealed God (v. 18)

B) Verses 3 & 17 – Logos' role in creation

- 1) All things "came into being" (cf. Gen 1:1)
- 2) OT parallels: Prov 8:22-31 (creative Wisdom)
- 3) Law from Moses; Grace & truth from Jesus (cf. Exod 33:18—34:8)

C) Verses 4-5 & 16 – What is "in" him & what we have "received" from him

- 1) Life: main theme of John is divine/eternal life
- 2) Light & darkness (cf. Gen 1:3-4; Isa 9:2; 40:6-7; 60:1-3)
- 3) Fullness; grace upon grace

D) Verses 6-8 & 15 – John (the Baptizer)

- 1) John's relationship to the true light
- 2) John's testimony about the one coming after him

E) Verses 9-10 & 14 – God's Word in the World

- 1) True light was in the world, but not recognized
- 2) The Word became flesh: doctrine of "incarnation"
- 3) Dwelled ("tented") among us (cf. Exod 25:8; Ezek 37:27)
- 4) We have seen his "glory" (cf. Exod 16:10; 24:15-18; 29:43-46; 40:34-38)

F) Verses 11 & 13 – Opposition/rejection of the Logos

- 1) His own people did not accept him (caution: avoid anti-Semitism)
- 2) Those "born" in physical/sexual/fleshly vs. spiritual ways

G) Central verse 12 – Highlight or Main Point!

- 1) Chiastic center is not v. 14, but v. 12
- 2) What is our reaction to the Logos? To reject/deny or accept/believe?

H) More comments on vv. 14-18

- 1) *Mono-genes huios*: "only-begotten Son" (not "one and only son")
- 2) "No one has ever seen God" (alludes to OT debates: Did Moses see God?)
- 3) Jesus Christ is explicitly named only near the end (1:17)
- 4) More contrasts: Moses vs. Jesus; Wisdom vs. Word; God distant vs. enfleshed

v. **Christology in the Four Gospels** (same Jesus, four portraits, different emphases)

A) *Mark*: powerful Son of God, suffering Son of Man

B) *Matthew*: Son of David, King of Israel, Teacher like Moses, Emmanuel

C) *Luke*: Lord of All Nations, Savior of All Peoples (esp. the poor)

D) *John*: Word, Life, Light, Only-begotten Son, Divine Revealer; "I Am", Lamb of God

VI. Discipleship in the Four Gospels

- A) *Mark*: take up your cross and follow; be faithful despite suffering
- B) *Matthew*: be a loyal subject of your king; good student of your teacher
- C) *Luke*: put social justice into action, welcome and care for the poor and needy
- D) *John*: believe, be in relationship with Jesus/Father/Spirit; receive eternal life

VII. Introduction to “Reflective Meditation”

- A) Basic Steps: See Appendix A
- B) Example: Meditate reflectively on John 1:1-18

VIII. Creative Resources for Prayer

- A) Biblical Art: <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art-1.html>
- B) Sacred/Liturgical Music
 - 1) “Prologue” – from *That You May Have Life*, by Marty Haugen
 - 2) “Before All Creation” – by James Quinn
 - 3) “Word of God, Come Down on Earth” – by James Quinn

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. If you wanted or were asked to write a “Gospel,” an account of the life of Jesus, how would you begin? What would you think was most important to communicate? What kind of an introduction or “Prologue” would you write?
- b. What does “Logos” mean to you? What does it mean for Jesus to be called “the Word of God”? How is this Logos/Word related to God the Father? To the created world? To human beings? To *you*?

2. Reflective Meditation: Read and reflect carefully on the meaning of each section, each verse, each phrase, and each word of the Johannine Prologue (John 1:1-18). Now also read the footnotes, commentaries, and cross-referenced OT texts. Read more than one modern translation. What is God saying to you as you read and reflect on this text?

3. Centering Prayer: Focus simply on the word “*Logos*” (or choose “*Word*” or “*God*” or “*life*” or “*light*”). Breathe slowly and deeply, allowing this single word to enter into your heart, so you can simply rest in the presence of God within you.

Note: You do *not* need to do *all* the above prayer exercises; but do *at least one or two* before moving on and listening to the next conference. You might also find it helpful to *journal* a bit after each prayer exercise.

Conference 3: John, Jesus, and Disciples (John 1:19-51)

I. Welcome and Introduction

II. Contrasts between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics

A) Overall Structure and Contents

- 1) Most stories in John are **unique**, not found in Matthew/Mark/Luke
- 2) Many stories familiar from the Synoptics are **not** found in John
- 3) Multi-year public ministry and multiple visits to Jerusalem in John
(vs. only one-year ministry and one journey to Jerusalem in the Synoptics)
- 4) Ordering of some events different in John (esp. the temple incident)
- 5) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Synoptic-Differences.htm>

B) Theological Emphases & Narrative Details; three good examples in John 1

- 1) Prologue (vs. short intros in Synoptics)
- 2) John the Witness (vs. John the Baptist)
- 3) Call of first five disciples (vs. four fishermen)

III. Contents and Structural Outline of John 1:19-51

A) The Testimony of John [the Baptizer] (1:19-34)

- 1) Testimony of John about himself (1:19-28)
- 2) Testimony of John about Jesus (1:29-34)

B) The First Five Disciples of Jesus (1:35-51)

- 1a) First Two Disciples: Andrew and Anonymous (1:35-39)
- 1b) Third Disciple: Simon Peter (1:40-42)
- 2a) Fourth Disciple: Philip (1:43-44)
- 2b) Fifth Disciple: Nathanael (1:45-51)

IV. Reflections on John the Witness (John 1:19-34)

A) Differences from “John the Baptist” in the Synoptics

- 1) Doesn’t preach repentance to people, but dialogues with authorities
- 2) Not called or described as a prophet

- 3) No mention of John doing any baptizing here (not until ch. 3)
- 4) No mention of Jesus being baptized (only of John seeing the Spirit descend)
- B) John's role in the Fourth Gospel is to Testify (1:19, 20, 32, 34)
 - 1) Testimony about himself: Who he is NOT, and who he IS
 - 2) Testimony about Jesus: Who Jesus IS, in contrast to John
- C) Titles attributed to Jesus by John (the Baptizer)
 - 1) The One whom you [people sent by Pharisees] do not know (1:26)
 - 2) The One coming after John (1:27; cf. Prologue 1:15)
 - 3) The Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (1:29)
 - 4) The One who ranks ahead of John, because he was prior (1:30)
 - 5) The One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (1:33)
 - 6) The Son of God (1:34)

v. Reflections on the First Disciples of Jesus (John 1:35-51)

- A) Contrast the "Call of the First Disciples" in the four Gospels
 - 1) Mark & Matthew: two pairs of brothers (Peter & Andrew, James & John)
 - 2) Luke: call delayed until after some teaching & miracles; more focus on Peter
 - 3) John: a more natural and realistic sequence than in the Synoptics
- B) Notice *who calls whom* to discipleship in the Fourth Gospel
 - 1 & 2) John (the Baptizer) sends two of his disciples (Andrew & anonymous)
 - 3) Andrew brings his brother Simon (Peter) to Jesus
 - 4) Jesus calls Philip personally (from Bethsaida, city of Andrew & Peter)
 - 5) Philip tells his friend Nathanael about Jesus
- C) Various invitations in the Johannine "call stories"
 - 1) "Look/behold" (1:36; cf. 1:29)
 - 2) "Come and See" (1:39 & 46)
 - 3) "Follow me" (1:43)

D) Titles attributed to Jesus here

- 1) “Lamb of God” (1:36; repeats 1:29a)
- 2) “Rabbi” (meaning “Teacher”; 1:38)
- 3) “Messiah” (meaning “Anointed/Christ”; 1:41)
- 4) [Jesus gives Simon the nickname Cephas/Rocky in 1:42!]
- 5) “We have found him about whom Moses and the Prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth” (1:45)
- 6) “Rabbi, you are the Son of God, the King of Israel!” (1:49)
- 7) “Angels ascending/descending on the Son of Man” (1:51; cf. Gen 28:12; Dan 7:13-14)

E) Questions posed by Jesus in John’s Gospel

- 1) First words of Jesus: “What are you looking for?” (1:38)
- 2) Jesus also speaks invitations (“Come & see”; “Follow me”)
- 3) Jesus also makes statements (1:42 to Peter; 1:47 & 51 to Nathanael)
- 4) Jesus’ questions drive dialogues along throughout this Gospel
 - (a) “Do you know what have I done to you?” (13:12)
 - (b) “Do you love me?” (21:15-17)
 - (c) “Do you believe?” (1:50; 9:35; 11:26; 14:10; 16:31)
- 5) His questions are particularly good for us to reflect on today
- 6) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Themes-Questions.htm>

F) “Amen, Amen” Statements in John’s Gospel

- 1) First one here (1:51); many others (25 total)
- 2) Today: single Amen *concludes* prayers; John: double-Amen *begins* sayings
- 3) Introduces important pronouncements, like “Hear Ye, Hear Ye”
- 4) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Themes-Amen.htm>

VI. Introduction to “Imaginative Contemplation”

A) Basic Steps: see Appendix A

B) Example: Imagine yourself present and taking part in one of the stories in John 1

VII. Creative Resources for Prayer**A) Biblical Art**

- 1) The Baptism of Jesus: <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/Dore-John.htm>
- 2) More at <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art-1.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) “Behold the Lamb of God” – by Bob Dufford, S.J.
- 2) “Lamb of God” – various settings used at the Eucharist

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. Reflect back on how you yourself came to be a Christian. Who has been a “witness” or given “testimony” about Jesus for you? What have they told you about Jesus, either through their words or through their actions?
- b. How can you participate in this chain of tradition, witnessing to others about who Jesus is, telling them about what Jesus means in your life?
- c. How would you answer the question Jesus posed to his first disciples: “What are you looking for?” (1:38)

2. Reflective Meditation (on John 1:26-36): Reflect carefully on what John the Baptizer says about Jesus. What is the meaning of each phrase and each word he speaks, especially the various titles he uses for Jesus (see section IV-C above). Which of these titles touches you most, and what does it say to you?

3. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 1:19-34): Imagine yourself present with John the Baptizer near the Jordan River. Listen to what John says to the people, both about himself and about the one coming after him (1:19-28). What does John say to you? What do you want to say or ask him in response? Then, see Jesus approaching, and hear what John says about Jesus (1:29-34). What else does John say to you? How do you respond? What are your feelings throughout these encounters?

4. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 1:35-51): Imagine yourself as the “anonymous disciple” in the scene with John the Baptizer and Andrew (1:35-39). Listen again to what John says to you about Jesus. How do you respond? As you and Andrew follow Jesus, what do you say to him? How does Jesus respond to you? Continue imagining yourself with Andrew and Jesus as you encounter other disciples (1:40-51). How do you interact with each of them? What do you talk about with the other disciples? What do you say to each other about Jesus?

5. Centering Prayer: Choose one of the titles attributed to Jesus in John 1:19-51 (*Lamb of God, Son of God, Rabbi, Teacher, Messiah, King of Israel, or Son of Man*). Breathe slowly and deeply. Focus simply on this one word or phrase, allowing it to enter into your heart, so you can simply rest in the presence of Jesus with you.

Conference 4: Jesus Begins His Signs (John 2)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) John 2 has two stories that are familiar, but often misinterpreted
- B) Wedding at Cana (not a “miracle” but a “sign”)
- C) Incident in Jerusalem Temple (not a “cleansing” but “prophetic/symbolic”)

II. Signs in the Fourth Gospel vs. Miracles in the Synoptics

- A) Vocabulary: “Miracles” (Synoptics) vs. “Signs” (John)
- B) Character of Johannine “Signs” is different (analogy: traffic signs)
- C) Purpose of Signs: to bring people to believe (but don’t automatically work)
- D) Number of Signs: not really seven
- E) Cana: not just “the first sign,” but literally “the beginning of his signs”
- F) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Themes-Signs.htm>

III. Chiastic Structural Outline of John 2:1-12

- A) 1-2: Temporal & Geographical Setting; Characters Introduced
 - B) 3-4: Mother tells Jesus about lack of more wine; Jesus replies
 - C) 5: Mother tells servants to do what Jesus says
 - D) 6: Mention of six stone water jars, for Jewish purity rituals
 - C’) 7-8: Jesus tells servants what to do, and they do it
 - B’) 9-10: Chief Steward tells Bridegroom about quality of new wine
- A’) 11-12: Theological Summary; Geographical & Temporal Transition

IV. Reflections on the Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-12)

- A) “On the third day”: when God comes or works!
- B) “Cana of Galilee”: small town, in North of Israel; hometown of Nathanael (1:45)
- C) “Mother of Jesus”: not named; appears only here and at the cross (19:25-27)
- D) “Jesus’ disciples also there”: not cause of empty wine (cf. ancient wedding customs)
- E) “They have no wine”: not just literal, but deeper meaning

- F) “Woman, what concern is that to you and me?”: not disrespectful
- G) “My hour has not yet come”: first mention of Jesus’ “hour” (his death/resurrection)
- H) “Do whatever he tells you”: calls for faith/trust
- I) “Six stone water jars”: weddings were feasts for the whole village
- J) Turning water into wine: How? Not described; not the main point!
- K) Overall point: to contrast Jewish purity rules vs. Christian focus on Jesus
- L) Contrast: not bad vs. good wine, but good vs. better wine!
- M) Summary (2:11): beginning of his signs; reveals his glory; disciples believe
- N) Transition (2:12): they go down to Capernaum, but only a few days

v. Chiastic Structural Outline of John 2:13-25

- A) 13: Temporal and Geographical Introduction
 - B) 14-17: Prophetic/Symbolic Action: Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem
 - C) 18: Temple authorities challenge Jesus: “What SIGN will you show us?”
 - B’) 19-22: Prophetic/Symbolic Discussion: Raising the “Temple” of Jesus’ Body
 - A’) 23-25: Temporal and Geographical Transition

VI. Reflections on the Temple Incident (John 2:13-25)

- A) Occurs late in the Synoptics, but early in John
- B) Shows conflict between Jesus and religious authorities
- C) Jesus’ intention? Not “cleansing,” but “prophetic/symbolic”
- D) Purpose of Jewish sacrificial system: mediation between God and people
- E) Replacement theme; quotations of OT texts
- F) Disciples at first do not understand; only later do they come to believe
- G) “What sign will you show us?” Jesus’ answer refers to his death & resurrection
- H) Historical Context: Gospel written after destruction of Temple in 70 AD
- I) Main point: Christians no longer need Jewish Temple sacrifices, since we have Jesus, who is a better mediator, giving more direct access to God (replacement theme)

VII. Introduction to “Centering Prayer”

- A) Basic Steps: see Appendix A
- B) Example: Psalm 46:10 – “Be still and know that I am God.”

VIII. Creative Resources for Prayer**A) Biblical Art**

- 1) Wedding Feast at Cana: <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/Dore-John.htm>
- 2) More at <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art-2.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) “God in the Planning” (esp. verse 2) – by John Bell
- 2) “Jesus, Come! For We Invite You” – by Christopher Idle

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. What “signs” has God worked in your life to help you see who Jesus is, to understand his relationship with God, and to believe (trust) in him more deeply?
- b. Where and how do you see God’s “glory” manifested in your life? In our world?

2. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 2:1-12): Imagine yourself with Jesus, his mother, and his disciples at the wedding at Cana. Which of the characters in the story are you? What do you see and experience at this wedding? How do you react as you witness the dialogues between Jesus and the other characters in this story? How does witnessing these things make you feel? How do you then respond to Jesus?

3. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 2:13-22): Imagine yourself with Jesus and his disciples in the Temple at Jerusalem. Which of the characters in the story are you? What do you see and hear on this occasion? How do you react as you witness what Jesus does and says, and how the temple authorities challenge him? What are your feelings after experiencing all of this?

4. Reflective Meditation (on John 2:13-22): Reflect deeply on the meaning of each word and each verse of the story of Jesus in the Jerusalem Temple, especially on the words spoken by Jesus himself in 2:16 and 2:19, and the words in 2:17 quoted from Psalm 69:9.

5. Centering Prayer: Starting with the phrase, “*Jesus... revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him*” (2:11), progressively simplify this so that you focus only on the word “*believe*” (or only on the word “*glory*”). Breathe slowly and regularly. Let this one word enter deeply into your heart, so you can simply rest in a trusting relationship with Jesus.

6. Centering Prayer: Starting with the phrase, “*his disciples... believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken*” (2:22), progressively simplify this so that you focus only on the word “*believe*” (or only on the name “*Jesus*”). Breathe slowly and regularly. Let this one word enter deeply into your heart, so you can simply rest in a trusting relationship with Jesus.

Conference 5: Jesus, the Only-Begotten Son (John 3)

I. Welcome and Introduction

II. Structural Outline of John 2:23—3:36 (four main parts)

- A1) Main Dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus (2:23—3:12)
- A2) Evangelist's Elaboration on Three Themes of Christology/Discipleship (3:13-21)
- B1) John the Baptizer's Final Testimony about Jesus (3:22-30)
- B2) Evangelist's Elaboration on Three Themes of Christology/Discipleship (3:31-36)

III. Double-Meanings and Misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel

- A) Many words in many languages have more than one meaning
 - 1) Previous examples: Logos (ch. 1); Temple (ch. 2)
 - 2) Later examples: "Living Water" (ch. 4); "I am going..." (ch. 8)
 - 3) Meanings literal or metaphorical? physical or spiritual?
 - 4) Misunderstandings if Jesus speaks spiritually, but people think literally
- B) Three main examples in John 3
 - 1) "Born *anōthen*" = temporal ("born again"); spatial ("born from above"); metaphorical ("born anew")
 - 2) "*Pneuma*" = physical (wind; breath); spiritual (God's spirit)
 - 3) "Lifted up" = physical (raised; crucified); metaphorical (exalted/glorified)
 - 4) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Themes-LiteraryFeatures.htm>

IV. Chiastic Outline of John 2:23—3:12

- A) Intro/Transition: many believed because they saw Jesus' signs (2:23-25)
- B) Nicodemus acknowledges that Jesus is a teacher from God (3:1-2)
- C) Jesus proclaims one must be born anew; Nicodemus asks how? (3:3-4)
- D) Jesus proclaims one must be born of water and Spirit (3:5-6)
- C') Jesus explains further how one can be born anew & born of Spirit (3:7-8)
- B') Nicodemus does not understand, despite being a teacher of Israel (3:9-10)
- A') Conclusion: some do not believe, despite hearing testimony (3:11-12)

v. Reflections on Jesus' Conversation with Nicodemus (John 2:23—3:21)

- A) Passover setting (since 2:13); first of three Passovers in John
- B) Nicodemus: Pharisee, Jewish leader, representative character (“WE know...”)
 - 1) Comes to Jesus at night (literally, out of fear? symbolically, light/dark?)
 - 2) Acknowledges Jesus as “teacher from God,” based on Jesus’ signs
 - 3) Reappears twice later in John (7:50; 19:39)
- C) Dialogue dynamics: double-meanings, misunderstandings, lead to deeper insights
 - 1) Jesus gives three “Amen, Amen...” proclamations (3:3, 5, 11)
 - 2) Nicodemus twice questions, “How...?” (3:4, 9)
 - 3) Jesus replies: “Don’t you understand? How can you believe?” (3:10, 12)
- D) Repetitions, with variations
 - 1) “No one can see/can enter the Kingdom of God” (3:3, 5)
 - 2) “Born anew”; “born of water and spirit” (3:3-8; cf. 1:12, “born of God”)
- E) Transition from dialogue to monologue; from Jesus’ words to Evangelist’s additions
 - 1) Jesus says “we” (3:11); reflects theology of later Johannine community
 - 2) Addresses Nicodemus with “you-plural” (he represents all Pharisees/Jews)
 - 3) Verses 13-21 talk *about* Jesus in *third* person; no more “I” statements
- F) Evangelist elaborates on three themes of Christology (3:13-21; dualistic)
 - 1) Jesus as the Son of Man (3:13-15)
 - (a) Allusion to story of Moses and Israelites in desert (cf. Num 21)
 - 2) Jesus as the Son of God (3:16-18)
 - (a) Two more uses of “only-begotten” (not “one and only”; cf. 1:14, 18)
 - 3) Jesus as the Light (3:19-21)
 - (a) Dualistic contrast of light vs. darkness

VI. Reflections on the Themes of Witnessing and Discipleship (John 3:22-35)

- A) Initial discussion about baptizing; but focus shifts back to witnessing
 - 1) Jesus and John are both baptizing; people come to be baptized (in water)
 - 2) John is asked about Jesus; continues to testify (about himself & Jesus)
 - 3) Last words of John in this Gospel: “He must increase; I must decrease” (3:30)
- B) Text again shifts to Evangelist’s elaboration on Christology & Discipleship
 - 1) The priority of the one from above (3:31)
 - 2) Accepting the testimony of the one sent (3:32-34)
 - 3) Believing or disobeying the Son (3:35-36)

VII. Creative Resources for Prayer

- A) Biblical Art
 - 1) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art.html>
- B) Sacred/Liturgical Music
 - 1) “Nicodemus” – from *That You May Have Life*, by Marty Haugen
 - 2) “Jesus, Lord” – by Randall DeBruyn
 - 3) “O Breathe on Me, O Breath of God” – by Edwin Hatch
 - 4) “This Is the Spirit’s Entry Now” – by Thomas Herbranson

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. What does being “born anew” (or “born from above” or “born again”) mean to you? How does being “born of water and the spirit” reveal itself in your life?
- b. What does “eternal life” mean to you? Do you think of it as something we may receive after death (as in the Synoptics) or as something we have already now (as emphasized in John’s Gospel)? What difference does this make in your daily life?

2. Reflective Meditation (on John 3:1-21): Reflect carefully on the meaning of each word and each phrase of Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus, especially on the assertions made and the questions asked by Jesus himself.

3. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 3:1-21): Imagine yourself, if possible, as Nicodemus himself (or at least as someone right next to Nicodemus) approaching Jesus one night. Start with the conversation as recorded in the Gospel. What do you say to Jesus? How does he reply to you? When Jesus says, “You must be born anew” (3:6), how do you respond? Why might you feel that you *need* or *want* to be born anew? Continue conversing with Jesus, even if the dialogue takes you in a direction different from what is literally recorded in John 3.

4. Reflective Meditation (on John 3:31-36): Reflect carefully on the meaning of each word and each phrase of this passage, which immediately follows the words of John the Baptizer (3:22-30), but is better read as words of the Fourth Evangelist about Jesus.

5. Centering Prayer: Focus simply on the phrase “*born anew*” (3:3; or choose “*born from above*” or “*born of the Spirit*”). Breathe slowly and deeply, allowing this short phrase to enter into your heart, so you can simply experience the renewing presence of God within you.

Conference 6: Jesus Gives Living Water (John 4—5)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) Three stories from John used for RCIA “Scrutinies” during Lent
 - 1) John 4: Samaritan Woman – Water (3rd Sunday)
 - 2) John 9: Man Born Blind – Light (4th Sunday)
 - 3) John 11: Raising of Lazarus – Life (5th Sunday)
- B) All are “theatrical” compositions; follow conventions of ancient theater
 - 1) Long plays, but can easily be broken into separate acts and scenes
 - 2) Analyze: Who is “on stage”? Who is “back stage”?
 - 3) Who are the two “active characters”? Who speaks to whom?
- C) John 4 is not just about Jesus and the Samaritan Woman
 - 1) Also Jesus and disciples; woman and other Samaritans; Jesus and villagers
 - 2) Overall structure not chiasmic; two main “Acts,” each with five “Scenes”

II. Structural Outline of John 4:1-42 (Act I)

- A) 1-4: Transition: Jesus departs from Judea, heads toward Galilee, passes thru Samaria
- B) 5-6: Intro: Jesus arrives about noon at Jacob’s well, near Samaritan town of Sychar
- C) 7-15: Jesus and a Samaritan woman dialogue about “living” water and thirst
- D) 16-19: Jesus talks about the woman’s husbands; she concludes he is a prophet
- E) 20-26: Jesus and the woman dialogue about “true” worship and the Messiah

III. Structural Outline of John 4:1-42 (Act II)

- A) 27: Transition: Jesus’ disciples return, wonder why he is speaking with a woman
- B) 28-30: She goes back to town, tells people about Jesus, wonders if he’s the Messiah
- C) 31-38: Jesus and his disciples dialogue about his food and his/their work
- D) 39: Many Samaritans come to believe in Jesus, based on the woman’s testimony
- E) 40-42: More Samaritans hear Jesus, come to believe he’s the Savior of the World

IV. Reflections on Jesus' Interactions with Samaritans at Jacob's Well (John 4:1-42)**A) Surprising that Jesus spoke to a woman of Samaria, for two reasons**

- 1) She herself is surprised (4:9), since she is a *Samaritan* (4:10)
- 2) His disciples are surprised, since he's speaking to a *woman* (4:27)

B) Samaritans

- 1) Long-time historical enemies of the Jews/Judeans
- 2) See themselves as Israelites who follow Moses (only the first five books of OT)
- 3) Judeans see them as a "mixed breed" who don't accept the whole Bible
- 4) Maccabean Jews had destroyed the Samaritan Temple on Mt. Gerizim

C) Interaction of Men and Women

- 1) Middle-eastern (ancient & modern) vs. modern Western cultures
- 2) Public (male) vs. private (female) spaces
- 3) Village wells: women gather to get water each morning (not noon!)
- 4) Wells were places to encounter future wives (cf. Gen 24: Isaac & Rebekah; Gen 29: Jacob & Leah; Exod 2: Moses & Zipporah)
- 5) Jacob's well: exact location unknown, but OT allusions clear
- 6) See also <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Themes-Women.htm>

D) Four Main Themes (with more double-meanings and misunderstandings)

- 1) "Living water": flowing spring water vs. dead stagnant well water
- 2) "Husbands": everyone had a "master" (father, husband, king, God)
- 3) "Prophet" & "worship": temple rituals vs. spiritual honoring of God
- 4) "Food to eat": physical bread vs. Jesus' work on behalf of the Father

E) Other Literary Features

- 1) Jesus uses two proverbs while speaking to his disciples
 - (a) "Four more months, then comes the harvest" (4:35)
 - (b) "One sows and another reaps" (4:37)

- 2) How do people come to believe? Not just by seeing, but also from hearing!
 - (a) Woman: “Come and See” (cf. 1:39 & 46; Jesus to two disciples and Philip to Nathanael)
 - (b) Hearing first-hand is better than hearing second-hand

F) Consider the Christological Titles given to Jesus throughout this chapter

- 1) Woman first says, “You, a Jew” (4:9)
- 2) Woman then says, “Sir” (*Kyrios* = Lord/Master/Mister/Sir; 4:11, 15, 19)
- 3) Woman later says, “Prophet” (4:19; cf. 29 – “a man who told me everything I had ever done”)
- 4) Woman finally says, “Messiah” [meaning “Christ/Anointed”] (4:25, 29)
- 5) Jesus says: “I AM, the one speaking to you” (4:26; first “I am” statement)
- 6) In Act 2, Jesus’ disciples call him “rabbi” (4:31)
- 7) At the end, villagers believe and know he is the “Savior of the world” (4:42)

v. Material for Extra Prayer (John 4:43-54; 5:1-47)

A) Geographical Transition (4:43-45; continue north to Galilee)

B) Jesus Heals a Royal Official’s Son (4:46-54; second sign)

- 1) Similar to story of Centurion’s Servant in Matt 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10
- 2) Chiastic middle: man believes Jesus’ words (4:50; repeated 4:53)
- 3) Narrator summarizes: this was Jesus’ second sign (4:54)

C) Jesus Heals a Man at the Pool of Bethesda (5:1-18)

- 1) Not really a sign, but the first Sabbath conflict story
- 2) Jesus’ action results in opposition, not belief

D) Ensuing Monologues by Jesus (5:19-47)

- 1) Three more “Amen, Amen” pronouncements
- 2) Jesus’ works: giving life and exercising judgment
- 3) Relationship of the Son with the Father
- 4) Various witnesses give testimony: Jesus, John, works, Father, scriptures
- 5) Series of contrasts about praise and believing

E) For details, see <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Outline-John05.html>

VI. Creative Resources for Prayer**A) Biblical Art**

- 1) Samaritan Woman: <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/Dore-John.htm>
- 2) More at <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art-4.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) “The Woman at the Well” – from *That You May Have Life*, by Marty Haugen
- 2) “God of All Power” – from *Who Calls You by Name*, by David Haas
- 3) “Give Us Living Water” – by M. Balhoff, D. Ducote, and G. Daigle
- 4) “With Joy You Shall Draw Water” – by Bob Hurd

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. Whom do you consider or treat as “Samaritans” in your life? (Be honest: Who are people you feel you shouldn’t associate with?) How can you, like Jesus, overcome any us/them group animosities and prejudices to treat “the other” with respect?
- b. In what ways is Jesus offering you “living water” today? How are you receiving it? How do you notice the presence of God’s spirit, God’s life, within you?
- c. How do or can you, like the Samaritan woman, witness to others (through your words or actions) what you have experienced with Jesus? How do those people react when you do?

2. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 4:1-42): Imagine yourself as one of the characters in this multi-scene story. Who are you: one of Jesus’ disciples, the Samaritan woman herself, one of the Samaritan villagers? In the role of your chosen character, engage in the action and the dialogues of this story. What do you see and hear? What do you say and do in response? How do you yourself interact with Jesus? What touches, surprises, frightens, or inspires you about him? How do you feel and respond overall, after actively participating in this story?

3. Reflective Meditation (on John 4:46-54): Reflect deeply on the meaning of each word and each phrase of the story of Jesus healing the son of a royal official, especially the words of the narrator/evangelist about the role of believing (vv. 48, 50, 53).

4. Reflective Meditation (on John 5:1-47): Read this whole chapter quickly, then return to any section or particular verses that stood out for you. Reflect more deeply on any words or images that especially enlighten or inspire you, or those that challenge or disturb you.

5. Centering Prayer: Starting with the phrase, “*The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life*” (4:14), progressively simplify this so that you focus only on the phrase “*eternal life*” (or only on “*water*” or “*spring of water*”). Breathe slowly and regularly. Let this one word or phrase enter deeply into your heart, so you can simply enjoy the life-giving presence of Jesus within you.

Conference 7: Jesus, the Bread of Life (John 6—7)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) “Feeding of 5000” and “Bread of Life discourse” influential in Christian theology
- B) Used at Mass in middle of Lectionary Year B (17th to 21st Sundays)

II. Overall Contents of John 6

- A) Jesus Feeds 5000 People (6:1-15) – narrated in all four Gospels
- B) Jesus Walks on Water (6:16-25) – together also in Mark & Matt, but not in Luke
- C) Bread of Life Discourse (6:26-71)
 - 1) Part 1: Transition and Introduction (6:22-34)
 - 2) Part 2: Bread of Life = Words and Teachings of Jesus (6:35-50)
 - 3) Part 3: Bread of Life = Flesh and Blood of Jesus (6:51-59)
 - 4) Part 4: Reactions: some disciples depart; others remain (6:60-71)

III. Chiastic Structural Outline of John 6:1-15

- A) Intro: Sea of Galilee (Sea of Tiberias); large crowd followed Jesus; they saw the SIGNS he was doing; he goes up a *mountain*; feast of Passover was near (6:1-4)
- B) Jesus asks Philip: “Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?” Philip replies: “Two hundred days wages would not be enough” (6:5-7)
- C) Andrew suggests: “Here’s a boy with five barley loaves and two fish, but what good is that for so many people?” (6:8-9)
- D) Jesus orders: “Have the people *recline*”; about 5000 men recline on grass (6:10)
- E) ***Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them... (6:11a)***
- D’) ...to those who were *reclining*; also of the fish, as much as they wanted (6:11b)
- C’) Jesus tells his disciples to collect the fragments; they fill twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves (6:12-13a)
- B’) These were the leftovers from those who had eaten (6:13b)
- A’) Conclusion: People who have seen the SIGN say, “This is the Prophet who is to come to the world”; they want to make him a king, so he withdraws to the *mountain* (6:14-15)

IV. Reflections on the Feeding of the Five Thousand (John 6:1-15)**A) Setting in wilderness (OT parallels, esp. with Exodus)**

- 1) Crowd sees signs; Jesus goes up *mountain*; Jewish Passover setting
- 2) Jesus & Philip: “Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?”
- 3) Andrew: “A boy has five *barley* loaves & two fish” (cf. 2 Kings 4:42-44 – Elisha fed 100 men with 20 barley loaves; his servant asked, How?)
- 4) 5000 men *recline* (position for supper indoors, cf. Last Supper)

B) Chiastic Center (6:11): key verbs related to Christian Eucharist

- 1) *Jesus* himself distributes the food (vs. Synoptics: his disciples do this)
- 2) See <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Eucharist.htm>

C) Christological titles at the end: Prophet & King (6:14-15)**V. Reflections on the Walking on Water (John 6:16-25)****A) Often listed as fifth of “seven signs”; but it’s not really a “sign” in John**

- 1) No one comes to believe in this story, and it’s never referred to again
- 2) It functions as a “Theophany”; an “I AM” revelation

B) Why does the Fourth Gospel include this story?

- 1) Traditional connection with Feeding of 5000? (cf. Mark 6 & Matt 14)
- 2) OT allusions: Moses and Israelites cross the Red Sea (cf. Exod 14:1—15:21)
- 3) Compare Ps 77:16-19, saying that *God* walks on the waters!

VI. “I AM” Statements in the Fourth Gospel**A) Normal “I am” (Gk. *eimi*) vs. Emphatic “I AM” (Gk. “*ego eimi*”); used 25 times)****B) Absolute “I AM” (9 times) vs. Predicate “I AM” (16 times)****C) Absolute Usage**

- 1) Alludes to YHWH, God’s sacred name (see Exod 3:14; etc.)
- 2) Already used in John 4:26: “I AM [he], the one speaking to you”
- 3) Used again in 6:20: not “It is I,” but “I AM; do not be afraid”

D) Predicate Usage

- 1) Occurs often in John, beginning in Chap. 6, with some variations
- 2) “I AM bread of life”; “I AM living bread”; “I AM bread from heaven”
- 3) Many other familiar “I AM...” images occur later in John’s Gospel

E) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Themes-IAM.htm>

VII. Reflections on the Bread of Life Discourse (John 6:26-71)

A) Explicitly refers back to the “sign” of feeding 5000 (not the walking on water)

B) Many OT allusions: contrast between Moses/Manna and Jesus/Eucharist

- 1) Read the whole Manna story (Exod 16; also Num 11; Deut 8)
- 2) Read also Isa 55:1-2, 10-11 (cf. Prov 9:5)

C) **Part 1 – Intro:** discussion about work and food (John 6:22-34)

- 1) First “Amen, Amen” statement (6:26-27)
- 2) “Work of God” = “Believe in the one he has sent” (6:29)
- 3) Second “Amen, Amen” statement (6:32-33)
- 4) Contrast Moses (Manna in desert) and Jesus (Father gives true bread)

D) **Part 2 – Bread of Life** = Words and Teachings of Jesus (6:35-50)

- 1) First “I AM” predicate statement (already with variations)
- 2) Jews complain/murmur (OT: murmuring against Moses in the desert)
- 3) Jesus’ response: another “Amen, Amen” and another “I AM...”

E) **Part 3 – Bread of Life** = Flesh and Blood of Jesus (6:51-59)

- 1) Yet another “I AM...” and another “Amen, Amen”
- 2) Shift to more obviously Eucharistic imagery
- 3) Narrator: conclusion of public setting (Synagogue at Capernaum)

F) **Part 4 – Reactions by Jesus’ disciples:** some depart, others remain (6:60-71)

- 1) “Many” disciples find Jesus’ words difficult (cannibalism?)
- 2) Jesus uses further dualistic contrasts: spirit/flesh; believe/betray
- 3) Choice to believe or to reject; to turn back or to continue following Jesus

- 4) Jesus directly asks “the Twelve”; Peter answers as spokesperson (6:68-69)
- 5) Jesus alludes to his future betrayal by Judas Iscariot
- 6) Reflect on Jesus’ questions in our prayer

VIII. Material for Extra Prayer (John 7)

A) Content: Jesus at the Festival of Booths, a.k.a. Tabernacles or Sukkoth (7:1-52)

- 1) Beginning of the Feast (7:1-13)
- 2) Middle of the Feast (7:14-36)
 - (a) Jesus teaches in the temple; various groups argue about him
- 3) Last/Greatest Day of the Feast (7:37-52)
 - (a) Jesus preaches about living water, the Spirit
 - (b) Crowds argue about the Messiah; temple authorities argue about Jesus

B) Main Themes in Ch. 7

- 1) Growing conflicts with the authorities
- 2) Allusions to Jesus’ upcoming arrest, passion, crucifixion, glorification

C) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Outline-John07.html>

IX. Creative Resources for Prayer

A) Biblical Art

- 1) Jesus Walks on Water: <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/Dore-John.htm>
- 2) Adulterous Woman: <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/Dore-John.htm>
- 3) More at <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) “Come to the Banquet” – by W. Jabusch and R. Kreutz
- 2) “Eat This Bread” – from Taizé; by Jacques Berthier
- 3) “I Am the Bread of Life” – by Suzanne Toolan
- 4) “I Am the Living Bread” – by David Haas
- 5) “Jesus, the Bread of Life” – by Grayson Brown
- 6) “Look Beyond” – by Darryl Ducote

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. How does Jesus “feed” or “nourish” you? What do Jesus’ words, “I am the Bread of Life,” mean to you?
- b. Which teachings or sayings of the Johannine Jesus do you find hard to accept, or even shocking? How do you engage with these teachings? How do they affect your understanding and/or your relationship with God?
- c. How do you see the inter-relationships between Moses and Jesus? Between the Old Testament and the New Testament? Between Judaism and Christianity?

2. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 6:1-15): Imagine yourself as one of the disciples with Jesus in the story of the feeding of the 5000, or possibly as the young boy who offers Jesus his own food (6:9). Participate actively, beginning with the dialogues and actions as recorded in the biblical story, but feel free to go in another direction, if you are so led in your prayer. How do you respond to Jesus’ words and actions? Have a dialogue with Jesus about the meaning of what he has done, and how you have been able to respond.

3. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 6:16-21): Imagine yourself as one of the disciples in the boat crossing the lake. How do you react when you see a figure, walking on water, approaching you? How do you respond when you hear him say, “I am; do not be afraid”?

4. Reflective Meditation (on John 7:1-52): Read this chapter quickly, then return to any section or particular verses that stood out for you. Reflect more deeply on any words or images that especially enlightened or inspired you, or those that challenged or disturbed you. What may God be saying to you through these scriptures?

5. Centering Prayer: Focus simply on the phrase “*bread of life*” (or choose “*bread from heaven*” or “*living bread*”). Breathe slowly and deeply, allowing this short phrase to enter into your heart, so you can simply experience God nourishing you.

Conference 8: Jesus, the Light of the World (John 8—9)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) John 9 used on 4th Sunday of Lent, as second RCIA Scrutiny Gospel
- B) Best example of a Johannine “Sign”

II. Material for Extra Prayer (John 8): growing conflicts with the authorities

- A) Woman Caught in Adultery (8:1-11)
 - 1) Not originally in Fourth Gospel; missing from oldest manuscripts
 - 2) Closer to Luke’s theological emphases (forgiveness of sins)
- B) Jesus’ Dialogues with Various Groups in the Temple (8:12-59) – increasing tensions!
 - 1) John 8 connects with both John 7 and John 9
 - (a) Same setting as John 7: Jerusalem temple, teaching crowds
 - (b) Same theme as John 9: “I am the light of the world” (8:12)
 - 2) Jesus as the “Light of the World” (8:12-30)
 - (a) Disputes with Pharisees: Valid testimony? Jesus and his Father
 - (b) Disputes with “Jews”: Who are you? Will he kill himself?
 - (c) Climax (8:28-29): “When you’ve *lifted up* the Son of Man... *I AM*.”
 - 3) Jesus disputes with Jews about their heritage/identity: Abraham? (8:31-50)
 - (a) Jesus addresses “those Jews who believed in him”
 - (b) Heated polemics and insults: freedom vs. slavery; truth vs. sin; children of Abraham and of God vs. children of the Devil?
 - (c) “*Amen, amen*, I tell you: Before Abraham was, I AM” (8:58)
 - (d) Reaction: they try to stone him, but Jesus hides and leaves temple

III. Structural Outline of John 9:1-41

Recall conventions of ancient theater: only two active characters on stage at any time; so here are not just seven scenes, but eight scenes

- A) Jesus & his disciples: discuss relation of sin & blindness (9:1-5)
- B) Jesus & the blind man: bringing him to physical sight (9:6-7)

C1) Neighbors & ex-blind man: question his identity; process of healing (9:8-12)

D1) Ex-blind man & Pharisees: debate Jesus' origin: from God? sinful? (9:13-17)

C2) Parents & Jews: question the man's identity; process of healing (9:18-23)

D2) Ex-blind man & Jews: debate Jesus' origin: from God? sinful? (9:24-34)

B') Jesus & ex-blind man: bringing him to full spiritual insight (9:35-38)

A') Jesus & Pharisees: discuss relation of sin & blindness (9:39-41)

IV. Reflections on the Story of the Man Born Blind

Beginning and end are balanced; but middle is not quite chiasmic

A) & A') Blindness and sin; physical vs. spiritual levels

1) Begin: disciples ask about connection; Jesus disputes it (physically)

2) End: Pharisees ask about connection; Jesus affirms it (spiritually)

3) Begin: "I am the light of the world"

4) End: "I came into this world for judgment"

B) & B') Bringing the blind man to sight

1) Physical sight: spit, mud, wash, Siloam, means "Sent" (9:6-7)

(a) OT allusions: God gives sight to the blind

(b) Expectations of Messianic Age (Ps 146:8; Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:7)

(c) Siloam ("sent") as title for Jesus: "sent by God"; "comes from above"

2) Spiritual sight: "Do you believe in Son of Man?" "Lord, I believe" (9:35-38)

(a) Contrast: Pharisees remain (spiritually) blind

C1), D1), C2), D2): Series of dialogues/interrogations of the formerly blind man

3) Jesus "on stage" only at beginning and end (chiasmic balance)

4) In between, longest stretch in Fourth Gospel when Jesus is "off stage"

5) The ex-blind man is the center of attention in these scenes

6) Conflict with opponents, variously called "Jews" or "Pharisees"

7) Religious authorities oppose the ex-blind man; later also oppose Jesus

8) *Aposynagogos* = "put out of the synagogue" (9:22; cf. 12:42; and 16:2)

v. Dynamics of Believing in the Fourth Gospel**A) Vocabulary**

- 1) John always uses the verb “believe” (never the noun “faith”)
- 2) Refers to “trusting” in God, not just “assent to doctrines”

B) Several possible reactions to the revelation of Jesus

- 1) Non-believers, secret believers, beginning believers, full believers
- 2) Examples of each category within John’s Gospel

C) Effects of Believing

- 1) Become children of God; have eternal life; not be condemned; etc.
- 2) Many other synonymous expressions

D) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Themes-Believe.htm>**vi. Positive Example: Blind Man Grows in his Trusting/Believing**

Notice what he says about Jesus:

- A) “The *man called Jesus* made mud...” (9:11)
- B) “He is *a prophet*.” (9:17)
- C) “We know that God does not listen to *sinner*s, but he does listen to *one who worships him and obeys his will*. / Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. / *If this man were not from God*, he could do nothing.” (9:31-33)
- D) [Jesus asks him: “Do you believe in the *Son of Man*?”] “*Lord*, I believe.” And he *worshiped* him. (9:35-38)

vii. Negative Example: Authorities Harden in their Opposition

Notice what other people say to the formerly-blind man and/or about Jesus:

- A) Neighbors: “Isn’t this the man who used to sit and beg?” “How were your eyes opened?” “Where is he [Jesus]?” (9:8-12)
- B) Pharisees: “This man [Jesus] is *not from God*, for he *does not observe the sabbath*.”
- C) Others: “How can a *sinner* perform such signs?” They: “What do you say about him [Jesus]? It was your eyes he opened.” (9:13-17)

- D) [Narrator]: The authorities, *not believing* that he had been born blind, question his parents. The Jews had already decided that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. (9:18-23)
- E) Pharisees: “Swear to God! We know this man [Jesus] is a *sinner*.” (9:24) “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” (9:26) Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” (9:28-29) “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out. (9:34)
- F) Pharisees [to Jesus]: “Surely we are *not blind*, are we?” (9:40)
- G) Jesus: “If you were blind (physically), you would not have sin. But since you say, ‘We see,’ *your sin remains*.” (9:41)

VIII. Creative Resources for Prayer

A) Biblical Art

- 1) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art-9.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) “The Man Born Blind” – from *That You May Have Life*, by Marty Haugen
- 2) “God of All Mercy” – from *Who Calls You by Name*, by David Haas
- 3) “He Healed the Darkness of My Mind” – by David Haas
- 4) “I Am the Light of the World” – by Greg Hayakawa

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. What does Jesus' claim, "I am the light of the world," mean to you? Where in your life have you experienced darkness? In what way did Jesus' light show itself?
- b. In what ways are you "blind" (emotionally, intellectually, and/or spiritually)? How does Jesus reach out to you, to give you new sight? How are you responding?
- c. How do you react when someone else tells you that he or she has been "touched" or "healed" by Jesus? Do you believably trust them, or skeptically reject them? What factors influence the way you react?

2. Reflective Meditation (on John 8:12-59): Read this chapter quickly; then return to any section or particular verses that stood out for you. Reflect more deeply on any words or images that especially enlightened or inspired you, or those that challenged or disturbed you. Consider especially the dualistic contrasts of above/below, and Jesus' words about true Fathers and sons.

3. Reflective Meditation (on John 9:1-41): Read the entire story of "The Man Born Blind" without stopping. Then return to any section or particular verses that stood out for you. Reflect especially on the statements made by the formerly blind man about Jesus, and on the two dialogues at the end: between Jesus at the now-seeing man, and between Jesus and the still-blind Pharisees (9:35-41).

4. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 9:1-41): Imagine yourself, if possible, as the man born blind (or else as one of the other characters in this complex story: the disciples, parents, or Pharisees). See, hear, respond, and participate in this story as actively as possible. What does Jesus initially say to you, and how do you respond to him? How do you interact and converse with the other characters in this story? Do you grow to believe more in Jesus as the story goes on? When Jesus encounters you again near the end of the story, how do you respond? Have a dialogue with Jesus about your own blindness, how he has touched and healed you, or whatever else you wish to talk about with Jesus. How do you feel during and after participating in this story?

5. Centering Prayer: Using the verse "*I am the light of the world*" (9:5), focus simply on the phrase "*I am*" (or choose "*light of the world*" or simply "*light*"). Breathe slowly and regularly, allowing this short phrase to enter into your heart, so you can experience the enlightening presence of Jesus within you.

Conference 9: Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) John 10 contains “Good Shepherd” imagery, but also much more
- B) First half (10:1-21): continues the conflicts begun in John 9
- C) Second half (10:22-42): Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem

II. Structural Outline of John 10

- A) Jesus, the Sheepgate and the Good Shepherd (10:1-21)
 - 1) *Paroimia* / Symbolic Image
 - (a) Jesus use shepherd images to contrast himself with others (10:1-5)
 - (b) Continues themes of 9:39-41; Jesus/Pharisees; shepherd/thieves; follow/flee
 - (c) Narrator reports the listeners’ incomprehension (10:6)
 - 2) Explanations and Reactions
 - (a) Jesus as the Sheepgate (10:7-10): two “I AM” sayings
 - (b) Jesus as Good Shepherd (10:11-18): two more “I AM” sayings
 - (c) Listeners’ divided reactions (10:19-21)
- B) Feast of Dedication: Jesus’ dialogue with authorities in Jerusalem Temple (10:22-39)
 - 1) Geographical Transition and Narrator’s Summary (10:40-42)

III. Reflections on the Good Shepherd and Related Images (John 10:1-21)

- A) Fourth Gospel has *no parables*; only two slightly similar images (sheep & vine)
 - 1) John 10:6 says *paroimia*, not *parabole*; contrast with Synoptics
 - 2) Matt & Luke: Jesus uses “Parable of Good Shepherd” to speak of God
 - 3) John 10: Jesus uses shepherd imagery, first more generally (gate & shepherd); later more directly speaking of himself and his relation with the Father
 - 4) Are we familiar enough with “shepherd” imagery? Or too familiar?
- B) Ancient Jewish Culture & Hebrew Bible
 - 1) Sheep: *needed* for food/wool; but considered simple, stupid
 - 2) Shepherds: *despised*/dirty, hard/dangerous work; occupation for children or the poor

- 3) David as a boy (literally; 1 Sam 16) and as King (2 Sam 5:2; 7:8)
 - 4) Wicked kings as bad shepherds vs. God/Messiah as good shepherd of Israel (see Jer 23:1-6; Ezek 34:1-16, 23-24; Isa 40:10-11; Zech 11:4-17)
 - C) Several “Amen, Amen” and “I am” statements in John 10
 - 1) First “Amen, Amen”: **contrasts** thief & robber vs. shepherd & gatekeeper
Sheep hear *shepherd’s* voice; don’t follow voice of *strangers*
 - 2) Second “Amen, Amen” is also “I AM”; then three more “I AM” sayings
 - (a) I AM the gate of the sheep (twice)
 - (b) I AM the good shepherd (twice)
 - D) Foreshadowing of later events
 - 1) Shepherd lays down life for the sheep: refers to Jesus’ death
 - 2) Shepherd calls sheep by name and sheep recognize shepherd’s voice:
risen Jesus calls Mary Magdalene by name, and she recognizes him
 - E) End of section: evangelist describes listeners’ divided reactions
 - 1) Division among Jews: “Jesus has a demon!” vs. “He can’t be a demon!”
 - 2) Questions still relevant: Do we accept or reject? Are we among Jesus’ “flock?”
- iv. Reflections on Jesus in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-42)**
- A) Extended Intro: setting at feast in Jerusalem, winter, temple, Solomon’s portico
 - 1) Commemorates the “Rededication” of the Jerusalem Temple in 164 BC
 - 2) Feast still celebrated by Jews today: “Hanukkah” in December
 - B) More conflicts with religious authorities
 - 1) Jews: “If you are the Christ, tell us plainly” (but Jesus never does)
 - 2) Jesus: “You don’t believe; you don’t belong to my sheep”
 - 3) Jesus: “The Father and I are one”
 - 4) Jews try to stone him (blasphemy); Jesus asks, “Why?”
 - 5) More on Jesus’ relation to the Father: “I and the Father are ONE”
 - 6) Conclusion: They try to arrest Jesus, but he (again) escapes
 - C) Geographical Transition: Jesus goes across Jordan (10:40-42)

v. Creative Resources for Prayer**A) Biblical Art**

- 1) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) “Jesus, Shepherd of Our Souls” – by Fred Kaan and Alexander Peloquin
- 2) “The Good Shepherd” – by Bob Hurd
- 3) “The Good Shepherd” – by Christopher Walker and Paule Freeburg
- 4) “Jesus, Shepherd” – by Jack Miffleton

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. What do you think of when you hear Jesus say, “I am the gate for the sheep”? What does Jesus keep in, or keep out? In what ways does he allow passage between inside and outside?
- b. What do you imagine when you think of a shepherd’s life and work? How does this affect how you hear Jesus say, “I am the good shepherd”? In what ways does Jesus “shepherd” you in your own life?

2. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 10:1-18): Imagine yourself within the shepherding scenes that Jesus describes. Are you one of the sheep, or a hired hand, or another shepherd (or maybe even a wolf or a thief)? How do you interact with Jesus? How does he call you, care for you, protect you, nourish you, and even die for you? How do you respond?

3. Reflective Meditation (on John 10:19-42): Read the rest of this chapter without stopping. Then return to any section or particular verses that stood out for you. Reflect especially on the growing conflicts between Jesus and those who do not believe in him, but think that he is blaspheming God by the way he is speaking of his intimate relationship with the Father.

4. Centering Prayer: Focus simply on the phrase “*I am the good shepherd*” (or just “*good shepherd*” or “*shepherd*”). Breathe slowly and deeply, allowing this image to enter into your heart, so you can rest in the embrace of Jesus who cares for you.

Conference 10: Jesus, the Giver of Life (John 11—12)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) Raising of Lazarus is often considered the last and greatest “sign”
- B) Influential story used on 5th Sunday of Lent; last RCIA Scrutiny Gospel
- C) Theme of death/life; but focus is more on Martha’s & Mary’s dialogues with Jesus
- D) Many connections with “Good Shepherd” imagery from John 10

II. Structural Outline of John 11:1-54

- A) 1-6: Intro: Jesus receives a message from Martha and Mary about Lazarus’ illness
 - B) 7-16: Jesus and his disciples talk about Lazarus’ death
 - C) 17-27: Jesus and Martha dialogue about life, death, and resurrection
 - C’) 28-37: Jesus and Mary and some Jews express their sorrow and love
 - B’) 38-44: Jesus glorifies God by raising Lazarus from the dead
- A’) 45-54: Conclusion: various reactions of the Jews

(Note: 11:55-57 serve as the transition/introduction to chap. 12)

III. Reflections on the Story of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (John 11)

- A) Chiastic Structure
 - 1) Balanced first and second halves; connections A & A’; B & B’; C & C’
 - 2) Two central dialogues: parallels between Martha & Mary
- B) Intro: family of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary in Bethany (near Jerusalem)
 - 1) Love: close friends; Jesus probably stayed with them on visits to Jerusalem
 - 2) Martha and Mary also appear in Luke 10; Lazarus in a parable in Luke 16
 - 3) Connection of illness and love; illness will result in “glory” (cf. John 9)
- C) Jesus and his disciples go again to Jerusalem (place of hostility)
 - 1) Jesus: “Lazarus is *asleep*”; disciples misunderstand (R.I.P. = dead!)

D) MARTHA

- 1) First slightly chastises Jesus for not coming sooner!
- 2) Dialogue about resurrection; Jesus says: “I AM the resurrection”
- 3) Jesus asks: “Do you believe?” Martha’s confession is strongest of all!

E) MARY

- 1) Only speaks one verse: same complaint as her sister Martha’s
- 2) Everyone weeps; sign of *love*
- 3) Connection with John 9: “Couldn’t one who gave sight to the blind man also prevent this man (Lazarus) from dying?”

F) Raising of Lazarus

- 1) Jesus’ first command: “Remove the stone”
- 2) Martha objects! (didn’t she believe?)
- 3) Jesus’ Prayer (11:41b-42)
- 4) Jesus’ second command: “Lazarus, come out!”
- 5) Lazarus comes out
- 6) Jesus’ third command: “Unbind him, and let him go”

G) Conclusion: Reactions

- 1) Division among the people: many believe; some tell the Pharisees
- 2) Chief Priests and Pharisees in Council: “What shall we do?”
- 3) Caiaphas’ Ironic Prophecy!
- 4) So, in John, the raising of Lazarus functions as reason for Jesus’ death
- 5) Reactions at end of John 11 continue in John 12: climax of “Book of Signs”
- 6) But is this really the “Last Sign”? Isn’t Jesus’ crucifixion also a “sign”?

iv. Material for Extra Prayer: Conclusion of the “Book of Signs” (John 12)

- A) Expectations before the Passover (11:55-57)
- B) Anointing at Bethany (12:1-11)
- C) Jesus’ Entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19)
- D) Jesus’ Hour Has Come (12:20-26)

- E) Jesus Speaks of His Impending Death (12:27-36a)
- F) Jesus' Last Public Words (12:44-50)
- G) Narrator's Summary and Conclusion (12:36b-43; reversal of sections F & G?)

v. Reflections on the Material of John 12

- A) Chief priests and Pharisees want to arrest Jesus (11:57; cf. Caiaphas in 11:53)
- B) They even plan to kill Lazarus (12:10-11)
- C) Jesus is proclaimed "King of Israel" but talks of himself as "Son of Man"
- D) Continued disputes about Jesus' identity; continued division among people
- E) Themes of believing and receiving eternal life
- F) Narrator's conclusion (12:36b-43) and Jesus' last public words (12:44-50): both are good recapitulations of the whole "Book of Signs" (John 1—12)

VI. Creative Resources for Prayer

A) Biblical Art

- 1) Raising of Lazarus: <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/Dore-John.htm>
- 2) More at <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art-11.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) "Mary, Martha & Lazarus" – from *That You May Have Life*, by Marty Haugen
- 2) "God of the Living" – from *Who Calls You by Name*, by David Haas
- 3) "I Am the Bread of Life" – by Suzanne Toolan
- 4) "I Am the Resurrection" – by Jim Anderson
- 5) "Roll Away the Stone" – by Tom Conry
- 6) "Jerusalem, My Destiny" – by Rory Cooney

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. How would you answer the question that Jesus asks Martha: “I am the resurrection... Do you believe this?” (11:25-26)
- b. What thoughts, feelings and imaginings do you have about death? How have you responded to the death of a loved one? How does hope and trust in the resurrection affect your own experience of loss and grief?

2. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 11:1-44): Imagine yourself as one of the main characters: Martha, Mary, or Lazarus (or even all three, in succession). What do you say to Jesus when you first encounter him? How does Jesus respond to you? What does he say and do for you? How do his words and actions make you feel? After participating actively in this story, how do you respond to Jesus action in your life?

3. Reflective Meditation (on John 11:45-57 and 12:1-50): Read through the rest of chapter 11 and all of chapter 12, without stopping. Then return to any sections or particular verses that stood out for you. Reflect especially on the divisions among the people, some accepting and believing in Jesus, and others rejecting and opposing Jesus.

4. Centering Prayer: Start with the verse, “*I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live*” (11:25). Progressively simplify this so that you focus only on the word “*life*” (or the verb “*live*”). Breathe slowly and regularly. Let this one word enter deeply into your heart, so you can appreciate the gift of God’s life within you.

5. Centering Prayer: Start with Martha’s statement, “*Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world*” (11:27). Choose just one of the titles of Jesus in this verse. Breathing slowly and deeply, let this word enter into your heart, so you can experience the presence of Jesus within you.

Conference 11: Jesus, Teacher and Lord (John 13—14)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) Begins “Book of Glory” (Last Supper, Passion, Death & Resurrection)
- B) Last Supper in John very different from Synoptics; more similarities in Passion
- C) Many scholars think the Last Supper Discourses were not written all at once; John 13—14 is older, while John 15—17 was added later in the first century

II. Outline of John 13—17 (Johannine Last Supper)

- A) Washing of the Feet (13:1-30)
- B) Last Supper Discourse, Part I (13:31—14:31)
- C) Last Supper Discourse, Part II (15:1—16:33)
- D) Prayer of Jesus (17:1-26)

III. Overall Chiastic Structure of John 13—17

- O) 13:1-30 – Washing of the Feet: example of love and service
 - A) 13:31-38 – Discourse Intro: new love commandment; Peter’s denials foretold
 - B) 14:1-7 – Don’t let your hearts be troubled; I AM the Way, Truth, and Life
 - C) 14:8-14 – Seeing and believing in Jesus and in the Father; mutual indwelling
 - D) 14:15-24 – Paraclete, Spirit of Truth; keeping the commandments of Jesus
 - E) 14:25-31 – Paraclete, whom the Father will send in my name; I love the Father
 - F) 15:1-10 – Vine and branches; remain in me, as I remain in you
 - G) 15:11 – Purpose/Goal: my JOY in you, and your JOY complete
 - F’) 15:12-17 – My commandment: Love one another as I have loved you
 - E’) 15:18-27 – World hates you; the Paraclete, whom I will send from the Father
 - D’) 16:1-11 – Opposition from the world; Paraclete won’t come unless I go
 - C’) 16:12-15 – Speaking and hearing the truth; the glory of the Father
 - B’) 16:16-24 – You’ll no longer see me; you’ll have pain; later you’ll have joy
 - A’) 16:25-33 – Conclusion: Jesus talks of the Father’s love and disciples’ scattering
 - O’) 17:1-26 – Great Prayer of Jesus: Summary of Johannine Jesus’ themes

iv. The Last Supper in the Four Gospels

A) Synoptics: Last Supper is very brief

- 1) Passover Meal, carefully prepared (although no mention of Lamb)
- 2) Mark/Matt: only Judas' betrayal foretold & Eucharistic words of Jesus; Peter's denial foretold just after supper, on their way to Gethsemane
- 3) Luke: more dialogue; disciples argue about greatness; Peter's denial at supper
- 4) See <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Jesus-Death.htm>

B) John: Last Supper is much longer, more carefully developed

- 1) *Not* the Passover Meal, but one night *before* the Passover
- 2) No mention of Eucharist (cf. John 6), but clearly Jesus' last meal on earth
- 3) First Focus: Washing of Feet; functions Eucharistically ("Do this!")
- 4) Rest of John 13: betrayal by Judas; words of Jesus; denial of Peter
- 5) Then much longer discourses (ch. 14—16) & Jesus great prayer (ch. 17)

C) Culmination of many Johannine Themes in the "Book of Glory"

- 1) Jesus' hour, glory, opposition of world, living in God, having joy
- 2) Focus of Public Ministry: light & life; coming to believe by seeing signs
- 3) Focus now on disciples: love one another, maintain unity, remain in Jesus

v. Reflections on the Last Supper (John 13:1-30)

A) Chiastic Structure: <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Outline-John13.html>

- 1) Compare A & A'; B & B'; C & C'; D & D'; E & E
- 2) Center (section F) is John 13:15 – "Do as I have done to you"

B) Washing of the Feet (in place of the Synoptic Eucharist)

- 1) Common practice before meals; but two elements are shocking here
 - (a) People usually washed their *own* feet (or children or slaves did it); but here *Jesus* washes his disciples' feet!
 - (b) People usually washed their feet *before* the meal; but here Jesus does it *during* the meal!
- 2) Peter objects; Jesus challenges; Peter overreacts; Jesus explains further
- 3) After washing everyone's feet, Jesus questions, explains, and challenges

C) Jesus then foretells his betrayal by Judas

- 1) Washing of feet and betrayal by Judas may seem like separate episodes, but are tied together here into a chiasmic whole!
- 2) Judas' betrayal already mentioned earlier (13:2, 11; par. 13:21, 26-27)

VI. Reflections on the Last Supper Discourse: Part I (John 13:31—14:31)

A) Mostly monologue, but some dialogue between disciples and Jesus

B) Solemn beginning: Jesus is going away... (13:31)

C) New Commandment: "Love One Another as I have loved you" (13:34)

- 1) Repeated in John 15:12, 17; also seven times in 1 John; four times in Paul!
- 2) Contrast Synoptics: love God, love neighbor, love self; love enemies
- 3) What's "new" about this love commandment? follow Jesus' example

D) Peter asks, "Lord, where are you going?" (13:36): then Peter's denials foretold

E) Other questions asked or statements made by other disciples

- 1) Thomas: "How can we know the way?" (14:5)
- 2) Philip: "Show us the Father..." (14:8)
- 3) Judas, not Iscariot: "How will you reveal yourself?" (14:22)

F) Introduction of *Paraclete* (14:16-17, 26; more in our next conference)

G) Initial Conclusion: "I do as the Father commanded me... Rise, let us go" (14:31)

- 1) Go where? Continued dialogue & monologues of John 15—17!

VII. Creative Resources for Prayer

A) Biblical Art

- 1) The Last Supper: <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/Dore-John.htm>
- 2) Washing of the Feet – by John August Swanson
- 3) More at <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art-13.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) "The Last Supper" – from *That You May Have Life*, by Marty Haugen
- 2) "All Those Who Love Me" – by Gregory Norbert & Mary David Callahan
- 3) "By the Love" – by Gregory Norbert & Mary David Callahan

- 4) “Serving You” – by Michael Guimont
- 5) “The Lord Jesus” – by Gregory Norbert
- 6) “Unless a Grain of Wheat” – by Bernadette Farrell

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. What does the Footwashing mean to you? What emotions does it evoke in you? How have you sometimes been able to “wash the feet” of someone else (literally or metaphorically)? When and how have you also allowed others to wash your feet, not just on Holy Thursday, but in other ordinary contexts and times?
- b. How do you put into practice Jesus’ commandment that we “love one another”? What do you find most appealing and most difficult about this commandment? Would others really know that you are a disciple of Jesus by observing how you actually treat other Christians? How can you “love one another” more concretely?

2. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 13:1-20): Imagine yourself as one of Jesus’ disciples with him at the Last Supper. See him begin to wash some of the other disciples’ feet. How do they react when he does? How do you react when you see this happening? Now see Jesus approach you, to wash your feet. Do you allow him to, or do you object, much like Simon Peter did (13:6-11)? What does Jesus say to you at this point, and do you respond to him? After Jesus finishes washing everyone’s feet and resumes speaking to all the disciples (13:12-20), what does he say? How do you respond to his commands that we follow his example in serving others? How do you feel after participating actively in this scene?

3. Reflective Meditation (on John 13:21-38 and 14:1-31): Read through the rest of chapter 13 and all of chapter 14, without stopping. Then return to any sections or particular verses that stood out for you. Reflect more deeply on any words or images that especially enlightened or inspired you, or those that challenged or disturbed you. Consider especially on the statements made and questions asked by various disciples (13:36-38; 14:5, 8, 22), and the questions Jesus asks them (esp. 13:38; 14:2, 9-10). How would you respond to those questions, if Jesus asked you directly today?

4. Centering Prayer: Start with Jesus’ command, “*Love one another as I have loved you*” (13:34). Progressively simplify this so that you focus only on the verb “*love*.” Breathe slowly and regularly. Let this single word enter deeply into your heart, so you can appreciate the gift of God’s life within you.

Conference 12: Jesus, the Father, and the Paraclete (John 15—17)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) Continued teachings of Jesus to his disciples at the Last Supper
- B) Focus here on vine/branches image in John 15, on Spirit/Paraclete in John 14—16, and on Jesus' concluding prayer in John 17.

II. Reflections on the Last Supper Discourse: Part II (John 15—16)

- A) Second half of discourse, added decades after John 13—14 was composed
- B) New image: Vine and branches
 - 1) Last of sixteen "I AM" statements in John
 - 2) OT parallels: Israel as God's Vine (Ps 80:8-16; Isa 5:1-7; 27:2-6; etc.)
 - 3) Image particularly useful for theme of abiding/mutual indwelling
 - 4) Greek verb "*menein*" = "live, dwell, abide, remain"
- C) Joy: center of entire discourse (see chiastic outline in Conference 11, above)
- D) Love: theme developed further (15:12-17 repeats "Love one another")
- E) World: not just physical creation, but people opposed to Jesus and his disciples
 - 1) Jesus' intention is to *love* and *save* the "world" (cf. John 3:16)
 - 2) Yet the "world" mostly reacts to Jesus and his disciples with hatred!

III. Holy Spirit in the Fourth Gospel

- A) Hebrew *ruah*; Greek *pneuma* = various kinds of moving air (wind, breath, spirit)
- B) Holy Spirit mentioned even more often in Luke, but also prominent in John
- C) "Spirit of Truth": special phrase only in John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13 (cf. 4:23-24)
- D) Paraclete: refers to an assistant, someone "called to your side" to help you
- E) Is the Paraclete sent by God or by Jesus? (cf. John 14:16, 26 and John 15:26; 16:7)
- F) Roles of Paraclete: companion, teacher, legal witness, judge, revealer
- G) Relation of Paraclete with Jesus and Father is complex (early Trinitarian theology)
- H) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Themes-Spirit.htm>

iv. Structural Outline of John 17

- A) 1-3: Jesus' hour of glory has come; he gives eternal life and knowledge to believers
- B) 4-8: Jesus' work of glorifying and revealing the Father is complete
- C) 9-12: Jesus prays that God protect the believers who are in the world
- D) 13: Jesus' return to the Father makes the JOY of the believers complete
- C') 14-19: Jesus prays that God sanctify the believers who are not of the world
- B') 20-23: Jesus' unity with the Father completes the unity of all believers
- A') 24-26: Jesus' glory reveals the Father; believers have knowledge and love of God

v. Reflections on the Great Prayer of Jesus (John 17)

- A) Similar themes as Last Supper Discourse, now addressed as prayer to Father
 - 1) Much longer/more developed than "Our Father" in Matt 6 & Luke 11
 - 2) Themes emphasized: Jesus' glory, sanctifying, hostility of the world
 - 3) Chiastic climax in the middle: the believers' joy is made complete
- B) Jesus' prayers to the Father earlier in John
 - 1) 11:41b-42 – "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me."
 - 2) 12:27-28 "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. /Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."
 - 3) Jesus does not explicitly pray in John 18, but says, "Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" (contrast the Synoptics)
 - 4) Jesus addresses the "Father" five times in John 17, also using the expressions "Holy Father" (17:11) and "Righteous Father" (17:25)
- C) Reflect on the Prayer of Jesus in John 17 chiastically
 - 1) Compare A & A' (verses 1-3 and 24-26)
 - 2) Compare B & B' (verses 4-8 and 20-23)
 - 3) Compare C & C' (verses 9-12 and 14-19)
 - 4) Center is D (verse 13)

VI. Creative Resources for Prayer

A) Biblical Art

- 1) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) “I Am the Vine” – by Bob Hurd
- 2) “No Greater Love” – by Tim Schoenbachler
- 3) “The Lord Jesus” – by Gregory Norbert
- 4) “We Have Been Told” – by David Haas
- 5) “Father, May They All Be One” – by John Foley

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. What does the Johannine theme of “mutual indwelling” mean to you? In what ways do you “abide/dwell/remain” in God/Jesus, and in what ways does God/Jesus “abide/dwell/remain” within you?
- b. How do you experience the Holy Spirit in your own life? What is your relationship with the Spirit? What kind of assistance does the Holy Spirit give you? What kind of help do you want or need from the Paraclete?
- c. What examples of unity among Christians do you see in our world today? How do you experience unity or efforts at unity among Christians in your own neighborhood?

2. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 15:1-17): Imagine yourself once again as one of the disciples with Jesus at the Last Supper, near the end of the meal, listening to his discourses. Can you maybe even creatively imagine yourself as one of the branches attached to the vine? How does listening to Jesus’ words to you and all the disciples make you feel? How do you respond to his challenging teachings that we love one another and that we remain in him? What else do you wish to ask or say to Jesus, and how does he respond to you personally?

3. Reflective Meditation (on John 15—16): Read through all of chapters 15 and 16, without stopping. Then return to any section or particular verses that stood out for you. Reflect more carefully on any words or images that especially enlightened or inspired you, or those that challenged or disturbed you. In particular, meditate on the statements Jesus makes about the Holy Spirit (a.k.a. Paraclete and Spirit of Truth; 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 13).

4. Reflective Meditation (on John 17): Read the entire prayer of Jesus in John 17 without stopping. Then reflect more deeply on any verses or words that struck you as particularly inspiring or challenging, enlightening or difficult. Could you possibly pray to God the Father in the same or similar words?

5. Creative Exercise: Try writing your own extended prayer to the Father, modeled after the great prayer of Jesus in John 17. How would you pray to God, if you knew that it was the last night of your own life here on earth?

6. Centering Prayer: Focus simply on Jesus’ invitation to “*Abide in me as I abide in you*” (15:4; equivalent translations: “*remain*” or “*dwell*” or “*live*”). Breathe slowly and deeply, allowing these words to enter into your heart, so you can dwell in Jesus and allow Jesus to dwell within you.

Conference 13: Jesus, Exalted and Glorified (John 18—19)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) People often pray with Jesus' Passion and Resurrection near the end of a retreat
- B) Four Passion Narratives are similar in overall historical sequence, yet each has unique or missing episodes and significantly different details
- C) John 18—19 is usually called the "Passion" narrative, but is more about the "completion" of Jesus' work on earth and his "glorification" by the Father
- D) John 18—19 is read each year during the special liturgy of Good Friday

II. The Passion Narratives of the Four Gospels

- A) Overall differences between John and the Synoptics
 - 1) Last Supper (with extended discourses) is much longer in John, but rest of Passion Narrative is somewhat shorter and simpler
 - 2) Mark and Matthew are closer; Luke and John are close in some respects
 - 3) Day and time of crucifixion: just *before* the Passover in John, one day *earlier* than in the Synoptics; Jesus dies when the Passover lambs are sacrificed
- B) Familiar Episodes NOT in John's Passion Narrative
 - 1) No "agonizing prayer" of Jesus in the garden (Jesus had prayed earlier)
 - 2) No Judas kiss (Jesus freely identifies himself)
 - 3) No account of the trial before Caiaphas (just an interrogation by Annas)
 - 4) No death of Judas (only in Matt)
 - 5) No trial before Herod Antipas (only in Luke)
 - 6) No mention of Pilate washing his hands (only in Matt)
 - 7) No release of Barabbas (only a brief mention of Barabbas)
 - 8) No Simon of Cyrene (Jesus carries his own cross)
 - 9) No stops on way to Golgotha to speak with women (only in Luke)
 - 10) No offer of drugged wine just before the crucifixion (as in Mark & Matt)
 - 11) No insulting of Jesus while he's on the cross (as in all Synoptics)

- 12) No story of the repentant thief (only in Luke)
- 13) No darkness over the land from the 6th to 9th hour (as in all Synoptics)
- 14) No mention of the temple curtain torn when Jesus dies (all Synoptics)
- 15) No mention of earthquakes or tombs being opened (only in Matt)
- 16) No reactions from the centurion (all Synoptics)
- 17) No mention of bystanders beating their breasts (only in Luke)
- 18) No guards placed at the tomb (only in Matt)

C) Familiar Episodes narrated very differently in John

- 1) Anointing at Bethany: much earlier, by Mary of Bethany (John 12; cf. Luke 7)
- 2) Last Supper: washing of feet, extended discourses (John 13—16)
- 3) Extended Prayer of Jesus (John 17)
- 4) Arrest: extended dialogue, Jesus identifies himself
- 5) Peter's Denials: another disciple secures Peter's entry into the courtyard
- 6) Interrogation by High Priests: more focus on Annas & Caiaphas; different themes in their questioning of Jesus
- 7) Trial before Pilate: much longer, more complex, detailed
- 8) Scourging and mocking by soldiers: brief, in middle of trial, not at end
- 9) Inscription on top of cross: longest in John; explained in three languages
- 10) People at foot of cross: Jesus' mother, Mary Magdalene, Beloved Disciple
- 11) Last Words of Jesus on cross
 - (a) Mark/Matt: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me..."
 - (b) Luke: "Father forgive them"; "You will be with me in paradise" (to repentant thief); "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"
 - (c) John: "Behold your son/ your mother"; "I thirst"; "It is finished"
- 12) After Jesus' death: his side is pierced, but legs not broken
- 13) Burial: Joseph of Arimathea is joined by Nicodemus; spices prepared

D) Overall Emphases of Johannine Passion Narrative

- 1) Jesus' death is not a tragedy, but his glorification
- 2) Less mistreatment, mocking, scourging, suffering (by soldiers & others)
- 3) Jesus is "in charge" throughout the events (vs. events happening to him)
- 4) Periodic mention of "fulfillment" of OT texts (more than in Synoptics)
- 5) Jesus is declared innocent of any capital charges by Pilate (similar in Luke)
- 6) Jesus is the sacrificial "Lamb of God" (timing of his death)
- 7) Jesus willingly "completes/finishes" the Father's will/work
- 8) So, it's not really a "Passion" (recall John 13—20 called "Book of Glory")
- 9) See <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Passion.htm>

III. Structural Outline of John 18—19: Three Main Acts

- A) The Arrest and Interrogation of Jesus (18:1-27)
- B) Jesus' Trial before Pilate: seven scenes (18:28—19:16a)
- C) Jesus' Crucifixion, Death, and Burial (19:16b-42)

IV. Reflections on the Arrest and Interrogation of Jesus (John 18:1-27)

- A) Jesus' Arrest in the Garden "across the Kidron Valley" (18:1-11)
 - 1) The "Hour" of Jesus' "Glorification" begins
 - 2) Same location called "Gethsemane" near "Mount of Olives" in Synoptics
 - 3) No "agonizing prayer" of Jesus in John; contrast John 18:11 ("Am I not to drink...?") with Synoptics ("Father, let this cup pass me by...")
 - 4) No Judas Kiss; instead Jesus identifies himself to the soldiers
 - (a) "Whom do you seek?" ; "Jesus of Nazareth"; "I AM"; they fall back
 - (b) "I AM" repeated; Jesus remains in control, freely gives himself up
 - (c) Jesus then protects his disciples; demands that they be let go
 - 5) Peter cuts off ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave; Jesus responds: "Put your sword away; Am I not to drink..."

B) Jesus' Interrogation before Religious Authorities (18:12-14, 19-24)

- 1) Focus on High Priests Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas
- 2) Annas questions Jesus "about his disciples & his teaching"
- 3) Annas sends Jesus to Caiaphas (18:24); no questions by Caiaphas in John
- 4) Interwoven with the story of Peter's denials (18:15-18, 25-27)

v. **Reflections on the Trial of Jesus (John 18:28-40; 19:1-16a)**

A) Much longer than Synoptics; seven scenes alternating outside/inside the praetorium

- 1) Carefully constructed courtroom drama (themes of testimony/judgment)
- 2) Political trial before Roman Pilate: themes of kingship and truth!
- 3) One might assume that Pilate is in charge; but Jesus really is!
- 4) Pilate asks most questions; but Jesus' responses drive the action
- 5) At end, Pilate "seated him (Jesus)" on the judge's bench!

B) Recall Rule of Ancient Theater: only two characters active in any one scene

- 1) Outside: Pilate & Jews (18:28-32)
- 2) Inside: Pilate & Jesus (18:33-38a)
- 3) Outside: Pilate & Jews (18:38b-40)
- 4) Inside: Soldiers & Jesus (19:1-3)
- 5) Outside: Pilate & Chief priests (19:4-7)
- 6) Inside: Pilate & Jesus (19:8-12)
- 7) Outside: Pilate & Jews (19:13-16a)

vi. **Reflections on the Crucifixion, Death, and Burial of Jesus (John 19:16b-42)**

A) Introduction (19:16b-18)

- 1) Only very brief mention of the actual crucifixion of Jesus

B) Five close-ups on particular scenes (19:19-34)

- 1) **Inscription** with the political charge in three languages: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (19:19-22)
- 2) **Soldiers** divide Jesus' garments and casts lots for his tunic: scripture is fulfilled (19:23-25a; cf. Ps 22:19)

- 3) ***Mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple***: “Behold, your mother. Behold, your son” (19:25b-27)
- 4) ***Jesus’ Thirst***; he drinks, thus “finishing” all his work and giving up his spirit (19:28-30; cf. Ps 22:16; 69:22)
- 5) ***Jesus’ Legs*** are not broken, but his side is pierced instead, thus fulfilling scripture (19:31-34; cf. Num 9:12; Ps 34:21; Zech 12:10)

C) Burial (19:38-42)

- 1) Joseph of Arimathea is joined by Nicodemus (cf. John 3:1-12; 7:50-52)
- 2) No hurry: choice of nearby tomb not just because it was already late
- 3) Bring huge amount of spices (implies a royal burial!)

VII. Creative Resources for Prayer

A) Biblical Art

- 1) The Passion of Jesus: <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/Dore-Passion.htm>
- 2) More at <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art-18.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) “The Passion” – from *That You May Have Life*, by Marty Haugen
- 2) “At the Cross Her Station Keeping” – by Jacopone da Todi

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. How have you, like Peter, sometimes “denied” knowing Jesus? How have you, like Judas, maybe also sometimes “betrayed” Jesus?
- b. At this point in your life, how do you view Jesus’ crucifixion overall: as a horrible tragedy, the unjust execution of an innocent man (as the Synoptics emphasize), or as Jesus’ willing fulfillment of God’s salvific plan (as John’s Gospel emphasizes)? Has your perspective on the crucifixion changed over time, perhaps as your own life experiences have changed?

2. Reflective Meditation (on John 18—19): Read through the entire Passion Narrative of John’s Gospel, without stopping. Then return to any section or particular verses that stood out for you. Reflect more carefully on any words or images that especially enlightened or inspired you, or those that challenged or disturbed you. In particular, concentrate on any statements made or questions asked by Jesus himself.

3. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 18:1-11): Imagine yourself as one of the disciples (maybe in the role of Simon Peter?) with Jesus in the garden as he is arrested. When Judas and the soldiers arrive, what does Jesus say to them? What do they do and say in response? How do you react as you see and hear all of this? Where are you as Jesus is bound and lead away? After all this happens, have a conversation with Peter (or another disciple) about what you have just experienced.

4. Reflective Meditation (on John 18:28—19:16): Read the account of Jesus’ trial before Pilate, noting its seven distinct scenes. Mediate reflectively on the dialogues between Jesus and Pilate, especially on the questions asked by Pilate and the responses given by Jesus. Consider how you yourself would reply to Pilate’s questions.

5. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 19:16-37): Imagine yourself as the Beloved Disciple, with Jesus’ mother, at the foot of the cross (esp. 19:25-27). As you witness how your Lord is crucified, how do you react? As he speaks to his mother and to you, what do you want to say in response? What do you experience and how do you feel as you see Jesus die, his body pierced, and then taken down for burial? After all this happens, have a conversation with Mary about what you have experienced.

6. Centering Prayer: Start with the phrase, “*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*” (19:19), and simplify this to focus only on the name “*Jesus*.” Breathe slowly and regularly. Let his name enter deeply into your heart, so you can experience a deeper communion with Jesus.

Conference 14: Jesus, Risen Lord and God (John 20)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) Near the end of our retreat, let's reflect on the Resurrection of Jesus
- B) Christians believe in "Resurrection of the Body," not just "Immortality of the Soul"
- C) Three types of related stories: Empty Tomb; Appearances; Ascension
- D) Resurrection stories in all four Gospels, but many differences in the details
- E) See <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Resurrection.htm>

II. Structural Outline of John 20

- A) Empty Tomb Narrative (20:1-10)
- B) Risen Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene on Sunday Morning (20:11-18)
- C) Risen Jesus Appears to His Disciples that Sunday Evening (20:19-23)
- D) Risen Jesus Appears to His Disciples again a Week Later (20:24-29)
- E) First Conclusion of the Gospel (20:30-31)
- F) [Epilogue: More Appearance Narratives (21:1-25)]

III. The Empty Tomb Narratives of the Four Gospels

- A) Overall story similar (women go on Sunday morning), but different details
 - 1) Different number of women: only one (Mary Magdalene) in John
 - 2) Different description of messengers: two angels in John
 - 3) Different content of message: in John, "Why are you weeping?"
- B) Did Jesus' male disciples also go to the tomb?
 - 1) Luke 24:12 – Peter goes alone (mentioned in only one verse)
 - 2) John 20:3-10 – Simon Peter & the Beloved Disciple go (later insertion?)

IV. Reflections on the Johannine Empty Tomb Story (John 20:1-10)

- A) Women went to tomb after Sabbath (oldest tradition; cf. Syn)
 - 1) Temporal Setting: "Early on first day of week, while it was *still dark*..."
 - 2) Mary Magdalene comes (she's a representative character in John)

- 3) She runs back to tell Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciple
- 4) Later, she's still standing outside tomb, weeping (20:11)
- 5) Message from two angels: "Why are you weeping?"
- 6) Mary replies; story transitions into an appearance story [see below]

B) Peter & the Beloved Disciple (20:2-10; a later Johannine addition)

- 1) Rivalry and connections between Johannine and Petrine communities?
- 2) Footrace: Who gets to the tomb first? Who goes in first?
- 3) Peter sees linen wrapping and headcloth; Beloved Disciple sees *and believes*
- 4) They don't understand yet; return to their homes

v. Resurrection Appearance Narratives of the Four Gospels

- A) Each story is different: where, when, to whom Jesus appears; how he is described
- B) Mark 16: none [except later additions]
- C) Matt 28: Jesus appears briefly to women on way back from tomb; [insert report of guards]; then Jesus appears also to disciples *on a mountain in Galilee*
- D) Luke 24: Jesus appears to two disciples on way to *Emmaus*; then to the other disciples that night in *Jerusalem*; later the *Ascension* also takes place, from *Bethany* outside Jerusalem
- E) John 20: Jesus appears three times: to Mary Magdalene at the tomb; then to all disciples; then also to Thomas (all take place in or near *Jerusalem*)
- F) John 21: several more appearance stories!

vi. Reflections on the Appearances of the Risen Jesus (John 20:11-29)

- A) Sunday Morning: to Mary Magdalene (20:11-18)
- 1) Mary outside the tomb, weeping; sees two angels
 - 2) "Why are you weeping?"; "They have taken away my Lord..." (20:13)
 - 3) She turns, and sees Jesus (gardener?): "Why are you weeping?" (20:15)
 - 4) He calls her name: "Mary"; she hears his voice, turns, replies "Rabbouni!" (20:16)
 - 5) Jesus commissions her: "Go to my brothers and say..." (20:17)
 - 6) Mary announces: "I have seen the Lord" (20:18)

B) That Sunday Evening: to a group of disciples (20:19-24)

- 1) Setting: evening, doors locked, fear of the Jewish authorities
- 2) Jesus says: “Peace be with you!”; shows his hands and side
- 3) Disciples rejoice when they *see* him
- 4) Jesus repeats, “Peace”; then sends them; breathes Holy Spirit on them; authorizes them to forgive sins

C) Next Sunday Evening: to the disciples and Thomas (20:25-29)

- 1) Other disciples witness to Thomas
- 2) Thomas refuses to believe unless he sees for himself
- 3) Jesus appears again: “Peace be with you!”
- 4) Jesus then offers to meet Thomas’ demands; challenges him to believe
- 5) Thomas replies: “My Lord and my God”
- 6) Jesus contrasts believing based on seeing vs. believing without seeing (referring to 1st Cent. Johannine Christians *and* to all later believers)

VII. Reflections on the Gospel’s First Conclusion (John 20:30-31)

A) Limits of this Gospel: “Jesus did *many other signs* not written in this book.”

B) Purpose of this Gospel: “These are written SO THAT you may believe...”

C) Content of Believing: Content of Believing: “...believe *that* Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...”

D) Result of Believing: “...and through believing you may have *life in his name*”

VIII. Creative Resources for Prayer

A) Biblical Art

- 1) See <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art-20.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) “The Resurrection” – from *That You May Have Life*, by Marty Haugen
- 2) “Ye Sons and Daughters” – plainchant, by Jean Tisserand
- 3) “These Things Did Thomas Count as Real” – by Carol Doran
- 4) “We Walk By Faith” – by Marty Haugen

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. What does “Resurrection of the Body” mean to you? How easy or difficult is it for you to trust that your *body* will be raised from the dead?
- b. How are you sometimes like Thomas? What sort of “proof” do you desire/demand before you are willing to believe/trust in Jesus? Do you need to “see” or experience something, or is it enough for you to “hear” the testimony of others, in order for you to believe in the living and life-giving God?

2. Reflective Meditation (on John 20): Read all of chapter 20, the initial conclusion of John’s Gospel, without stopping. Which particular episodes or individual verses stood out for you? Reflect more deeply on any words or images that especially enlightened or inspired you, and those that challenged or disturbed you. In particular, concentrate on the dialogues between Jesus and the other characters (Mary Magdalene, the disciples, and Thomas).

3. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 20:1-18): Imagine yourself, if possible, as Mary Magdalene, going to the tomb that Sunday morning. What are you feeling as you approach the tomb in the dark? What do you see and hear, and how do you respond? Later, as you remain outside the tomb, you encounter someone you at first think is a gardener, but soon realize is Jesus himself. Begin with the dialogue between Jesus and Mary as recorded in John’s Gospel, but feel free to follow the conversation wherever God prayerfully leads you.

4. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 20:19-29): Imagine yourself as one of the disciples in Jerusalem that Sunday evening. How are you feeling about your Lord’s crucifixion and death? How do you react as the risen Jesus first appears? What does he say to all of you, and how do you respond? Next, try to imagine yourself as Thomas, not present with the other disciples that first evening. What do they say to you the next day, and how do you respond to them? Finally, imagine yourself as Thomas, the following week, when the risen Jesus again appears. What does he say to you? How do you respond? Have a dialogue with Jesus about whatever questions or topics you wish to ask him.

5. Reflective Meditation (on John 20:30-31): Meditate carefully on each phrase and each word of these two verses, which served as the original conclusion of John’s Gospel. What do they say about the purpose of this Gospel and the stories it contains? Focus especially on what this text says about the results or effects of believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

6. Centering Prayer: Focus on the words of Mary Magdalene, “*I have seen the Lord*” (20:18), or the words of Thomas, “*My Lord and my God*” (20:28). Breathe slowly and deeply, speaking these words from your own heart, so you put all your trust in Jesus, the risen Lord.

Conference 15: Jesus, Loving and Forgiving Lord (John 21)

I. Welcome and Introduction

- A) Johannine Epilogue; added some time after completion of rest of Gospel
- B) Don't worry about historical questions during this retreat; focus on the contents
- C) Additional stories of appearances of the risen Jesus, esp. to Simon Peter
- D) Main theme: unity (despite differences) between Petrine & Johannine churches

II. Structural Outline of John 21

- A) Risen Jesus Appears in Galilee, at the Sea of Tiberias (21:1-14)
- B) Risen Jesus Questions Peter about his Love and Mission (21:15-19)
- C) Risen Jesus Speaks with Peter about the Beloved Disciple (21:20-23)
- D) Second Conclusion to the Gospel (21:24-25)

III. Reflections on the Appearance of the Risen Jesus (John 21:1-14)

- A) Setting: Sea of Tiberias; listing of disciples (seven? or more?)
- B) Activity: fishing (caught nothing *at night*; *at dawn* they see Jesus on shore)
- C) Dialogues: between the Beloved Disciples, Simon Peter, and the Risen Jesus

IV. Reflections on the Dialogues of Peter and the Risen Jesus (John 21:15-23)

- A) Part One (21:15-19)
 - 1) Jesus asks; Peter replies; Jesus commissions (three times, with variations)
 - 2) Jesus continues instructing Peter: "Amen, Amen, I say to you..."
 - 3) Jesus concludes this scene: "Follow me" (not just literally, but in discipleship)
- B) Part Two (21:20-23)
 - 1) Narrator's Transition: Peter sees the Beloved Disciple
 - 2) Peter asks Jesus about the Beloved Disciple: "What about him?"
 - 3) Jesus' essentially replies: "Don't worry about him; you follow me!"
 - 4) Narrator corrects false idea that the Beloved Disciple would not die

v. Reflections on the Gospel's Second Conclusion (John 21:24-25)

- A) Focus on the importance of testimony, both oral and written
- B) Later author writes about the beloved disciple: "We know his testimony is true"
- C) Jesus did many other things; there are not enough books!

vi. Creative Resources for Prayer**A) Biblical Art**

- 1) Miraculous Catch of Fish: <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/Dore-John.htm>
- 2) More at <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Art-20.html>

B) Sacred/Liturgical Music

- 1) "The Resurrection" – from *That You May Have Life*, by Marty Haugen
- 2) "If You Belong to Me" (v. 2) – by Bob Hurd

vii. Conclusion and Thanks

- A) Questions for Continued Reflection on John's Gospel (see below)
- B) Thank you for allowing me to guide you on this retreat!

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

1. Personal Reflection

- a. Consider how Jesus' disciples are portrayed in John 21, and ask yourself: In what ways am I sometimes like Peter, and in what ways am I more like the Beloved Disciple?
- b. What else can you learn from John 21 about true discipleship? What does this Epilogue to John's Gospel teach you about what you, as a Christian, must do as an authentic follower of the risen Jesus?
- c. Re-read both the first ending (20:30-31) and the second ending (21:24-25) of John. How would you conclude your own Gospel, if you were writing an account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

2. Reflective Meditation (on John 21): Read through the whole Epilogue to John's Gospel, without stopping. Which actions or statements stood out most for you? Reflect more deeply on any words or images that especially enlightened or inspired you, or those that challenged or disturbed you. In particular, concentrate on the dialogues between Jesus and Simon Peter.

3. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 21:1-14): Imagine yourself as Simon Peter, at the Sea of Tiberias, fishing with your companions. As you notice someone on shore, what does he say to you? How do you react when the Beloved Disciple says, "It is the Lord!" (21:7)? How do you feel as you come to realize that this indeed is Jesus, your risen Lord? Have a conversation with the other disciples about what you have just experienced.

4. Imaginative Contemplation (on John 21:15-23): Imagine yourself once again as Simon Peter, now conversing with the risen Jesus after the breakfast. Hear Jesus ask you, "Do you love me?" How do you respond to him? When Jesus asks you the same thing a second and third time, how does it make you feel? What else does Jesus say to you on this occasion, and how do you respond to him? Dialogue with Jesus in whatever way you are prayerfully led.

5. Reflective Meditation (on John 21:20-25): Read the final dialogue between Jesus and Simon Peter, as well as the second conclusion by the narrator. What do these verses say about how we are to follow Jesus? Focus especially on what is said about the importance of giving testimony to what we believe.

6. Centering Prayer: Choose either the words of the Beloved Disciple, "*It is the Lord*" (21:7), or the words of Peter, "*Yes, Lord; you know that I love you*" (20:28), or the words of Jesus himself to Peter, "*Follow me*" (21:19, 22). Breathe slowly and regularly, allowing these words to enter deeply into your own heart, so you experience even closer relationship with the risen Lord.

QUESTIONS FOR CONTINUED REFLECTION ON JOHN'S GOSPEL

1. **Theology:** Who is God? How do I recognize God's revelation in the world? In my life?

2. **Christology:** Who is Jesus? What do I say about him? How do I encounter him?

3. **Pneumatology:** Who is the Holy Spirit for me? In what ways is the Holy Spirit active in my life? How will I call upon the assistance of the Paraclete to help me?

4. **Discipleship:** How will I grow in believing/trusting in God and in Jesus even more deeply? How can I be a more loving disciple? How does being a believer really affect my daily life and my relationships?

Recommended Readings and Resources

Introductions to Prayer

- William A. Barry, S.J. *God and You: Prayer as a Personal Relationship*. Paulist Press, 1987.
- Thomas H. Green, S.J. *Opening to God: A Guide to Prayer*. 2nd edition. Ave Maria Press, 2006.
- Timothy M. Gallagher, O.M.V. *Meditation and Contemplation: An Ignatian Guide to Prayer with Scripture*. Crossroad Publishing, 2008.
- Timothy M. Gallagher, O.M.V. *An Ignatian Introduction to Prayer: Scriptural Reflections According to the Spiritual Exercises*. Crossroad Publishing, 2008.
- Thomas Keating, O.C.S.O. *Intimacy with God: An Introduction to Centering Prayer*. 3rd edition. Crossroad Publishing, 2009.

Commentaries on the Gospel of John

- Brown, Raymond E. *The Gospel & Epistles of John: A Concise Commentary*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1988.
- Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*. Edited by Francis J. Moloney. ABRL. New York: Doubleday, 2003.
- Lewis, Scott M. *The Gospel according to John and the Johannine Letters*. New Collegeville Bible Commentary, 4. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005.
- Moloney, Francis J. *The Gospel of John*. Sacra Pagina 4. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998.
- Quast, Kevin. *Reading the Gospel of John: An Introduction*. New York: Paulist, 1991.
- For more literature, see <http://catholic-resources.org/John/Bibliog-Main.html>

Introductions to the Four Gospels

- Daniel Harrington, S.J. *How to Read the Gospels: Answers to Common Questions*. New City Press, 1996.
- Mark Allan Powell. *Fortress Introduction to the Gospels*. Fortress Press, 1998.
- Donald Senior, C.P., ed. *Invitation to the Gospels*. Paulist Press, 2002.

Introductions to the New Testament

- Raymond E. Brown, S.S. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Doubleday, 1997.
- Joseph F. Kelly. *An Introduction to the New Testament for Catholics*. Liturgical Press, 2006.
- Margaret Nutting Ralph. *A Walk through the New Testament: An Introduction for Catholics*. Paulist Press, 2009.

Biblical Texts

- *The Catholic Study Bible: NAB-RE*. 2nd edition. Donald Senior and John J. Collins, eds. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- *Little Rock Catholic Study Bible*. Catherine Upchurch, ed. Liturgical Press, 2011.
- *The Catholic Prayer Bible, Lectio Divina Edition (NRSV)*. Paulist Press, 2010.
- *The Catholic Comparative New Testament*. Oxford University Press, 2006.
- *Synopsis of the Four Gospels, Revised Standard Version*. American Bible Society, 2010.
- *The Four Gospels: Catholic Personal Study Edition*. Liturgical Press, 2009.

Audio Lectures from Now You Know Media

- Donald Senior, C.P. *The Gospel of John*. Now You Know Media, 2008.
- Felix Just, S.J. *The New Testament: A Guided Tour*. Now You Know Media, 2010.
- Felix Just, S.J. *The Lectionary: A Treasure for Liturgy and Prayer*. Now You Know Media, 2010.

Music, Videos, and Audiobooks related to John's Gospel

- *That You May Have Life: Musical Stories from the Gospel of John*. Composed by Marty Haugen. GIA, 2005.
- *Who Calls You By Name: Music for Christian Initiation*. Composed by David Haas. GIA, 1988.
- *St. John in Exile*. Performed by Dean Jones. Gateway Films, 1996.
- *The Gospel according to John*. Performed by Leonardo Defilippis. St. Luke Productions, 2009.
- *The Visual Bible: The Gospel of John*. Narrated by Christopher Plummer. Vision Video, 2003.
- *New American Bible; New Revised Standard Version; New Jerusalem Bible*. – Available in various MP3, podcast, or other formats.

Internet Resources

- <http://catholic-resources.org> – biblical and liturgical website of Fr. Felix Just, S.J., Ph.D.
- <http://www.biblical-art.com> – large searchable database of “Biblical Art on the WWW”
- <http://www.nowyouknowmedia.com> – other audio programs from Now You Know Media

Appendix A: Three Methods of Biblical Prayer

REFLECTIVE MEDITATION – Basic Steps

1. **Begin:** consider how God looks upon you and loves you; become aware of being in God's presence; stand for a moment, make a simple gesture of reverence or offering (sign of the cross, uplifted hands, profound bow, etc.), then be seated comfortably for your time of prayer.
2. **Preparatory Prayer:** offer to God all your will and actions, especially in this time of prayer; ask God for a specific grace that you need and desire right now (peace, consolation, hope, etc.).
3. **Meditate on the Biblical Text** that you have selected:
 - **Read** the biblical text slowly, recalling what it is about; then let it come alive for you!
 - **Reflect** on the truths that God wants to reveal to you in this text.
 - **Ponder** the meaning of each word, phrase, and sentence in the text.
 - **Focus** on two or three points (words, phrases, images, ideas) that stand out to you.
 - **Embrace** what God is saying to you; let your heart be moved with love and desire.
 - **Notice** what is going on *inside you* as you pray: feelings of joy or sorrow, peace or confusion, love or anger, or any other emotions or reactions.
 - If you get *distracted* or your mind wanders, gently *return to the biblical text* and your focal points.
4. **Colloquy:** enter into a short personal conversation with Jesus (or the Father, or the Holy Spirit); speak heart-to-heart, as if conversing with a close friend.
5. **Closing Prayer:** conclude by praying the Our Father, Hail Mary, or another favorite prayer; you might stand, kneel, bow, raise your hands, or adopt another posture to mark the end of your prayer.

Afterward, briefly *review* what you experienced during this time of prayer (maybe *journal* about what happened), and *look forward* to your next prayerful encounter with God: when? where? which biblical text will you use?

IMAGINATIVE CONTEMPLATION – Basic Steps

1. **Begin:** consider how God looks upon you and loves you; become aware of being in God's presence; stand for a moment, make a simple gesture of reverence or offering (sign of the cross, uplifted hands, profound bow, etc.), then be seated comfortably for your time of prayer.
2. **Preparatory Prayer:** offer to God all your will and actions, especially in this time of prayer; ask God for a specific grace that you need and desire right now (peace, consolation, hope, etc.).
3. **Contemplate the Biblical Story** that you have selected:
 - **Read** the text slowly and carefully; recall what it is about; then let it come alive for you!
 - **Place yourself within** the story, using your imagination; don't remain a spectator, but become one of the characters in the scene.
 - **Participate** in the dynamics of the scene, dialoguing and interacting with Jesus and other characters.
 - **Observe** what is going on around you in the scene: What do you see, hear, feel, smell, taste, touch?
 - **Dialogue** with the other characters: What do they say or ask you? What do you say or ask in reply?
 - **Notice** what is going on *inside you* as you pray: feelings of joy or sorrow, peace or confusion, love or anger, or any other emotions or reactions.
 - If you get **distracted** or your mind wanders, gently *return to the biblical text* and re-enter the scene.
4. **Colloquy:** enter into a short personal conversation with Jesus (or the Father, or the Holy Spirit); speak heart-to-heart, as if conversing with a close friend.
5. **Closing Prayer:** conclude by praying the Our Father, Hail Mary, or another favorite prayer; you might stand, kneel, bow, raise your hands, or adopt another posture to mark the end of your prayer.

Afterward, briefly *review* what you experienced during this time of prayer (maybe *journal* about what happened), and *look forward* to your next prayerful encounter with God: when? where? which biblical text will you use?

CENTERING PRAYER – Basic Steps

1. Choose an *appropriate time and place* when you can devote 20-30 minutes to quiet prayer without being disturbed.
 - Early morning, or late evening; at home, in church, in nature; turn off all phones and electronic devices.
2. Choose a *“sacred word”* as a symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within.
 - Use a single word or a very short phrase: God, Father, or Abba; Jesus, Lord, Messiah, Teacher, or Son of God; Spirit of Love, Holy Peace, etc.
 - Or, start with a short biblical phrase (such as Ps 46:10 – “Be still and know that I am God”), and progressively simplify it, so you can simply “Be still” and “Be” with God.
 - Stay with the *same* word or phrase for the entire period; don’t engage in thoughts or reflections on its meaning.
3. *Sit comfortably* (chair or floor cushion), with back straight and eyes closed; settle briefly and breathe deeply.
 - You might focus on your breath for a time (God’s Spirit within you!); breathe in, breathe out; slowly, regularly.
4. *Quietly introduce* the sacred word into your mind as a symbol of God’s presence and action within.
 - Use your word or phrase not like a “mantra” (constantly repeated), but as a touchstone to keep your attention focused on God.
 - If distracted by any thoughts (or feelings, images, reflections), gently return to your sacred word.
5. *At the end* of your prayer period, remain in silence for a few more minutes and/or slowly pray the Our Father or another Concluding Prayer.

Caution: This type of prayer is sometimes called “Meditation” or “Contemplation” in other spiritual traditions; yet it is very different from the “Reflective Meditation” and “Imaginative Contemplation” presented above, which is based on Ignatian spirituality. So, to avoid confusion, the designation “Centering Prayer” seems more helpful.

Question: Can “Centering Prayer” be considered “biblical”? Yes and no! It is not as explicitly biblical as the two other methods explained above; its goal is not to focus on a better understanding of the biblical text (through rational thinking or creative imagination). Yet for Christians it is minimally biblical, since the “sacred word” we use is most often a biblical word or phrase, and the goal is to encounter the God whom we also know from the sacred scriptures.

Appendix B: The Fourth Gospel in the *Lectionary for Mass*

Readings for Sundays and Major Feasts

Gospel Reading	Sunday or Feast Day
John 1:1-18 (or 1:1-5, 9-14)	Christmas: Mass during the Day
John 1:1-18 (or 1:1-5, 9-14)	Second Sunday after Christmas
John 1:6-8, 19-28	Third Sunday of Advent, Year B
John 1:29-34	2nd Sunday of Ord. Time, Year A
John 1:35-42	2nd Sunday of Ord. Time, Year B
John 2:1-11	2nd Sunday of Ord. Time, Year C
John 2:13-25	3rd Sunday of Lent, Year B
John 3:14-21	4th Sunday of Lent, Year B
John 3:16-18	Trinity Sunday, Year A
John 4:5-42 (or shorter)	3rd Sunday of Lent, Year A (opt. B/C)
John 6:1-15	17th Sunday of Ord. Time, Year B
John 6:24-35	18th Sunday of Ord. Time, Year B
John 6:41-51	19th Sunday of Ord. Time, Year B
John 6:51-58	Body and Blood of Christ, Year A
John 6:51-58	20th Sunday of Ord. Time, Year B
John 6:60-69	21st Sunday of Ord. Time, Year B
John 7:37-39	Pentecost Vigil, Years ABC
John 8:1-11	5th Sunday of Lent, Year C
John 9:1-41 (or shorter)	4th Sunday of Lent, Year A (opt. B/C)
John 10:1-10	4th Sunday of Easter, Year A
John 10:11-18	4th Sunday of Easter, Year B
John 10:27-30	4th Sunday of Easter, Year C
John 11:1-45 (or shorter)	5th Sunday of Lent, Year A (opt. B/C)
John 12:12-16 (2nd option)	Palm Sunday, Year B (Procession)
John 12:20-33	5th Sunday of Lent, Year B
John 13:1-15	Holy Thursday: Lord's Supper, Years ABC
John 13:31-33a, 34-35	5th Sunday of Easter, Year C
John 14:1-12	5th Sunday of Easter, Year A
John 14:15-21	6th Sunday of Easter, Year A
John 14:15-16, 23b-26	Pentecost Sunday, Year C (optional)
John 14:23-29	6th Sunday of Easter, Year C
John 15:1-8	5th Sunday of Easter, Year B
John 15:9-17	6th Sunday of Easter, Year B
John 15:26-27; 16:12-15	Pentecost Sunday, Year B (optional)
John 16:12-15	Trinity Sunday, Year C
John 17:1-11a	7th Sunday of Easter, Year A
John 17:11b-19	7th Sunday of Easter, Year B
John 17:20-26	7th Sunday of Easter, Year C
John 18:1—19:42	Good Friday, Years ABC

Readings for Sundays and Major Feasts (cont'd)

Gospel Reading	Sunday or Feast Day
John 18:33b-37	Christ the King, Year B
John 19:31-37	Sacred Heart Friday, Year B
John 20:1-9	Easter Sunday, Years ABC
John 20:19-23	Pentecost Sunday, Years ABC
John 20:19-31	2nd Sunday of Easter, Years ABC
John 21:1-19 (or 21:1-14)	3rd Sunday of Easter, Year C

Readings for Weekday Masses

Gospel Reading	Weekday	Gospel Reading	Weekday
John 1:1-18	Christmas Season: Dec. 31	John 10:1-10 (or 10:11-18)	4th Week of Easter: Mon
John 1:19-28	Christmas Season: Jan. 2	John 10:22-30	4th Week of Easter: Tues
John 1:29-34	Christmas Season: Jan. 3	John 10:31-42	5th Week of Lent: Fri
John 1:35-42	Christmas Season: Jan. 4	John 11:1-45 (or shorter)	5th Week of Lent (optional)
John 1:43-51	Christmas Season: Jan. 5	John 11:45-56	5th Week of Lent: Sat
John 2:1-11	Christmas Season: Jan. 7	John 12:1-11	Holy Week: Mon
John 3:1-8	2nd Week of Easter: Mon	John 12:44-50	4th Week of Easter: Wed
John 3:7b-15	2nd Week of Easter: Tues	John 13:16-20	4th Week of Easter: Thurs
John 3:16-21	2nd Week of Easter: Wed	John 13:21-33, 36-38	Holy Week: Tues
John 3:22-30	Christmas Season: Jan. 12	John 14:1-6	4th Week of Easter: Fri
John 3:31-36	2nd Week of Easter: Thurs	John 14:7-14	4th Week of Easter: Sat
John 4:5-42 (or shorter)	3rd Week of Lent (optional)	John 14:21-26	5th Week of Easter: Mon
John 4:43-54	4th Week of Lent: Mon	John 14:27-31a	5th Week of Easter: Tues
John 5:1-3, 5-16	4th Week of Lent: Tues	John 15:1-8	5th Week of Easter: Wed
John 5:17-30	4th Week of Lent: Wed	John 15:9-11	5th Week of Easter: Thurs
John 5:31-47	4th Week of Lent: Thurs	John 15:12-17	5th Week of Easter: Fri
John 5:33-36	3rd Week of Advent: Fri	John 15:18-21	5th Week of Easter: Sat
John 6:1-15	2nd Week of Easter: Fri	John 15:26—16:4a	6th Week of Easter: Mon
John 6:16-21	2nd Week of Easter: Sat	John 16:5-11	6th Week of Easter: Tues
John 6:22-29	3rd Week of Easter: Mon	John 16:12-15	6th Week of Easter: Wed
John 6:30-35	3rd Week of Easter: Tues	John 16:16-20	6th Week of Easter: Thurs
John 6:35-40	3rd Week of Easter: Wed	John 16:20-23a	6th Week of Easter: Fri
John 6:44-51	3rd Week of Easter: Thurs	John 16:23b-28	6th Week of Easter: Sat
John 6:52-59	3rd Week of Easter: Fri	John 16:29-33	7th Week of Easter: Mon
John 6:60-69	3rd Week of Easter: Sat	John 17:1-11a	7th Week of Easter: Tues
John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30	4th Week of Lent: Fri	John 17:11b-19	7th Week of Easter: Wed
John 7:40-53	4th Week of Lent: Sat	John 17:20-26	7th Week of Easter: Thurs
John 8:1-11 (or 8:12-20)	5th Week of Lent: Mon	John 19:31-37	Sacred Heart Friday, Year B
John 8:21-30	5th Week of Lent: Tues	John 20:11-18	Octave of Easter: Tues
John 8:31-42	5th Week of Lent: Wed	John 21:1-14	Octave of Easter: Fri
John 8:51-59	5th Week of Lent: Thurs	John 21:15-19	7th Week of Easter: Fri
John 9:1-41 (or shorter)	4th Week of Lent (optional)	John 21:20-25	7th Week of Easter: Sat

Note: No passages from John's Gospel are prescribed for any weekdays of Ordinary Time.