

+ Desires of the Heart: Themes of Ignatian Spirituality +

LOVE

Contemplation on the Love of God; God's unceasing giving and gifting

BACKGROUND

After almost a month of meditations on the life and death of Jesus, sin, evil, and our response to Jesus' invitation in our lives, the Spiritual Exercises concludes with a meditation on the Resurrection of Christ and then the Contemplation on the Love of God. This final and peak meditation wraps up all the experiences of God in our life and in salvation history and directs our view toward our real experience of communion with the divine: *our identity in the divine*.

St Ignatius gives us two things to first consider:

- Love ought to show itself more in deeds than in words
- Love consists in a mutual sharing of goods, an exchange

Then we ask for a grace: *To have an intimate knowledge of all the goods which God lovingly shares with me, and in gratitude to respond totally in love and service.*

My contemplation prayer now stems from these four themes:

1. God's gifts to me
2. God's self-giving to me
3. God's labours for me
4. God's unceasing giving and gifting

TAKE, LORD, AND RECEIVE ALL MY LIBERTY, MY MEMORY, MY UNDERSTANDING, AND MY ENTIRE WILL—ALL THAT I HAVE AND CALL MY OWN. YOU HAVE GIVEN IT ALL TO ME. TO YOU, LORD, I RETURN IT. EVERYTHING IS YOURS; DO WITH IT WHAT YOU WILL. GIVE ME ONLY YOUR LOVE AND YOUR GRACE. THAT IS ENOUGH FOR ME.

“...at the end of the Spiritual Exercises, you and the Divine become one. Not only do you and God become one, but also everything is seen as a manifestation of the Divine. You look at a tree and see God and experience God. It is a manifestation of the Divine. It is the presence of the Divine that makes a tree a tree. It is a miracle.” - Paul Coutinho, SJ

RESOURCES

goo.gl/56S1Nf - Text of the meditation

goo.gl/qJO84 - Explanation of the meditation by Kevin O'Brien, SJ

youtu.be/meYf3BIYGbw - Beautiful 9-minute video inspired by this meditation

*“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?”
- 1 Corinthians 3:16 (NRSV)*