

Part 2: Loved as I am

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Summary of part 2—Loved as I Am

1/ Quarter Review

- Grace: to identify the graces for the past few months
- Exercise: Quarter Review
- Action: pray, “What do you want to get out of CLC this quarter?”

2/ What’s the point?

- Grace: to search deep in our hearts, “What motivates us in all we do?”
- Read: Ignatius’ principle and foundation, Write: My principle and foundation
- Action: pray, “My principle and foundation”

3/ The Voice of God

- Grace: to discern which voice from God and which is not
- Lisa Kelly’s article, “The voice of God vs the voice of not God”
- Action: pray with Examen, prayer partner

4/ My inner GPS

- Grace: to cultivate a discerning heart.
- Exercise: Plant; Examen
- Action: pray with Examen, prayer partner

5/ Being real about loneliness

- Grace: to articulate our own experience of loneliness and join it to Christ’s.
- Jesus’ loneliness: Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14: 26-42)
- Action: pray with Examen, prayer partner

6/ The Fire Within

- Grace: to identify how our longing for intimacy informs our daily decisions.
- Article, “The Longing for Intimacy” (by Jackie Joens); Writing of consciousness
- Action: pray with Examen, prayer partner

7/ Friend Me

- Grace: to encounter God in friendship and discern true vs false friendship
- 2 Videos: Friendship algorithm, Greg Boyle
- Action: pray with Examen, prayer partner

8/ Sexuality and spirituality

- Grace: deepen our sense of a God-given sexuality that draws us into communion with all of creation.
- Read, “Sexuality as Divine Fire”
- Action: pray with Examen, prayer partner

9/ My Gifts and Addictions

- Grace: to identify our gifts and attachments.
- Game: 30 square cards, “Everything but....”.....what’s my gifts and addictions?
- Action: pray with Examen, prayer partner

10/ Called To Compassion

- Grace: grace to receive and embody God’s healing presence in our lives and in our relationships.
- Exercises: Mk 2:1-12, read Greg Boyle’s commentary, reflection questions
- Action: pray with Examen, prayer partner

#1 Quarter Review



Scripture

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light. (Mt 11:28-30)

Mk 6:31 "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while."

Luke 5:1-6 "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch."

Note: this meeting is adapted from "Recollecting, Reconnecting" <http://www.youngadultclc.org/caminos/>

Introduction & Welcome (1")

Welcome members back after the break and to the new quarter. Thank them for coming.

I. Opening Prayer (5")

Grace: to identify the graces for the past few months.

Use the grace or the suggested scripture above to create your own prayer or use the prayer below. After reading the scripture, say...., "*Almighty God, we thank You for gathering us here tonight. Thank You for Your invitation to come to You for rest and learn from You for Your yoke is easy and Your burden light. We pray for the grace of being attentive to how You have loved us over the quarter and the break. Help us to identify those graces and give You glory. Amen.*"

Note: ask for a volunteer to lead opening and closing prayers for the next meeting.

II. Check-In (5")

- The high and low points of your break

III. Focus Exercise (40")

Materials Needed: CLC supply box (CLC journal booklets, papers, pens, etc.). All handouts are in the CLC journal booklets. If you do not have them, come to the CLC office.

- **Introduction:** This meeting will center around looking back at the past few months and the break in order to help the group process all that has happened and changed. It will help deepen the group's practice of finding God in all aspects of their lives and learning to be more attentive to God's movements in their everyday experiences as well as more momentous times, particularly in change.

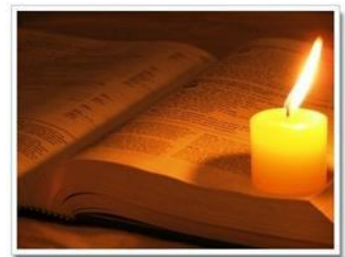
- Invite members to spend time praying with, “Quarter Review.”
- **Exercise 1: Quarter Review**
- **Sharing:** invite members to share. Using the Examen questions given as a guide for group sharing and conversation.
- **Exercise 2: Meeting topics**
 - Preview the meeting topics for the rest of the quarter (see table of contents). Check in and discuss them.
- **Listening Deeper**
Suggested Questions to deepen awareness of inner movements and further conversation
 - What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
 - How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
 - Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

III. Moving Forward (5”)

- **Wrap Up:** thank members for their openness and participation.
- **Action:**
 - pray with the question, “What do you want to get out of CLC this quarter?”
 - ask God, “What do you want me to get out of CLC this quarter?”
- **Announcements:** topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5”):

Pray for each other or use the CLC Closing Prayer



Quarter Review

~A Free-Writing Awareness Examen~

I ask God for the light of the Holy Spirit—for the grace to see with God’s “eyes” and feel with God’s “heart”... I ask God to more deeply reveal the following to me in my writing, without judgment or conscious control...I pause and sit with the questions that particularly draw me, letting what touches me sink-in more deeply and unfold...

...the gifts that God has given me in the past weeks or months for which I am most grateful...
...what has given me life or energy...

...the ways that I have responded to God out of love...

... this is what has drained me or challenged me...

...the ways that I have not responded to God out of love as fully as I could have...
...the reasons I may need to ask for forgiveness...

...how or what God may be inviting me to in the days, weeks, or coming months

#2 What's the point?



Scripture

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What do you read there?’ He answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.’ (Lk 10:25-28)

Mk 10:17-31 “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Micah 6:8 “...To act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with God...”

Note: this meeting is adapted from <http://www.youngadultclc.org/caminos/>

Introduction & Welcome (1”)

I. Opening Prayer (5”)

Grace: to search deep in our hearts and see more clearly what the purpose and foundation of our lives are, motivating us in all we do.

Use the grace or the suggested scriptural passage above to create your own prayer. You can also use the one below.

After reading the scriptural passage above, say....*Loving God, we are going to continue exploring the questions of vocation tonight. Help us to get in touch with our deepest desires and dare to ask you as the lawyer did, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Help us to be attentive to you and one another. Be here with us and guide our conversation. Amen.*

Note: ask for a volunteer to lead opening and closing prayers for the next meeting.

II. Check-In (5”)

- What have been the motivating forces in your life this week (stress, love, fear, pressure, relationships, approval, etc.)

III. Focus Exercise (40”)

Materials Needed: CLC supply box (CLC journal booklets, papers, pens, etc.).

Introduction: What is the meaning of life? The question is notorious in our culture as being synonymous with something that is impossible to really figure out, a lofty, philosophical conundrum that can never be fully understood or articulated. Yet, St. Ignatius attempted it! His “First Principle and Foundation” is the first thing he invites people to consider in the *Spiritual Exercises*.

It makes sense to start with the basics, to use this foundation to build upon. As our CLC group now moves forward together after our first phase of recognizing our belovedness, it is helpful to spend some time reflecting on what we really think is our purpose, our most basic objective. **What do we live our lives for?**

- **Exercise 1: Ignatius' First Principle and Foundation**

Read together this contemporary interpretation of the [First Principle and Foundation](#).
(As translated and interpreted by David Fleming, S.J.)

The goal of our life is to live with God forever. God who loves us, gave us life. Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into us without limit.

All the things in this world are gifts of God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily. As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God insofar as they help us develop as loving persons. But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives, they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some obligation. We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God.

Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to the deepening of God's life in me.

Discuss: Engage a brief discussion on what people notice about it.

- Does it ring true for you?
- Does it seem challenging?
- Does it inspire you?
- Does it feel inaccessible?
- Invite people to share their thoughts, and read it again if need be.

- **Exercise 2: My First Principle and Foundation**

Invite everyone to spend 15 minutes writing her or his own First Principle and Foundation, considering what they believe to be the most meaningful motivating force(s) in their lives (or what they *want* to be the most motivating factors in their lives). You may want to play some quiet music in the background as people think and write. Some questions that might help prompt this activity include:

- What is the purpose of why I am here?
- What is the most foundational part of my life?
- Where does God fit in my foundation?



- **Sharing**

- Share some or all of your First Principle and Foundation with the rest of the group. Explain why you chose the words you did and how you came to include the ideas that you did.
- How does your First Principle and Foundation fit with your spiritual autobiography?
- In what ways are you already living in line with your First Principle and Foundation? What things in your life make it hard to live according to your First Principle.

- **Listening Deeper**

Suggested Questions to deepen awareness of inner movements and further conversation

- What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
- How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
- Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5")

- **Wrap Up:** thank members for their openness and participation.
- **Action:** Read the *First Principle and Foundation* (either yours or St. Ignatius') at the start of each day this week. If you want to revise it during this week, feel free to. Consider the following ways to make it a concrete part of your life:
 - Write it out in your own handwriting.
 - Decorate it and hang it on your bathroom mirror to read while you brush your teeth.
 - Put it on your computer screen so it is the first thing you see when you open your laptop.
 - Set it as a reminder that pops up on your cell phone.
 - Record yourself speaking it and listen to it on your way to class or work every morning.
- **Announcements:** topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5"):

Invite each person to turn their First Principle and Foundation into a prayer, asking God for the things that feel most challenging to them in living it out.

Or, ask people to bless one another, with Person A asking that God give Person B the strength, clarity, and faith to do what Person B sees as the fundamental principle of his or her life.

#3 The Voice of God



Scripture

Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" (1 Sam 3:4-11)

Rev 3:20 "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come to you and eat with you, and you with me."

Note: this meeting is adapted from <http://www.youngadultclc.org/caminos/>

Introduction & Welcome (1")

I. Opening Prayer (5")

Grace: to be able to recognize what different voices are at play within our hearts and how they point us toward or away from God.

Use the grace and the suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use CLC Opening and Closing prayer, which can be found in Appendixes section.

Note: ask for a volunteer to lead opening and closing prayers for the next meeting.

II. Check-In (5")

- Share about a time this week when you either felt great energy, cohesion, and sense of purpose, or a time when you felt really detached, distant, and discouraged.

III. Focus Exercise (40")

Materials Needed: CLC supply box (CLC journal booklets, papers, pens, etc.).

- **Introduction:** Introduce "The Voice of God/the Voice of Love" and "The Voice Not of God/the Voice of Fear" using your own words. Then invite someone in your group who has a gift for reading expressively (maybe the theatre major!) to read the passage below.

“I’m being urged from the inside to do something really crazy. I’ve tried to put it out of my mind, get away from it for over a year, let it go, but it keeps coming back to my heart. It is nothing bad, illegal or immoral. In fact, it is something that I could easily say is for the Greater Glory of God, for helping others on their path. You can probably insert just about any healthy dream, wish, hope, or vision you have had in it’s place. In fact, do that... right now. Say to yourself, “In five years I can see myself... what? What are your wildest dreams? (Ignatius was big on using your imagination to envision your calling.) At first there is this flutter of something in your heart. Awe? Excitement? Inspiration? A YES!

But then... the Voice sets in. The Voice of Sarcasm: “Yeah right, like that could ever happen.” The Voice of Hopelessness: “I could never pull that off. I’m not good enough.” The Voice of Insecurity: “I have no idea what I’m doing.” The Voice of Fear: “I’m going to look really foolish. It’s not worth the risk of being humiliated.” And with that any flutter in the heart is firmly squashed (insert image of smashed butterfly laying on its side with one wing up... weakly waving... weakly...waving.)

That longing to act is still there. That dream keeps coming back. And the cycle begins again. So I asked God in prayer ever so reverently, “What the heck??”

And there is a new Voice, one I almost dare not believe. “Look at the Voice you’ve been listening to,” It implores. “It is not Mine. I see you only as fully capable to be everything I have gifted you to be. I desire your wholeness. I desire for you to shine as my beloved child. The Voice of Sarcasm, Hopelessness, Negativity, Fear, that is the Voice of the Spirit Not of God that seeks your brokenness, your emptiness, your uselessness to serve others.”

I was a bit shocked by the revelation that I have been worshipping the Spirit Not of God in so many messages I believed to be true about myself.

I’m not really sure I have fully come to grips with the Spirit Not of God. I tend to think it is really my own weakness rather than a Spirit from outside me. And yet I know without hesitation that my Strength comes from a Spirit beyond my own capacity. But in the end, whether of my own making or something beyond me, the result is the same reticence to grow and serve as I perhaps, maybe, possibly, haphazardly have been gifted or called to do. Is it easier to believe the Spirit Not of God? Does it get us off the hook to believe for whatever reason we simply can’t respond to that longing in our hearts? Is it too much responsibility to accept that calling as uniquely ours?Uniquely mine. I sit with it for a good while.

The butterfly wing begins to flutter ever so slightly.

The Voice of Sarcasm gives way to the Voice of Certainty: “With God, all things are possible.” The Voice of Hopelessness gives way to the Voice of Hope: “I could pull it off.” The Voice of Insecurity gives way to the Voice of strength: “I have so much to share that other people need to hear or know or be empowered by.” The Voice of Fear turns

into the Voice of Courage: “This is absolutely insane and I’m going to love every minute of it no matter what happens!” Even the Voice of Resistance becomes the Voice of Invitation: “Just come and see.” I so want to believe that this is my calling because when I am doing it, I feel so whole, so full, so dead on. But to even chance that that desire of my heart is God’s wish for me is staggering.

And the Voice says, “The Force of the Resurrection is the Force at work within me to do the will of God. Fly, butterfly, fly.”

Lisa Kelly, [This Ignatian Life](#)

- **Sharing**

- In what ways do you relate to the woman who wrote this passage? Does it sound familiar to you?
- When in your life have you listened to the wrong voice?
- Which voice has most power over you?
- In your own life now, where do you think the Voice of Love is speaking and where do you think the Voice of Fear is speaking?

If time allows, use two large cartoon “word bubbles” made out of poster board or large sheet of paper to invite group members to list phrases that could be the Voice of God and the Voice Not of God. Allow people to respond to what is written.

- **Listening Deeper**

Suggested Questions to deepen awareness of inner movements and further conversation

- What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
- How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
- Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

- **Action:**

(1) pray with Awareness Examen: Try to notice one time this week when the Voice of God or the Voice Not of God seems to be speaking to you. Take a few moments to talk with God about that movement.

(2) share with your prayer partner

- **Announcements:** topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events



V. Closing Prayer (5’)

Pray for each other or use the CLC Closing Prayer.

#4 My Inner GPS



Scripture

“Then the Lord said, ‘Go outside and stand on the mountain before the Lord; the Lord will be passing by.’ A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord - but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake - but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire - but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound.” 1 Kings 19:11-12

Gen 2:15 *Then the LORD God took human and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and take care of it.*

Note: this meeting is adapted from <http://www.youngadultclc.org/caminos/>

Introduction & Welcome (1”)

I. Opening Prayer (5”)

Grace: of perception, to see clearly the things that may normally remain hidden and receive them in gratitude.

Use the grace and the suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use CLC Opening and Closing prayer, which can be found in Appendixes section.

Note: ask for a volunteer to lead opening and closing prayers for the next meeting.

II. Check-In (5”)

- What is one thing that surprised you today: something out of the ordinary, or something you noticed for the first time?

III. Focus Exercise (40”)

Materials Needed: CLC supply box (CLC journal booklets, papers, pens, etc.).

- A **live plant**, or small plants for everyone in your group. Even consider giving everyone in the group a packet of seeds and bring small pots with potting soil (but be mindful of cleaning up afterward).
- **Introduction:** Have you ever had a day where you lie down in bed at the end of it and you can hardly remember what you did that morning? You’ve been on the go for such a long time that you stopped even really noticing what was happening? You just do one thing after another in order to get it done until you finally crash?

- **Why are we so busy?** Is that the lifestyle or the person we want to become? Shaping ourselves into the person who we want to be takes persistent work and attention. We seek to have discerning hearts, hearts that readily notice the things that are God’s activity or the things that push us away from God. In order to make our hearts increasingly receptive, we work on *cultivating* receptive and attentive hearts.
- We will explore the idea of “**cultivation**” in general to give us insight into the process of cultivating a discerning heart. Then, we will share in a guided Examen as a tool to help us in our cultivation.
- **Exercise 1: Lessons from the Plant**

Bring a live potted plant of some kind to the meeting. You may choose to bring a small one for each member of your group. Lead the group in a discussion of how this plant came to be.

- (1) What did it need to grow? Light? Water? Nutrients?
- (2) What would happen if those things were no longer provided to the plant?
- (3) Explore the idea of a farm and a farmer who cultivates the land. What does that entail? What must the farmer do to make sure the land can bear fruit? What kind of tools does the farmer use? What is the difference between farmland and wild land?

Suggested questions for discussion:

- How do we see our own spirituality in the plant or the land?
 - If you are the farmer and your faith is the plant, how are you tending to it? What shape is it in?
 - How is your spirituality thriving? How is it struggling?
- **Exercise 2: Awareness Examen**

Introduce your group to the Examen prayer and how it can help us as we continue to cultivate a sense of discernment in our own hearts. Invite them to enter into the Examen prayer as you guide it. This 5-10 minutes reflective prayer at night (or the next morning) to review a day is a vital way to developing a discerning heart:

1. Lord, **ble**ss** me** with the light of your Spirit to see through Your eyes and feel with Your heart.
2. Lord, what gifts have I **re**ceived**** today that I can be **th**ankful**** for?
3. Which experiences give me **l**ife**** today? Which experiences **dr**ain**** me? Lord, how have you **l**oved**** me today?
4. Lord, how have I **no**t** r**espon**ded** to you? I need your **fo**rgiveness**** with...?
5. Lord, how are you **in**vi**ting me** to respond more fully or be **mo**re** a**ttentive**** to you in the coming day?

Suggested questions for discussion

- How did it feel to review your day in this prayerful way?
- What did you notice?
- What did you feel called to?
- How do you think this could work as a tool for cultivating a growth in your spiritual life?

IV. Moving Forward (5”)

- **Action:** Can our CLC commit to praying the Examen once a day this week? Will we undertake the “Awareness Examen Challenge?!” Some ways we could do this include:
 - One person can volunteer to text message everyone a reminder each night.
 - The group can pick a time that they will pray it so they can be in it together.
 - Pray-as-you-go.org has an mp3 guided Examen called “Review of the day” which can be downloaded and played on a computer or mp3 player.
 - The group could facebook or text message each other each day sharing one grace that they experienced in the Examen (or one struggle with it).
 - You can use your plant as a reminder to do the Examen, and tend to it each time you tend to your own spirit. See how it grows!
 - You can journal the “One a Day Gratitude”
- **Announcements:** topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5”):

Return to the image of the plant, using that image as inspiration for the prayer. Pray for one another.



The Quiet Garden Prayer
Oh Lord Jesus
true gardener
work in us what you want of us, For
you are indeed the true gardener at
once, maker and tiller
and keeper of your garden
you who plant with the word,
water with the spirit
and give your increase
with your power.

Cisterician Guerric of Igny 12th century

#5 Being real about Loneliness



Scripture

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? (Mk 14:32-37)

Matt 11:28-31 "Come to me all you who are weary."

Note: this meeting is adapted from <http://www.youngadultclc.org/caminos/>

Introduction & Welcome (1")

I. Opening Prayer (5")

Grace: to articulate our own experience of loneliness and join it to Christ's.

Use the grace and the suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use CLC Opening and Closing prayer, which can be found in Appendixes section.

II. Check-In (5")

- When have you felt connected with others this week?

III. Focus Exercise (40")

Materials Needed: CLC supply box (CLC journal booklets, papers, pens, etc.)

- **Introduction:** you might begin with a song (e.g., I'm with You by Avril Lavigne) to set a tone for the meeting. Or begin asking members, "Have you ever felt extremely lonely even in a room or at a school crowded with many people?"
Loneliness can often isolate us from community or keep us from being our fullest selves. It can also be very painful to be lonely. Sometimes we try to fill that pain with other things like alcohol, money, shopping, sex, food in order to numb that pain. The following Scripture serves as an entry point in which to connect our own loneliness with that of Christ's.

Jesus' loneliness: As I read the following passage, imagine how Jesus is feeling in his experience and how he is feeling in relations with others. We pray to feel with Christ's very heart as we open ourselves to the spirit of the scripture.

“Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will have your faith shaken, for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be dispersed.’ But after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee.” Peter said to him, “Even though all should have their faith shaken, mine will not be.” Then Jesus said to him, “Amen, I say to you, this very night before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times.”

But he vehemently replied, “Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you.” And they all spoke similarly. Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed.

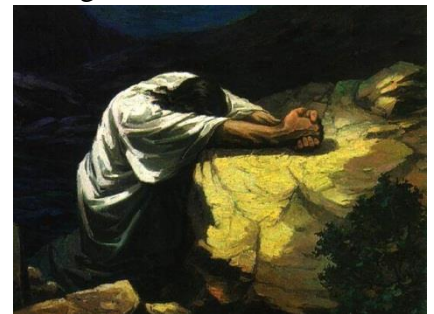
Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch.”

He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will.”

When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing. Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him. He returned a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is at hand.” *Mark 14: 26-42*

Pray: After reading the scripture, allow for about 10 minutes of silence with meditative music playing and invite members to pray with Gethsemane Night (note: the questions below can be found on pagein their CLC Journal booklets)

- What do you imagine Christ was experiencing in his time in the garden?
- Has there been a time in recent years or months that you have felt particularly lonely or empty, as if there was something lacking? What role did relationships play in this time? How did this affect your relationship with God, with yourself, or others? How were you challenged or consoled spiritually?
- How did you respond in action to these moments?
- What desire is emerging for you in light of these experiences? Ask God for guidance.
- How does loneliness affect your relationship with God?



- **Sharing:** After some time in prayer and reflection, invite members share what they wrote. Use the Reflection questions given as a guide for group sharing.
- **Listening Deeper**
Suggested Questions to deepen awareness of inner movements and further conversation
 - What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
 - How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
 - Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5”)

- **Action:**
 - (1) Pray with Awareness Examen: Pay attention to moments in the week when a sense of loneliness emerges. Notice what your natural instinct is in how to respond.
 - (2) Share with your prayer partner
- **Announcements:** topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5”):

Pray for each other or use the CLC Closing Prayer



*“Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted
is the most terrible poverty.”*
(Mother Teresa)

#6 The Fire Within



Scripture

“Jesus said to the disciples...Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest?” Luke 12:22-26

Psalm 37:5 *“Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.”*

Note: this meeting is adapted from <http://www.youngadultclc.org/caminos/>

Introduction & Welcome (1”)

I. Opening Prayer (5”)

Grace: to identify how our longing for intimacy informs our daily decisions.

Use the grace and the suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use CLC Opening and Closing prayer, which can be found in Appendixes section.

II. Check-In (5”)

- Name an example of someone you saw on TV this week that was seeking intimacy.

III. Focus Exercise (40”)

Materials Needed: CLC supply box (CLC journal booklets, papers, pens, etc.)

- **Introduction:** Who doesn't want to feel loved? Who doesn't want to feel REAL connection to people and not just be a passerby in the grocery store, the bar, the shopping center, the gym, or even in church? The desire for intimacy is one of the most fundamental human needs. This meeting is an opportunity to examine more closely our strong desire for intimacy.

As with all powerful desires, there are **two sides** of it. On one hand, we are designed for intimacy with God and made for human community. On the other hand, societal pressures make us think that it has to be earned, deserved, and expressed in very narrow and sometimes unfulfilling ways. We long for healthy fulfilling intimacy but we often settle for less in an effort to at least get close to it.

- **Exercise 1:** “Longing for Intimacy”

Introduce the topic of the evening by inviting members to read the article “[Longing for Intimacy](#)” on the next page. Have the group reflect on their reactions to the article.

- **Exercise 2:** Stream of Consciousness Writing

With meditation music playing, invite members to take some silent reflection to write on the questions in their journal booklets. Reiterate that there are no right answers and full sentences or punctuation are not necessary. Encourage members to listen to their natural responses and instincts upon reading the statements. Encourage them to allow their pens to flow without judgment.

- **Sharing**

- Which questions drew you? Which questions challenged you?
- Any new insights, repetition or deepening of prior ‘ah hah moments’?
- Any area you feel invited to return to later for more reflection?
- What is remaining with you from this prayer?

- **Listening Deeper**

Suggested Questions to deepen awareness of inner movements and further conversation

- What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
- How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
- Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5’)

- **Action:**

- (1) Pay attention to the ways you express intimacy this week. Allow yourself to be surprised.
- (2) Share with your prayer partner.

- **Announcements:** topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5’):

Pray for each other or use the CLC Closing Prayer



The Longing for Intimacy

By Jackie Joens – July 21, 2009

The longing for intimacy in life and relationships is part of being human.

Humans are wired for connection and some of the best connections achieved are between people when they share levels of intimacy. Relationships all experience intimacy at some level. The depth of the intimacy shared should be defined by the ‘safeness’ of the relationship. Often times however, this isn’t the case. In many relationships the hunger for intimacy is the driving force that attempts to define the connection. This sense of urgency or hunger for relationship sometimes allows intimacy to grow too deep or too quickly...and then the relationship often times doesn’t work.

So how can healthy intimacy be experienced in the daily dance of relationships?

First, it becomes important that we have a good understanding of the definition of intimacy. It needs to be understood in order to enjoy the depth of reward it can offer in our relationships. One of my favorite ways to describe intimacy is, “ a detailed knowledge resulting from a close or long association or study.” In other words, intimacy is a two part learning and sharing process. 1) to learn about ourselves and then choosing how much of our self-knowledge we care to share with another person and 2) to learn about others. It is a give and take of deeply personal pieces of self.

Four Branches of Intimacy

Intimacy can be divided up into four major areas: *emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical*. Because all relationships experience these intimacies in some combination and to varying levels, these different intimacies need to be understood individually as well as how they relate to each other. Once understood, then the intimacies can be explored in safe and healthy ways.

Emotional Intimacy is a type of intimacy where feelings are explored, exposed and exchanged. Not just a display of emotions – crying, yelling, laughing...but rather a conscious process of self-examination, understanding and mutual exchange. What do you think? How do you feel? What are your core values? What are your passions? What are your hurts? What are your inspirations? What are your fears?

All of these questions tap into the reality of your emotions and how they impact your life. Are you familiar with your feelings? Do you examine your emotions and understand where they come from and then choose a good course of behavior? Or are your emotions the triggers that set you down a course of habitual behavior patterns? Do you choose to act a certain way as a result of your emotions or instead do you just react to them?

What is your sense of purpose? What role does spirituality play in your life and relationships? *Spiritual Intimacy* is the exploration and discovery of the greater sense of self – why are you here? To understand spirituality also takes time in study, self-examination, meditation and prayer. The study of the age-old question, “Why am I here?” brings about an understanding of the meaning of life – your life. What do you believe? What are your priorities to living? When do you feel your soul being moved?

These considerations provide a glimpse into the journey of your fit into the world. When you have a better understanding of your greater purpose and your beliefs, then you are better able to share knowledge of yourself with others. Unfortunately, this is an area of intimacy that is often misunderstood and is neglected. Make no mistake, it is a fundamental piece of every person – no matter what your faith. Spend time in prayerful consideration and meditation – get to know yourself as reflected in your relationship with God.

Intellectual Intimacy is another type of intimacy that can often be neglected. Humans need to share ideas, dreams, thoughts...it is a venue where many great and wonderful ideas have found fertile ground to grow and become new creations. Discussions – especially surrounding topics of passion - bring like minds together and the resulting relationships can be rich and rewarding. Do you tend to your intellect? Are you challenging yourself to learn and grow? What are your passions? Have you explored them?

By experiencing the fire of your passions and by exercising the grey matter in your head, you expand the richness of your life. The more we learn, the more we grow and often times are eager to learn more. This knowledge exploration can surround literature, sports, mathematics, politics, culture...any subject that stirs the fire of searching for more information. What ignites the fire in you to learn, explore and grow in your knowledge base?

Physical Intimacy is the sharing of personal and physical space. In all relationships or potential relationships, there is some form of physical intimacy explored. Culturally, it seems as if the boundaries of appropriate physical intimacy are often misunderstood or just simply ignored. We do need to understand the implications of sharing our personal and physical space.

Often times when discussions first turn toward physical intimacy, thoughts go immediately toward sexual relationships. Physical intimacy does encompass more than just sex. A handshake, nudge, pat on the back, holding hands, touching an arm, an embrace, a kiss are all examples of different forms of physical intimacy. In some relationships a hearty handshake is appropriate and appreciated, where other situations may call for a warm hug, and still others no physical touch may be appropriate.



Conclusion: All of these are forms of intimacy that have many more expressions than can be described here. The reality is that all of our relationships speak to different aspects of intimacy in our lives- some speak to one area, others speak to a few. Our make-up has to have all four of them engaged at different times. How do you see each form of intimacy playing out in your own life? What form of intimacy stands out to you most? Why?

Stream Of Consciousness Writing

We pray for the grace to feel with God's very heart. May our hands be an expression of God's deepest stirrings within us. Loving God, help us to write freely- without judgment or need for correction.

1. *I long for intimacy...*

2. *For me, intimacy looks like...*

3. *Intimacy is present in my life...*

4. *My intimate relationships have helped me grow...*

5. *The deepest desire of my heart lies in...*

#7 Friend Me



Scripture

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

Matt 18:18-20

"Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them"

Note: this meeting is adapted from <http://www.youngadultclc.org/caminos/>

Introduction & Welcome (1")

I. Opening Prayer (5")

Grace: to encounter God through friendship.

Use the grace and the suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use CLC Opening and Closing prayer, which can be found in Appendixes section.

II. Check-In (5")

- What were some of your high and low points of the week?

III. Focus Exercise (40")

Materials Needed: **laptop**, CLC supply box (CLC journal booklets, papers, pens, etc.)

- **Introduction:** How do we come to know God? We think that prayer, going to church, and reading Scripture are the answers. But, what if we could also come to know God through the kindness of the grocery store clerk, the compassion of a professor when we're late with a paper, and the understanding of a classmate when we need a listening ear?

This meeting invites us to use our experience of being community in CLC and applying those values to the other relationships in our lives. Together, we explore the ideals and components of relationships that are important and that help us discern how God is at work in our lives through our relationships.

- **Exercise 1: Friendship Algorithm**

Watch this video together, then discuss it <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0xgjUhEG3U>

- What's your number one friendship algorithm factor? What are you looking for in a friend?
- Do you feel you have friendships stuck in the “infinite loop”?
- Is it ok to settle with the LOA?
- One of our CLC pillars is Community. We strive to build a community of Friends in God.
 - (1) What have you experienced of friendship in CLC so far?
 - (2) How do we build a stronger a community of friendship in God?

- **Exercise 2: A Community of Kinship**

Watch this video together and discuss: Fr. Greg Boyle's view on a community of kinship <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2nerjG5rVA>

- What strikes you about this video? Does anything resonate with how you see relationships? Does anything seem off base?
- Mother Teresa once said, “The problem of the world is that we've forgotten that we **belong** to each other.” What do you think about her statement? Do you feel you belong to this CLC community?
- Fr. Greg said, “If **kinship** was our goal we would no longer be promoting justice, we would be celebrating it.” What do you think about his statement? Do you experience kinship in CLC?

- **Listening Deeper**

Suggested Questions to deepen awareness of inner movements and further conversation

- Where have you seen **God** active in or revealed through relationships in your life?
- Some relationships help us grow closer to God while others pull us away from God. Are there any relationships or aspects of your relationship that **pull you away** from God?
- Are there other relationships **missing** in your life? Where might you be called to be more expansive in your circle of relationships?
- How do we **share or apply** our CLC values to other relationship in our lives?



IV. Moving Forward (5”)

- **Action**

- Pray with Awareness Examen: focus on friendship and family.
 - (1) Which relationship or aspects of relationship help you grow closer to God? Pull you away from God?
 - (2) Write a letter to a friend or family member whose relationship revealed something about God’s love to you and thank them for their presence in your life.
- Prayer Partner: Get together one-on-one with another community member this week for coffee, a shared meal, or a long conversation and be present to one another in that experience.
- **Announcements**: topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5”)

- Pray in gratitude for people who have been important in your lives. Invite the group to say their names in the prayer.
- If helpful, end the prayer with a song, “Faces of our Friends” by Sarah Hart



“To love another person is to see the face of God” (*Les Miserables*)

#8 Sexuality & Spirituality



Scripture

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine, your anointing oils are fragrant, your name is perfume poured out; therefore the maidens love you. Draw me after you, let us make haste. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will exult and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine; rightly do they love you. (Song of Songs 1:2-4)

Psalm 38:9 “O Lord, all my longing is known to you; my sighing is not hidden from you.”

Note: this meeting is adapted from <http://www.youngadultclc.org/caminos/>

Introduction & Welcome (1”)

I. Opening Prayer (5”)

Grace: to deepen our sense of a God-given sexuality that draws us into communion with all of creation.

Use the grace and the suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use CLC Opening and Closing prayer, which can be found in Appendixes section.

Note: ask for a volunteer to lead opening and closing prayers for the next meeting.

II. Check-In (5”)

- What were some of your high and low points of the week?

III. Focus Exercise (40”)

Materials Needed: CLC supply box (CLC journal booklets, papers, pens, etc.)

- **Introduction:** Begin, “When was a time this week when you felt very aware of your body?” Then, invite three different readers to read the below writings on sexuality. Encourage them to read slowly in order to allow all the parts to be grasped by the group.
- **Exercise 1: Sexuality as Divine Fire**
From Ronald Rolheiser’s *Holy Longing*, 3-11

“It is no easy task to walk this earth and find peace. Inside of us, it would see, something is at odds with the very rhythm of things and we are forever restless, dissatisfied, frustrated, and aching. We are so overcharged with **desire** that it is hard to come to simple rest. Desire is always stronger than satisfaction. Put more simply, there is within us a fundamental dis-ease, an unquenchable fire that

renders us incapable, in this life, of ever coming to full peace. This desire lies at the center of our lives, in the marrow of our bones, and in the deep recesses of the soul...

Spirituality concerns what we do with desire. It takes its roots in the Eros inside of us and it is all about how we shape and discipline that Eros... to offer a striking example of how spirituality is about how one handles his or her Eros, let us compare the lives of three famous women: Mother Teresa, Janis Joplin, and Princess Diana.

We begin with **Mother Teresa.** Few of us would, I suspect, consider Mother Teresa an erotic woman. We think of her rather as a spiritual woman... Yet she was erotic because she was a dynamo of energy... She was a human bulldozer, an erotically driven woman. She was, however, a very disciplined woman, dedicated to God and the poor.



Everyone considered her a saint... A saint is someone who can, precisely, channel powerful eros in a creative, life-giving way... Nobody disputes that Mother Teresa did just that, willed the one thing – God and the poor. She had a powerful energy, but it was a very disciplined one. Her fiery eros was poured out for God and the poor. That – total dedication to everything to God and poor – was her signature, her spirituality. It made her what she was.



Looking at **Janis Joplin,** the rock star who died from an overdose of life at age twenty-seven, few would consider her a very spiritual woman. Yet, she was one. People think of her as the opposite of Mother Teresa, erotic, but not spiritual. Yet Janis Joplin was not so different from Mother Teresa, at least not in the raw makeup and character. She was also an exceptional woman, a person of fiery Eros, a great lover, a person with a rare energy. Unlike Mother Teresa, however, Janis Joplin could not will the one thing. She willed many

things. Her great energy went out in all directions and eventually created an excess and a tiredness that led to an early death. But those activities – a total giving over to creativity, performance, drugs, booze, sex, coupled with the neglect of normal rest – were her spirituality. It was her signature. It was how she channeled her Eros...

Most of us, I suspect, are a bit like **Princess Diana** – half-Mother Teresa, half Janis Joplin... Princess Diana is held up as a person who is both, erotic and spiritual. That is rare, given how spirituality is commonly understood. Usually we see a person as one or the other, but not as both, erotic and spiritual... Spirituality is about how we channel our Eros. In Princess Diana's attempts to do this, we see something most of us can identify with, a tremendous complexity, a painful struggle for choice and commitment, and an oh-so-human combination of sins and virtues. Spirituality is what we do with the spirit that is within us. So, for Princess Diana, her spirituality was both the commitment to the poor and the Mediterranean vacations... Hers, we can see, was a mixed road... she chose some things that left her more integrated in body and soul and others which tore at her body and soul. Such is spirituality. It is about integration and disintegration, about making the choices that Princess Diana had to make and living with what that does to us."



Discuss: *Invite them in silence to reflect on the following questions in light of their own understanding of sexuality and then discuss the followings.*

- What stands out from the reading?
- What resonated with you in your own experience of sexuality?
- What challenged you?
- Any new ideas or themes present?
- Where does God seem to be emerging?

- **Exercise 2: My experiences of Sexuality**

Invite members to write on a larger piece of poster paper at the center of the circle. Invite them to write down one or more of the following:

- Words, phrases, or images that remain with them after their reflection
- Emerging questions about sexuality
- Additional themes or images that delineate sexuality for them

Invite the group to look upon the group's compilation. The conversation may be elicited in various ways:

- Ask members to identify what they see. What is being spoken about sexuality?
- If there are commonalities, it may be helpful to highlight these as the beginning of the conversation and ask members why they chose to articulate these themes
- Go around the group and have members describe what they wrote or drew and what moved them to do so.
- Ask, "How might a spiritually rooted understanding of sexuality re-shape a purely moralistic view?"

- **Listening Deeper**

Suggested Questions to deepen awareness of inner movements and further conversation

- What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
- How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
- Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5")

- **Action:**

- (1) Pray with your body (e.g. Yoga, Tai Chi, Labyrinth, Breathing, etc.)
- (2) share with your prayer partner

- **Announcements:** topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

If members want to learn more about Spirituality and Sexuality, refer them to Caminos Resource <http://www.youngadultclc.org/caminos/>

V. Closing Prayer (5"):

Pray for each other or use the CLC Closing Prayer

#9 My Gifts & Addictions



Scripture

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge, to another faith, to another gifts of healing, . . .to another the discernment of spirits, All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. (1 Cor 12:4-11)

Galatians 5:22-23 the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.

Note: this meeting is adapted from <http://www.youngadultclc.org/caminos/>

Introduction & Welcome (1”)

I. Opening Prayer (5”)

Grace: to identify our gifts and attachments.

Use the grace and the suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use CLC Opening and Closing prayer, which can be found in Appendixes section.

II. Check-In (5”)

Choose one below

- What were some of your high and low points of the week?
- How have you used one of your gifts this week?

III. Focus Exercise (40”)

Materials Needed: CLC supply box (CLC journal booklets, papers, pens, etc.)

- **30 small pieces of papers for each member**

- **Introduction:** The aim of this meeting is **to identify our gifts and addictions**. The “Everything But...” activity in this meeting helps us to do so.

The aim of this activity is to help members articulate that which is most important to them and in the process, perhaps illuminate “gifts” that might have become “addictions” as they are challenged to make choices between many entities that they esteem. The list is purposefully expansive to stretch a person’s imagination in reflecting upon the many gifts that are part of their daily lives. Not only is the activity intended to highlight disordered **attachments** but also grow in gratitude for the **gifts** in one’s life.

Instructions:

- Give each member of the group 30 square pieces of paper.
- Explain the rules of the activity:
 - 1) Tell them that you will instruct them on what to do with the papers throughout the activity and they cannot do anything apart from your instructions.
 - 2) Once decisions have been made with squares, there is no “going back.” A decision is always final and the decisions will only be given a set amount of time (decisions will be made more clear as the activity goes on).
 - 3) No talking during the activity. It must be conducted in silence.

- **Exercise 1: My Gifts**

- Invite members to write each of the following on their squares. Give them enough time to write.
 - 1) 5 most important material items (pause)
 - 2) 5 most important people in their life (pause)
 - 3) 5 important goal/hopes for the future for your life (pause....)
 - 4) 5 important memories (pause ...)
 - 5) 5 meaningful talents (pause)
 - 6) 5 activities that take up the most of your time (pause)

Note: If members say they cannot think of 5 things, tell them “YES YOU CAN- THINK MORE CREATIVELY!”

- **Discuss:** Once all group members have written their 30 items, invite them to display those squares in front of them and discuss them
 - 1) What do you notice during the activity?
 - 2) Are there any insights and feelings stir up within you?

- **Exercise 2: My Attachments**

Invite them to “let go” of each of these gifts in phases. How to let go? Pick up the number of squares and put them face down in the communal center or in the bucket, etc. Once you’ve done so, you can’t take them back. (note: You may consider other creative ways to let them go). Encourage members to notice their particular orientations or feelings as they have to let go of squares.

- PHASE 1: let go of 10 squares (Give 2 minutes or so for members to decide)
- PHASE 2: let go of 6 more squares (Give 1 minute for members to decide)
- PHASE 3: let go of 4 more squares (Give 30 seconds for members to decide)
- PHASE 4: let go of 4 more squares (Give 20 seconds for members to decide)
- PHASE 5: let go of 3 more squares (Give 15 seconds for members to decide)
- PHASE 6: let go of 2 more squares (Give 10 seconds for members to decide)
- PHASE 7: Let go of everything. Invite members to announce the last square they put down and reflect silently on the question: What remains?

Invite members to reflect upon their experience of the activity and their orientation toward the “letting go.”

Suggested Questions for conversation

- How did it feel to let go of all these things?
 - Were there some things that were easier to let go of than others?
 - How did you make your decisions?
 - Did your feelings change over the course of the activity?
- **Listening Deeper**
Suggested Questions to deepen awareness of inner movements and further conversation
 - How does the **First Principle and Foundation** affirm or challenge your orientation during the activity?
 - Is there anything that you are feeling called to let-go of?
 - Is there anything that you are feeling more grateful for?
 - Is there anything that you would like to reflect upon further in the coming weeks?

IV. Moving Forward (5”)

- **Action:**
 - (1) Pray with Awareness Examen: Pay attention to the circumstances you feel most **alive** in the week as well as when you are most likely to give into people, activities, or thoughts where you might be not be fully **free**. Do not judge. Just take note.
 - (2) Share with your prayer partner
- **Announcements:** topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5”):

Pray for one another or "Prayer for Detachment" by Bl. Peter Faber, SJ



I beg of you, my Lord,
to remove anything which separates
me from you, and you from me.
Remove anything that makes me unworthy
of your sight, your control, your rephension;
of your speech and conversation,
of your benevolence and love.
Cast from me every evil
that stands in the way of my seeing you,
hearing, tasting, savoring, and touching you;
fearing and being mindful of you;
knowing, trusting, loving, and possessing you;
being conscious of your presence
and, as far as may be, enjoying you.
This is what I ask for myself
and earnest desire from you. Amen.

#10 Call to Compassion



Scripture

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a man who was paralyzed, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'(Mk 2:1-12)

Mt 14:14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

Note: this meeting is adapted from <http://www.youngadultclc.org/caminos/>

Introduction & Welcome (1")

I. Opening Prayer (5")

Grace: to embody God's healing through inclusion and kinship in all our relationships.

Use the grace and the suggested scripture above to create your own prayer, or use the one below.

Dear Jesus, in the same way that you saw the faith of the paralytic's friends and healed him, we ask that you hear our own desires for healing in our lives and communities. Please give us the strength and courage to remove the obstacles that inhibit us and others from encountering your healing presence. Amen.

II. Check-In (5")

- When was the last time someone showed you compassion? (e.g., professor extends the deadline, forgiveness, etc.)

III. Focus Exercise (40")

Materials Needed: CLC supply box (CLC journal booklets, papers, pens, etc.)

- **Introduction:** Introduce the meeting to the group and explain that the following passage of Jesus healing a paralytic will frame the meeting. Invite the group to close their eyes and let the words sink into their hearts. After a brief moment of silence, begin reading the passage aloud. (note: you may use *Lectio Divina* or Ignatian Contemplation to guide the meditation)

- **Story: Removing the Roof (Mark 2:1-12)**

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a man who was paralyzed, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’

Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ‘Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’ At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, ‘Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven”, or to say, “Stand up and take your mat and walk”? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—he said to the paralytic—‘I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.’ And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this!’

- **Reflection of the Story: Tattoos on the Heart--*The Power of Boundless Compassion***

Introduce Greg Boyle’s reflection of the story. Encourage members to take notice of the images and words that move and/or challenge them. Have someone read the excerpt aloud. (Note: the excerpt can be found on the next page towards the end of this meeting)

- **Journaling:** Invite members to take time to pray and respond to the scripture and the reflection above. Encourage them to pay attention to the movements of their hearts. Play instrumental music while they pray. (Note: the questions are in their journal booklets)

- **Sharing:** Invite members to share.

- **Listening Deeper**

Suggested Questions to deepen awareness of inner movements and further conversation

- What has struck you as you have been listening to others share? Do you notice any patterns or commonalities?
- How have you been feeling throughout the meeting? Comfortable? Anxious? Curious?
- Is there anything you would like to share after listening to another person share?

IV. Moving Forward (5”)

- **Action:**

- (1) Pray with Awareness Examen: focus on the question, “How am I called to compassion in reaching out to those who are poor and marginalized in the society?”
- (2) Group service project: discuss group service project next quarter

- **Announcements:** topic for next meeting and upcoming CLC events

V. Closing Prayer (5”):

Pray for each other or for those who are poor and marginalized in the society.



**Tattoos on the Heart: *The Power of Boundless Compassion*
by Greg Boyle, S.J., pp. 71-75**

Pema Chodron, an ordained Buddhist nun, writes of compassion and suggests that its truest measure lies not in our service to those on the margins, but in our willingness to see ourselves in kinship with them. In 1987 Dolores Mission Church declared itself a sanctuary church for the undocumented, after passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Soon, recently arrived undocumented men from Mexico and Central America would sleep each night in the church (Guadalupe Homeless Project), and women and children, in the convent (Casa Miguel Pro).

Attention followed and lots of it. The media swarmed the place in these earliest days. As almost always happens, attention begets opposition. I used to dread clearing the parish's answering machine during this period. It always had a handful of hate messages and vague (and not so vague) death threats.

Once, while I turn the corner in front of the church, heading to a CEB [small Christian group] meeting in the projects, I am started by letters spray-painted crudely across the front steps: **WETBACK CHURCH.** The chill of it momentarily stops me. In an instant, you begin to doubt and question the price of things. I acknowledge how much better everything is when there is no cost and how I prefer being hoisted on the shoulders in acclaim to the disdain of anonymous spray cans.

I arrive at the meeting and tell the gathered women about our hostile visitor during the night. "I guess I'll get one of the homies to clean it up later." Petra Saldana, a normally quiet member of the group, takes charge. "You will not clean that up." Now, I was new at the parish and my Spanish was spotty. I understood the words she spoke but had difficulty circling in on the sense of it.

"You will not clean this up. If there are people in our community who are disparaged and hated and left out because they are *mojados* (wetbacks)..." Then she poises herself on the edge of the couch, practically read to leap to her feet. "Then we shall be proud to call ourselves a wetback church."

These women didn't just want to serve the less fortunate; they were anchored in some profound oneness with them and became them. "That you may be one as the Father and I am one."

Jesus and Petra are on the same page here. They chose an oneness in kinship and a willingness to live in others' hearts. Jesus was not a man for others. He was one with others. There is a world of difference in that. Jesus didn't seek the rights of lepers. He touched the leper even before he got around to curing him. He didn't fight for improved conditions for the prisoner. He simply said, "I was in prison." The strategy of Jesus is not centered in taking the right stand on issues, but rather in standing in the right place—with the outcast and those relegated to the margins.

Once the homeless began to sleep in the church at night, there was always the faintest evidence that they had. Come Sunday morning, we would foo foo the place as best we could. We would sprinkle I Love My Carpet on the rugs and vacuum like crazy. We would strategically place potpourri and Air Wick around the church to combat this lingering, pervasive reminder that nearly fifty (and later up to one hundred) men had spent the night there. About the only time we used incense at Dolores Mission was on Sunday morning, before the 7:30 a.m. mass crowd would arrive. Still, try as we might, the smell remained. The grumbling set in, and people spoke of "churching" elsewhere...

The smell was never overwhelming, just undeniably there. The Jesuits figured that if “we can’t fix it, then we’ll feature it.” So we determined to address the discontent in our homilies one Sunday. Homilies were often dialogic in those days, so one day I begin with, “What’s the church smell like?”

People are mortified, eye contact ceases, women are searching inside their purses for they know not what. “Come on, now” I throw back at them, “What’s the church smell like?”

“Huele a patas” (Smells like feet), Don Rafael booms out. He was old and never cared what people thought.

“Excellent. But why does it smell like feet?”

“Cuz many homeless men slept here last night?” says a woman. “Well, why do we let that happen here?”



“Es nuestro compromiso” (It’s what we’ve committed to do), says another. “Well, why would anyone commit to do that?”

“Porque es lo que haria Jesus.” (It is what Jesus would do.)

“Well, then...what’s the church smell like now?”

A man stands and bellows, “Huele a nuestro compromiso” (it smells like our commitment).

The place cheers. Guadalupe waves her arms wildly, “**Huele a rosas**” (smells like roses). The packed church roars with laughter and a newfound kinship that embraced someone else’s odor as their own. The stink in the church hadn’t changed, only how the folks saw it. The people at Dolores Mission had come to embody Wendell Berry’s injunction: “You have to be able to imagine lives that are not yours.”

Scripture scholars contend that the original language of the Beatitudes should not be rendered as “Blessed are the single-hearted” or “Blessed are the peacemakers” or “Blessed are those who struggle for justice.” Greater precision in translation would say, “You’re in the right place if...you are single- hearted or work for peace.” The Beatitudes is not a spirituality, after all. It’s a geography. It tells us where to stand.

Compassion isn’t just about feeling the pain of others; it’s about bringing them in toward yourself. If we love what God loves, then, in compassion, margins get erased. “Be compassionate as God is compassionate,” means the dismantling of barriers that exclude.

In Scripture, Jesus is in a house so packed that no one can come through the door anymore. So the people open the roof and lower this paralytic down through it, so Jesus can heal him. The focus of the story is, understandably, the healing of the paralytic. But there is something more significant than that happening here. They’re ripping the roof off the place, and those outside are being let in.

Journal Questions: Tattoos on the Heart

- 1) **What stands out** to you from the story? Are there images or developments in the story that surprise, move, or challenge you?

- 2) **“Heule a rosas.”** It is a miracle indeed when dirty feet can come to us as the smell of roses. When it came to teaching about the Kingdom of God, Jesus often said, “Those who have eyes to see, let them see. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear.” This story brings in another sense: “Those who have noses to smell, let them smell.”
 - What was it that allowed the church in this story to take this deeper perspective on the reality of their situation? What happened when they were able to do so?

 - Have you ever had an experience like this where you embraced an opportunity to see, feel, and experience a deeper “Kingdom” perspective on reality? What happened when you were able to do so?

 - What do you think helps or hinders you from taking the deeper “Kingdom” perspective?

- 3) “They’re ripping the roof off the place, and **those outside are being let in.**” Can you connect with the way the author portrays miracles and healing as dismantling the barriers that exclude others from full participation in community? Have you ever witnessed or experienced a ‘miracle’ through kinship with those on the margins?



- 4) How are you being called to act on your faith in **standing with** someone who is being excluded? What are the obstacles that stand between them and full participation in community?

