

PRAYER HOUR 2

THE WALK TO EMMAUS AND THE LOCKED UPPER ROOM

DIRECTIONS FOR PRAYER

This is a contemplation on the mystery of the Resurrection of our Lord. After the Offering of Myself, and a Preface to the subject matter of the Mystery, it contains some Points for Reflection, a Dialogue and a Communal Sharing of the fruits of the meditation.

OFFERING OF MYSELF

I beg the Three Divine Persons for grace during this hour that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to their praise and service.

A PREFACE TO THE MYSTERY

Jesus' appearance to His disciples on the road to Emmaus.

BRINGING MY WHOLE SELF TO THE MYSTERY

I read **Luke 24:13-43** and make an imaginative effort to put myself into the situation suggested by the scripture reading.

THE DESIRE OF MY HEART

I seek the grace to be happy and rejoice with all creatures as they bask in the glory and joy of the Risen Jesus Christ.

SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND CONSIDERATION

First point: I see and hear Cleopas and his friend talking as they walk. I take note of the details of the road and vegetation, and see Jesus joining them. I hear the doubt and confusion in their voices as they describe the report from the tomb.

Second point: I hear Jesus' words as He describes to them His graced history; I see their expressions as their hearts burn within them.

Third point: I see and hear Jesus' friends gathered in the room and the arrival of the two friends from Emmaus.

Fourth point: I reflect on how Jesus' divinity, almost hidden during the passion, now appears and is revealed so marvelously in the risen and glorified Christ.

Fifth point: I reflect on how He acts as our consoler and compare this with the way in which friends console one another. I reflect too, on how these two friends return seven miles that night to console their small community.

DIALOGUE

I speak with the Three Divine Persons in my astonishment and joy; I thank the Trinity that my despair is replaced with hope.

I close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

PREPARATION FOR SHARING MY PRAYER

As I recall my prayer and write it in my journal, I mark what I would like to share with my community.

PRAYER HOUR 3

JESUS' APPEARANCE TO HIS DISCIPLES ON THE SHORE OF LAKE TIBERIAS

DIRECTIONS FOR PRAYER

This is a meditation on the mystery of the Resurrection and Glory of Jesus Christ. After the Offering of Myself, and a Preface to the subject matter of the Mystery, it contains some Points for Reflection, a Dialogue and a Communal Sharing of the fruits of the meditation

OFFERING OF MYSELF

I beg the Three Divine Persons for grace during this hour that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to their praise and service.

A PREFACE TO THE MYSTERY

Jesus' Appearance to His Disciples on the Shore of Lake Tiberias

BRINGING MY WHOLE SELF TO THE MYSTERY

I read **John 21:1-25**, and make an imaginative effort to put myself into the situation suggested by the scripture reading.

THE DESIRE OF MY HEART

I seek the grace to be happy and rejoice with all creatures as they bask in the glory and joy of the Risen Jesus Christ.

SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND CONSIDERATION

First point: I contemplate Jesus directing His friends to make a huge catch of fish.

Second point: On the Tiberias lakeshore, I reflect on how Jesus' divinity, almost hidden during the passion, now appears and is revealed so marvelously in the risen and glorified Christ.

Third point: I see Peter leap off the boat to wade to shore. I reflect on how Jesus acts as our consoler and compare this with the way in which friends console one another.

DIALOGUE

I speak with the Trinity in my astonishment and joy; I thank the Trinity that my despair is replaced with hope.

I close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

PREPARATION FOR SHARING MY PRAYER

As I recall my prayer and write it in my journal, I mark what I would like to share with my community.

THESE ARE ADDITIONAL POINTS FOR PRAYER AND/OR EXTENSIONS OF THE POINTS ABOVE

You may find them helpful in leading you deeper into the mystery.

HOOR 2: THE WALK TO EMMAUS AND THE LOCKED UPPER ROOM

2. I ponder why we did not recognize Him at first sight. I see their faces as they recognize Him after He blesses the food. I see with joy how they are flooded with new life. I consider how this new biology reveals a hint of the vast evolutionary leap that awaits all life.
3. I see the locked door and sense their fear. I see Jesus appear in their midst. I consider how carefully Jesus ensures that they know His presence is physical, not ghostly. I marvel, with them, at the revelation of this new biology that is the basis of the material universe.
4. I reflect on the miracle of emergence; that is, our experience of true novelty. I marvel at the new community emerging from separate, discouraged, fearful individuals. Miraculously, it is much greater than the sum of those present and their desolation. I consider how the resurrected Lord draws all life in the universe into the future as an evolving community of increasing splendour and diversity.
5. I reflect how the Christ draws us to evolve toward full humanness. I consider that my evolution invites me to imitate Him; I console the lonely, the sad. I befriend all creatures. In this consolation, trees become fully trees, whales become fully whales, and I become fully human. This is emergence: a leap to unpredictable novelty, beauty, transcendence.

HOOR 3: JESUS' APPEARANCE TO HIS DISCIPLES ON THE SHORE OF LAKE TIBERIAS

1. I see Him making a fire to cook breakfast on the shore. I marvel that what I see in this early morning is a glimpse of the fulfillment of the great promise of the Trinity. It is that all matter, all creatures in the cosmos will share in the resurrection. It is this cosmos of hydrogen, carbon, DNA,

poetry, music, which will acquire a glorified information, not some ghostly substitute up in the heavens.

2. I become aware that St. Paul authored a glorious new biology of evolution. (**1 Cor 15:35-53; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 1:15-18; Colossians 3:1; Eph 3:20-21; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Rom 8:18-25; Rom 8:28-30**) John Haught interprets this new biology to explain that death is the switch-over from superficial associations with the world and creatures, to an ever-deepening intimacy with the entire cosmos - not a departure from it.
3. Jesus constantly befriended and consoled the lonely; moreover, His powerful parables were often about ravens, sowing seeds, harvest work, a fig tree, weeds, grapevines, yeast cells, lilies, grass. He ordered turbulent waters to be still; He changed water into wine, and loaves and fishes somehow cloned themselves. He commanded eyes to regain their sight, nerves to function, and life to animate a corpse. He was completely the author and source of this new biology. So I consider that if death is an evolutionary leap into greater intimacy with creation, then to prepare for death, I should, like Jesus, deepen and expand my friendship with persons and with creation. I ponder the astonishing logic of this life-force which prescribes that the right way to live is to prepare to die. (**Rom 6:8-11**)

APPLICATION OF THE SENSES

DIRECTIONS FOR PRAYER

This is a contemplation in which I apply the five senses to the matter of the previous contemplations on the Resurrection of Jesus. After the Offering of myself, and a Preface to the subject matter of the Mystery, it contains some Points for Reflection, a Dialogue and a Communal Sharing of the fruits of the meditation.

OFFERING OF MYSELF

I beg the Three Divine Persons for grace during this hour that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to their praise and service.

A PREFACE TO THE MYSTERY

The Resurrection of Jesus.

BRINGING MY WHOLE SELF TO THE MYSTERY

I make an imaginative effort to put myself into a place or situation suggested by the scripture readings in the previous contemplations on the Resurrection of Jesus.

THE DESIRE OF MY HEART

I seek the grace to be happy and rejoice with all creatures as they bask in the glory and joy of the Risen Jesus Christ.

SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND CONSIDERATION

Once again, I reflect on the consolations and desolations I have experienced in contemplations of the Resurrection of Jesus. I look for amazing insights about the Trinity and Jesus. I enter into the ones that most deeply impress me; I relish and savour them.

I consider the physical presence of the resurrected Christ to His disciples and to the community of life: trees, birds, soil, air, oceans.

I see the delight in Jesus' eyes.

I hear, as He surprises those in the Upper Room, their songs of joy joined with the songs of all creatures.

I taste the mystery of the Trinity's amazing love, concealed for eons within all of evolving nature.

I smell the fragrance of trees, grass, and flowers in the promised fulfillment of the new biology.

I touch, with Thomas, His wounds and wounded creation.

DIALOGUE

I speak to Jesus my friend and brother, in the triumph of His victory.

I close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

PREPARATION FOR SHARING MY PRAYER

As I recall my prayer and write it in my journal, I mark what I would like to share with my community.

CONTEMPLATIO

THE CONTEMPLATION TO ATTAIN LOVE FOR THE TRINITY

PRAYER HOUR 1

These three hours are prayed after the three prayer hours on the fourth exercises, either in the same week as the fourth exercises prayers or the week after.

INTRODUCTION

This prayer assists us to fulfill our deep desires to love the Three Divine Persons with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. It helps us find God in the mystery of our own lives. We recognize that our lives are intimately connected to the rest of the community of life. Through this prayer we appreciate the many gifts we have received through the Trinity's love for us and for all members of the community of life. We are filled with a gratitude, which leads us to love the Three Divine Persons and offer ourselves to them. The four points focus on remembering, being present, appreciating the effort of the Trinity for me, and their love for me. As I pray the *Contemplatio*, I realize that these expressions of love are given in the communal context of the universal community of life.

DIRECTIONS FOR PRAYER

This is a contemplation on the mystery of my own life within the community of all life. As such, it follows the same method as those in previous contemplations

Note: Before this exercise it will be helpful to call attention to two things:

- First, love ought to be manifested in deeds, rather than words.
- Second, love consists in a mutual sharing among persons, for example, as a lover gives and shares with the beloved what he or she possesses, or has to give; and vice versa, the beloved shares with the lover. Thus if one has knowledge, it should be shared with one who does not, and so also with

honours, or riches, so that one is always sharing with others. [*Sp. Ex.* 230-231]

OFFERING OF MYSELF

I seek the grace to be happy and rejoice with all creatures as all of us praise the Trinity and experience the glory and joy that our Risen Christ experiences when we, also, have experiences of new life.

A PREFACE TO THE MYSTERY

The life story of each of us can be seen as an experience of the Trinity's love coming to each of us through the life of Jesus, and through other exemplars, friends, family, the living creatures sharing earth with us, and the actual mineral substances of our earth. As a preparation for this contemplation, let us recall the many places and situations where we have experienced the Trinity's love.

BRINGING MY WHOLE SELF TO THE MYSTERY

I observe myself standing in the presence of the Trinity, with Jesus Christ and of all the angelic and saintly beings both great and small of the universe who intercede for me.

THE DESIRE OF MY HEART

I ask for what I desire. Here it will be to ask for an intimate knowledge of the great gifts I have received, that filled with gratitude for all, I may in all things love and serve the Trinity.

SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND CONSIDERATION

First Point of the *Contemplatio* [230-234]: Read the following passage from Teilhard de Chardin's, *Le Milieu Divin*:

“By virtue of creation and still more of the Incarnation, nothing is profane here below on earth to him who knows how to see. On the contrary, everything is sacred for the one who in every creature distinguishes the particle of the selected being that is subjected to the attraction of Christ in the process of consummation.”

Continue with Ignatius' First Point of the *Contemplatio*: I recall the activity of the Trinity as they initiate the vast evolutionary process, which results in the formation of millions of galaxies, stars, and planets, as well as

myself. Recall also, the presence of Jesus Christ who has given me and the community of life meaning and fulfilment. I will reflect on my experience of the Trinity's presence in the special persons and occasions of my life. I ponder, with great feeling, on how much the Trinity has done for me, and the community of life: how much they have given me, and finally on how much they desire to give me their very selves. Then I will reflect upon myself and consider, according to all reason and justice, what I ought to offer to the Trinity, that is, all I possess, and my own being as well.

DIALOGUE

Moved with great love, I will make this offering of myself:

TAKE AND RECEIVE

Take, O Trinity, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me. To You, O Trinity, I return it. All is Yours. Dispose of it wholly according to Your will. Give me your love and your grace. That is enough for me.

Close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

PREPARATION FOR SHARING MY PRAYER

As I recall my prayer (Review) and write it in my journal, I mark what I would like to share with my community.

PRAYER HOUR 2

All parts of the prayer exercise are the same as **PRAYER HOUR 1** except for the following **POINT**.

SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND CONSIDERATION

Second Point of the *Contemplatio* [230-235]: Recall the instructions of the First Point. Then read the following passage taken from David Darling's book, *The Science of Death, the Logic of Reincarnation*, (p. 170):

"We now know - and every experiment quantum physicists carry out further bolsters our knowledge - that we are deeply, intrinsically bound up with reality as a whole. Subject and object are one."

Continue with Ignatius' Second Point of the *Contemplatio*. I reflect on how the Trinity began the evolutionary process, which resulted in the universe and all beings within it. I note how the Trinity dwells in all creatures: in the elements giving them existence, in the plants giving them growth, in the animals conferring upon them sensation, in human beings giving them understanding. I ponder how the Holy Spirit also dwells in me as in a temple, since I am created in the image and likeness of the Trinity. Then I will reflect upon myself again in the manner described in the First Point, or in some other way that may seem better.

DIALOGUE

Moved with great love, I will make an offering of myself by praying the prayer, *Take and Receive*, given above.

Close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

PREPARATION FOR SHARING MY PRAYER

As I recall my prayer (Review) and write it in my journal, I mark what I would like to share with my community.

PRAYER HOUR 3

All parts of the prayer exercise are the same as **PRAYER HOUR 1** except for the following **POINTS**.

Third Point of the *Contemplatio* [230-236]: Recall the other instructions of the First Point. Then read the following passage taken from John Honner's book, *Time God and Cosmology*:

“For others, like Paul Davies, the brilliant orderedness of the cosmos implies some great designer who is called God...Like William Paley or Isaac Newton or Albert Einstein, Davies sees God not only uninvolved in the universe, but also unable to be involved.”

Continue with the Third Point of the *Contemplatio*. I will consider how the Trinity, with the all living beings and inanimate matter of the universe, works and labours for me, that is, they labour to continue their creative act. Thus in the heavens, the elements, the plants, the fruits, and animals, the Trinity gives existence, protects, gives growth and feeling. Then I will reflect on myself.

Fourth Point of the *Contemplatio* [230-237]: Recall the two notes on love and the other instructions of the First Point. Then read the following passage taken from Rupert Sheldrake's book, *THE REBIRTH OF NATURE, The Greening of Science and God* (p. 110):

“The hypothesis of formative causation suggest that memory depends on morphic resonance rather than material memory stores. Morphic resonance (mirror memory) depends on similarity. It involves an effect of like on like. The more similar an organism is to an organism in the past, the more specific and effective the morphic resonance. In general, any given organism is most like itself in the past and hence subject to highly specific resonance from its own past.”

Continue with the Fourth Point of the *Contemplatio*. This is to reflect that all blessings and gifts in me and in creation are an expression of the Trinity's love. Thus our limited power comes from the supreme and infinite

power of the Trinity's love and, so too, our beauty, justice, goodness, pity, mercy, and all our virtues. The Trinity poured out upon us as the rays of light descend from the sun and as the water from a fountain. Then, once again, I will reflect on myself.

DIALOGUE

Moved with great love, I will make an offering of myself by praying this prayer, *Take and Receive*.

I close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

PREPARATION FOR SHARING MY PRAYER

As I recall my prayer (Review) and write it in my journal, I mark what I would like to share with my community.

Two additional readings you might find helpful are: **John 4:7-21** and **Luke 10:21-24**.

HOW TO MAKE A COMMUNAL DECISION

INTRODUCTION

Our experiences of prayer in the *Spiritual Exercises* can help us to make decisions, either individual or communal. Making a communal decision occurs over a number of weeks of prayer and discussion.

Ignatius asks us to make an important life decision while contemplating the life of Jesus. *The Two Standards*, *The Three Types of Persons* and *The Three Kinds of Humility* help with this by giving us a context for recognizing our interior movements and learning the correct criteria for making a decision. By following this formal process, we are better able to attain some spiritual freedom and, therefore, make a better decision. The steps for making a communal decision are given below. Read them, but don't worry about remembering the steps, they will become familiar to you and your community as you use them.

SIX STEPS IN DISCERNING A SIGNIFICANT COMMUNAL DECISION

1. The **first step** in making a communal decision is to **research an issue** you think might be of interest to you and your community. This step is taken in the light of the graces and insights given to you and your community during your prayer with the *Spiritual Exercises*. An example of an issue might be homelessness in your city. Leave time to share on various issues at your **community meeting**. Listen to the issues and the discussion around them. In a second round of sharing, identify any common themes or insights that emerge. Try to articulate a common issue.
2. The **second step** in this process is to **pray in the coming week** over what you have heard and then **compose an open-ended question**, i.e., one that has many answers, which you think is in the hearts and minds of community members. An example might be, "*How can our community help the homeless this year?*" Bring this to the next meeting and share it. If similar questions are given by other members, use part of your meeting to formulate

a clear open-ended question, such as, “*How can we help at the homeless shelter this year?*” If there is time begin listing possible answers.

3. The **third step** is to agree on a specific answer and reword it to the satisfaction of all. An example might be, “*We will help at the homeless shelter on five weekends this coming year*”. In addition, the group will compose its opposite, which in this example would be is, “*We will NOT help at the homeless shelter on five weekends this coming year.*” Each member takes these two statements home and before the next meeting lists the **advantages and disadvantages** of each statement, thus producing four columns. Bring your four columns to the next community meeting. Share your four columns by going around the circle, each person giving his or her reasons for *one column* until the community has a complete list for that column. Do the same for the other three columns. Pray over what you have heard in the sharing in the coming week. Come to the next meeting with a **provisional decision**, having read step four.
4. At this meeting each member first shares one reason, taken from the four columns, which influenced him/her the most, without naming their provisional decision. This process helps the group recognize whether there is **CONSENSUS**. The description of **CONSENSUS** is found below. Read this **before** your meeting. If consensus is evident, then the fourth step follows, which is each person, in turn, indicates his or her **provisional decision**. A **communal** provisional decision is then made.

CONSENSUS

Consensus in a group is a special form of confirmation. It is not simply majority rule or unanimity. It means that everyone in the group will be satisfied they and others have been listened to, that the gifts of each member have been acknowledged and that a free and effective process has been followed. The group will know itself as loved by God. Members will have a sense of wonder and of being drawn into the future, despite the group's limitations and past sufferings. The group will experience consolation as a gift from the Holy Spirit.

The group will have an awareness of transcendence and experience the beauty, truth, and goodness of God as well as union with God. The fruits of consensus for the community are:

- *the consoling insight of seeing the Paschal mystery in the life of the group, since the decision means dying to self for the sake of the universal community of life,*
- *group members may feel a special sense of wholeness and consolation,*
- *all are committed to the decision and its implementation with realistic hope and joy,*
- *an experience of a freeing and creative love operating in the group.*

*Consensus is experienced as a **unanimous decision**, made in true consolation, that is to say, all are satisfied with the process and the decision. It may also be experienced as a **high degree of agreement**. If this is the case, try to get unanimity by asking those not in agreement to state their objections to the decision and discover what will satisfy them in implementing the decision. Keep in mind the reasons against the decision, even as the group implements it. If there is a **low degree of agreement**, the group would be wise to revisit the general issue and look for another proposal for discernment.*

5. The **fifth step** is **SEEKING CONFIRMATION** of the decision. If consensus is reached, go round the circle once again, this time indicating whether or not you experienced consolation. Describe your experience briefly. If you are not in agreement with the communal decision, state your objections and make suggestions for change.
6. The **sixth step** is **implementing the decision**. Many a well-discerned decision is lost in implementation. Make sure that communications and delegation are dealt with as soon as possible after the decision is made. As the group works through various items of implementation it will become aware of the costs to the group. When members face these costs in union with Christ suffering and still wish to do the work, they will have another experience of consolation.

On the following pages you will find two examples of Ignatian prayer, which may help you and your community make a *significant communal decision*.

TWO PRAYER EXERCISES FOR UNDERTAKING A COMMUNAL DECISION

PRAYER HOUR 1

A MOMENT OF DECISION

DIRECTIONS FOR PRAYER

I contemplate the action of the early Christian community in **Acts 11:27-30** as an example of a communal discernment.

OFFERING OF MYSELF

I beg God for grace that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of the Holy Trinity.

A PREFACE TO THE MYSTERY

It is not always possible, due to time and circumstances, to use a formal process of decision-making. However, the weeks of prayer over the *Spiritual Exercises* are times of grace and spiritual growth for communities. They provide the foundation for making an important communal decision. This work involves increasing the beauty, diversity and novelty in the universal community of life by living in an attitude of forgiveness and by befriending humans, plants and animals that are suffering or oppressed. When we do this, we contribute to the evolution of greater freedom for the cosmos.

BRINGING MY WHOLE SELF TO THE MYSTERY

I read **Acts 11:27-30** and place myself with the early Christian community.

THE DESIRE OF MY HEART

I ask for an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ, who became a creature like one of us for the sake of the universal community of life, that I may imitate Him in His respect for all life and love Him in the fullness of communion with all creation.

SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND CONSIDERATION

First point: I see the disciples making a decision to contribute to famine

relief. I hear what they are saying.

Second point: The reading from Acts describes a moment of decision for the early Christian community. As I reflect on this reading, I think of how the Spirit was active in this young Christian community and what resulted from the decision they made.

Third point: I consider the four elements that precede a good decision. They are: **first**, an intimate knowledge of Christ's beauty, goodness, truth and oneness with us and the Trinity; **second**, a knowledge of true and false impulses coming to us from our cultural, political and social environments; **third**, an awareness of our usual ways of making decisions and meeting a commitment; **fourth**, responding with a deep desire to be with Christ in His work.

DIALOGUE

I ask Mary to ask Jesus to help our faith community focus on making a communal decision and to guide us to an issue that is important for our community. I go with Mary to Jesus to ask for the same guidance. I go with Mary and make the same request of the Trinity.

I close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

PREPARATION FOR SHARING MY PRAYER

As I recall my prayer with step one, I write in my journal what I wish to share with my community.

PRAYER HOUR 2

JESUS TEACHES HIS FOLLOWERS

DIRECTIONS FOR PRAYER

This contemplation on Jesus' teaching can help us when we begin the process for making a communal decision.

OFFERING OF MYSELF

I beg God for grace that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of the Holy Trinity.

PREFACE TO THE MYSTERY

Freedom can be thought of as external. So, one is a *free citizen* or *free to move*. Freedom is also an internal disposition. In Jesus there is a new stress on *interior freedom*, and on making decisions to start something unpredictably new. Jesus brings about the latter by being with the poor as a friend and healer, living in an attitude of forgiveness that informs all His words and actions and making liberation and freedom an interior movement, as well as an external event. His life provides us with a way to liberate and restore healthy relationships of all in Earth's community of life. He is an evolutionary force for freedom, and hopes we will follow His example.

BRINGING MY WHOLE SELF TO THE MYSTERY

I read **Luke 6:27-38** or **Matthew 5:38-48** and place myself in the crowd, listening to Jesus.

THE DESIRE OF MY HEART

I ask for an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ, who became a creature like one of us for the sake of the universal community of life, that I may imitate Him in His respect for all life and love Him in the fullness of communion with all creation.

SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND CONSIDERATION

First point: I see and hear Jesus talking to the crowd, giving us His new vision for the community of life, one of compassion and forgiveness. I watch the expressions of amazement or, perhaps, disbelief on the faces of those in the crowd.

Second point: Darwinian thinkers believe that morality is *hardwired* in our brains and therefore, determined by our genes. So the choice is not whether an action is moral or immoral, but whether or not to chose the nerve cell activity in our brains, which we call morality. This attitude is an example of what John Haught calls “a metaphysics of the past” because it “rules out the coming of something genuinely new”. (*God After Darwin*, p. 86) Jesus is the genuinely new expression of *spiritual freedom* giving us a way to make good decisions by cultivating a forgiving, loving attitude.

Third point: I ask for the humble freedom of Jesus as I consider the steps in making a Communal Decision. Are there any tasks or issues facing my community? What are they? I develop an open-ended question related to the one I consider most significant, and list the answers to this question. I use this for entering into a discerning process for making a communal decision.

DIALOGUE

I ask Mary to ask Jesus to help my faith community and me to focus on and make a communal decision and to guide us to an issue that is important for our community. I go with Mary to Jesus to ask for the same guidance. I go with Mary and make the same request of the Trinity.

I close with the prayer Jesus taught us.

PREPARATION FOR SHARING MY PRAYER

As I recall my prayer with step one, I write in my journal what I wish to share with my community.

IF YOU WISH, REFLECT ON ANY OF THESE ADDITIONAL POINTS

You may find them helpful in making a communal decision.

First point: I remember that the disposition for making a good communal decision is one that includes all members of Earth's community of life. Reflection on relationships with our plant and animal kin, and their relationships with each other, is one way to think about being united with a common purpose and mind. I read **Philippians 2:1-11** and enter into the mystery of being united with my CLC group and Earth's community of life. Jesus Christ became a creature like one of us for the sake of this community. I seek to imitate Him in His respect for all life and love Him in the fullness of communion with all creation.

Second point: I reflect on the following story of friendship with trees and ask myself how this friendship affects the decisions of those involved.

The Chipko movement is a method of non-violent resistance based on Gandhi's method of satyagraha. It acts to prevent the destruction of rural forests in India, which are a critical resource for rural villagers. For decades, the trees in these forests were increasingly felled by industry. The first Chipko action took place spontaneously in 1973. Chipko leaders and participants are mostly women acting to preserve their communities and their livelihood. They place their bodies between the trees and the loggers' saws and axes. The name "Chipko" comes from a word meaning "embrace" and that is what the women do; they put their arms around the tree they wish to protect. They know what many of us don't; that the members of Earth's community of life are our kin, deserving of respect, needing to be listened to and valued and taken into account when making decisions.

Third point: I reflect on the story below, an illustration of being united in love, with a common purpose and a common mind. I draw fruit from my reflection.

This excerpt, from an essay by Joy Williams, describes the author's experience of buying 5 adjacent lots, totalling one acre, on a two-lane road in

Florida, 30 years ago. Since then, all the land adjacent to her acre has become a housing subdivision. Roads were built, trees and wildlife uprooted, driven out or killed. The author decided to let her acre just be- no building, except for the small cypress house and cottage already there, no lawn, no garden. In 1990, she had a wall built around the acre.

“Behind the wall was an Edenic acre...Although the wall did not receive social approbation, its approval from an ecological point of view was resounding. The banyan, as though reassured by the audacious wall, flung down dozens of aerial roots. The understory flourished; the oaks soared, creating a great grave canopy. It was odd. I fancied that I had made an inside for the outside to be safe in...Inside was cool and dappled, hymned with birdsong... An osprey roosted each night in a casuarina that leaned out over the lagoon, a tree of no good reputation and half-dead, but the osprey deeply favoured it, folding himself into it invisibly in a few seconds each nightfall. A pair of yellow-crowned night herons nested in a slash pine...A single acre was able to nurture so many lives, including mine. Its existence gave me great happiness.” (One Acre, by Joy Williams, in Harper’s magazine, February 2001)

Fourth point: I reflect on these wise sayings.

- *“Better than a thousand useless words is one single word that gives peace.”* (a saying of the Buddha)
- *“Forgiving is the only reaction that does not merely react but acts anew and unexpectedly, unconditioned by the act that provokes it.”* (Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition*, p. 241)

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