



LANTERI CENTER FOR IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY
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LANTERI CENTER FOR IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY
A mission of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary

Fall 2022 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

I hope you're enjoying a wonderful Autumn. God's handiwork is amazing! Here in Denver, we see the beautiful golden Aspen color, but I miss the reds and orange colors from the Midwest and East. In this newsletter, we are excited to feature Alicia Torres, F.E., a graduate of our Spiritual Exercises training program, and her work with children at her school in Chicago.

We have begun the National Eucharistic Revival in the Church in America which will continue for three years. All Catholics are invited to a renewed encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist, especially if they don't fully understand its power. Pope Francis, in calling for the liturgical formation of the people of God, has called for "real existential engagement" with the person of Christ in the Liturgy. This happens according to the pattern of the Incarnation in a sacramental way with concrete things such as the altar, bread, wine, oil, water, etc.—the matter of the sacraments. Pope Leo the Great once explained that all that is visible of the Risen Christ has passed into the sacraments, wherein we encounter him. The sacraments are accentuated with other concrete materials such as candles, garments, rings, incense, gestures, bells, etc. All creation is in fact meant to reveal God and is meant to be drawn into the worship of God, and to help us to praise him, as the Psalms and St. Francis' *Canticum of the Creatures* so well demonstrate. When we comprehend the deeper essence of these created things ordered

to the worship of God we are interiorly transformed. Experiencing these realities in the Sacraments develops the interior senses of the imagination. St. Bonaventure explains that the inner senses are restored to see the highest beauty, to hear the highest harmony, to smell the highest fragrance, to taste the highest sweetness so that the soul is prepared for spiritual advancement and greater union with God.

The Song of Songs is rich in this symbolism of nature and the human person engaged in Temple worship and wedding ritual. The intensely personal expression of love brings a strong devotional component to our worship. This symbolism, as in the Liturgy, engages all our senses and imagination and leads us to union with Christ. In this vein, I'll be presenting *Consuming Love, the Eucharist and the Song of Songs at the Lanteri Center and hopefully in parishes over the coming months.*

Thank you for your prayers and generous support of the Lanteri Center and all our works. Be assured of our prayers for you as we seek to meet your spiritual needs.

Sincerely in Jesus and Mary,

Fr. Greg



Eucharistic Revival Conference

Consuming Love: The Eucharist and the Song of Songs

Fr. Greg Cleveland, OMV, Author and Director

November 11-12, 2022,

Lanteri Center for Ignatian Spirituality

Friday 7:00—8:30 PM, Saturday, 9:00 AM—2:30 PM.

Cost: \$35 (Includes Lunch) Register: lantericenteromvusa.org—Events



BRUSH STROKES OF GOD

VIA PULCHRITUDINIS, BY CATHY

A few months ago, the staff of The Lanteri Center attended the delightful Van Gogh exhibit "Immersion". It was quite an experience. The genius of Van Gogh, his colors, and his brushstrokes are digitally splashed on the walls, ceiling, floor, and even the spectator, though participant is a better word. You participate with the art as you are plunged into Van Gogh's world, your body becoming part of the canvas of the room. Brushstrokes are enlarged and splashed on the surrounding space here, there, and everywhere. Alone, they are beautiful. Thick, bold dabs of color demanding that you take notice. But taken alone, they don't tell the whole story. Zoom out and they are the elements of the swaying wheatfield, so expressively painted that you can feel the wind in your hair, the sun on your face, hear the shafts of wheat dancing. Zoom out and now they are the dense, dark nuances of a summer's night sky with brilliant swirling stars strewn across the heavens evoking the feeling of standing in the cool grass, gazing upward. As the brushstrokes pass over your body, you're aware that each one is a specific moment in eternity, a specific moment in the heart and mind of Van Gogh, an intersection of time and space never to be lived again. There is something sacred about those brushstrokes. Each moment of our own lives is like one of these brushstrokes. Immersed in the moment, it can be hard for us to see the overall picture. Some brushstrokes may be dark, obscured, and even overlapped by the next. The darker brushstroke may be the backdrop to the brilliant hue that is laid over it, creating depth. But all that we experience in any moment is part of the larger picture of our lives. As in all great masterpieces, each stroke of the brush, blow of the chisel, note in the composition, or word of the poem, lends itself to the harmony of the whole piece. Take one moment out, and somehow the work of art wouldn't capture the same beauty. In this life, we don't know what any given moment may hold for us. In each brushstroke of our life, we are called to be immersed in the experience of our own sacred work of art. Each moment of life invites us to take notice of this intersection of time and space given to us, never to be lived again. At the end of our life God, the Supreme Artist, will show us the finished masterpiece of love that is our life in Him. We are each a brilliant color in God's infinite palette of love. He is at work creating the masterpiece of our life and He asks that we hold the brush with Him, to trust in The Master's Hand



Out of the Mouths of Babes: Spiritual Exercises with Children by Sr. Alicia Torres, F.E.



“Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” (Matt 19:14) A little known fact about the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola is that he spent the final years of his life among children—teaching them about the Lord Jesus. I can’t help but smile as I consider this, for truly the entire movement of the Exercises is at the service of spiritual childhood: utter dependence upon the goodness of the Father, after the pattern of the Son, through the movements of the Holy Spirit. Nearly 500 years later, I’d like to offer my reflections and share the graces received while making the Spiritual Exercises with Kindergarteners through 8th graders during the 2020-2021 school year.

The Principle and Foundation

I have a distinct memory of one of our last days exploring the Principle and Foundation. ... *To keep from getting distracted, I have to learn how to receive everything from God with open hands. When my hands are open, I am not holding on to things to own them, but holding them with love and gratitude because they are a gift from God and they belong to Him. I had prayerfully penned this as part of the adaptation of the P&F I’d prepared for the children. They were remarkably recollected as they were drawing the gifts God had given them on the worksheet that showed open hands and a large heart, which I’d drawn for them. I saw one little girl drawing different, nondescript objects in her open hands. “Tell me about your drawing—what have you drawn?” I said softly to Joy. “The world,” she responded firmly. I replied, “The world? Does God give you the world?” “Yes, the whole world,” she said, as if that was quite natural. I was deeply moved with love for that child and felt a communion with her in the Lord I can’t quite explain. Somehow her disposition made what I knew in my head sink into a new depth of my heart—God literally has given us the whole world ...*

Week One

“How could they turn their back on God when He’d given them everything?” one of the seventh grader girls wrote in her journal after we meditated on the Fall. “They had it so good, they had everything! I don’t understand how they could do that.” There was a sincerity to Grace’s nearly page length reflection which not only revealed the confusion sin caused her personally, but her own awareness that she, too, had turned away. That grace was starting to grow in her—to be open to the question, “What am I doing for God ... what ought I to do for Him?” Somehow, by honestly acknowledging the sin of the angels and the sin of Adam and Eve ... she was not so afraid to examine her own heart and notice her own turning away. She had a renewed hope as a few days later we meditated at the foot of the Cross and asked those questions ... and sincerely sought what she ought to do for Jesus. “He wants a deeper relationship with me ... I need to open my heart to Him,” she wrote.

Call of the King

Throughout the Exercises, we took time to pray as St. Ignatius recommends—with our imaginations. It is very special to sit among children and lead a meditation: when they are recollected, the presence of the Lord is impossible to miss. “Yes, Jesus, I will fight. I will fight with you and for you,” were among the captions of the artwork our third and fourth graders drew after we considered Jesus’ invitation. Large castles, enemy armies, swords and King Jesus were depicted in so many creative ways. Yet, each child was moved to want to be a part of Jesus’ army, no matter the cost. It made reality so much more simple for me. “Anything you want Jesus, I want it to” is what the children were really saying. And they said it with a resolute spirit. It helped me reconsider my own call, my own vocation and what it could mean to live totally for Jesus ... if I really drank it to the dregs.

The Second Week

“Jesus puts the light into the star,” she explained as I gazed in awe at her picture. We just prayed with the Nativity story, and I invited the children to draw what they saw in their hearts as we had prayed. Emmy drew Mary and Joseph on either side of the manger with a very happy baby Jesus in the middle. Above the scene was a large star, with a ray of light connecting the star to the Child. When I asked her about

that ray of light, she firmly expressed Jesus was the source, not the star: “He is our Light.”

The Third Week

“Helen sat next to me and sighed heavily. She started telling me all the things they had done to Jesus, and how sad she was, they’d killed Jesus. Then she just sighed again and sat there, quietly,” our gym teacher reported, deeply moved by little Helen’s compassion. The Passion Narrative had moved the small children in a unique way. They painstakingly included small details in their artwork, like Jesus sweating blood in the Garden of Gethsemane or the little hooks on the end of the cords the soldiers whipped Him with. They didn’t just draw what they were experiencing in prayer, but carried it in their hearts into the rest of the school day.

The Fourth Week

“Yes Lord, you know that I love you.” With Jesus, there is always a second chance. The mercy of Jesus displayed in the post-Resurrection accounts was especially powerful for the older children. Jesus kept coming back, kept opening His hands to his friends ... the invitation remained: Follow me. “I just love Jesus SO MUCH,” Vicky wrote. Often the older girls would spend their journal time drawing large hearts and flowers to express what life after the Resurrection was like: something beautiful, something new.

The Contemplation

Another grace of the Exercises was how real it made the Eucharist for the youngest children—they truly came to believe the Eucharist is Jesus. During the final mediation we pondered the question “What should I offer back to God for all He has given to me, for all He has done for me?” The children took it very seriously. Discussing her drawing, Maria explained “I drew my heart, the Eucharist and the water.” “Why did you draw water?” I asked. “The water is to wash away His blood (Jesus’) so that we can drink His blood.” She just looked at me, with no further words. Her classmate Annie, explaining her picture, shared “I am giving God my body and my spirit. My eyes are crossed out because I am offering my life to God. I want to die for Him.” It felt surreal as I listened to these first graders, who had gained a profound heart-knowledge of what it means to offer, and to be offered. They were already living Eucharistic lives.

Making the Spiritual Exercises with children has left a deep mark on my heart and taught me something so simple and yet so profound: to be a child means to be loved, to be free ... and to be unfettered in sharing that love and freedom with the whole world as we rest confidently in the good company of Jesus and all our friends.

Alicia Torres, F.E., is a member of the Franciscans of the Eucharist of Chicago. She works at the Mission of Our Lady of the Angels on Chicago’s West Side and serves as a religion teacher in an inner-city Catholic school. Her writing has appeared in First Things, Catholic News Service and Living City.



The Letters of St. Therese of Lisieux

Fr. Timothy Gallagher, OMV

Saturday/Sunday,

January 28-29, 2023

9:00 AM—3:00 PM

Cost: \$50: (Includes Lunch)

Register: Events at

Lanternicenteromvusa.org



Be firmly resolved never to let yourself be troubled by anything in the world. Present yourself humbly and with complete confidence to the Lord in prayer, and he will not fail to have compassion on you.”
Ven. Bruno Lanteri, OMV

Upcoming : Silent Retreat

Dates

Spring: March 29-
April 2, 2023

Fall: October 18-22,
2023

Mother Cabrini Shrine
Golden, CO



All the things of this world are gifts from God, created for us, to the means by which we can come to know him better, love him more surely, and serve him more faithfully.
St. Ignatius of Loyola