

Finding the Place and Time for a Retreat

Objective:

Many of us have positive memories of faith renewed at a spiritual retreat. Going on retreat means fitting it in with family and work responsibilities. It is challenging to find a nearby location which offers an appropriate retreat at a time you can get away. However, sometimes you just have to make a commitment to do it.

Song Suggestion: You are Near (Blue 554, Red 590, Glory & Praise Hymnal p. 610)

Bible and Catechism Readings:

1 Kings 19: 11-13

He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

[God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire. God was found in "a sound of sheer silence."]

Psalm 46:10

Be still, and know that I am God!

Matthew 4: 2

He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.

Luke 6: 12

Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God.

Matthew 14:23

And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,

Mark 1:35

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.

Catechism 2602

Jesus often draws apart to pray in solitude, on a mountain, preferably at night.

Catechism 2691

...-In regions where monasteries exist, the vocation of these communities is to further the participation of the faithful in the Liturgy of the Hours and to provide necessary solitude for more intense personal prayer.

Saint: St. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556) is noted for developing the popular "Spiritual Exercises." The goal of these exercises is to help the retreatant discover the will of God in their lives. In 1922, Pius XI declare St. Ignatius to be "the heavenly Patron of all Spiritual Exercises."

Vignette:

Paul was generally satisfied in his efforts at being a good husband and father. However, his job was demanding and he had little time for his spiritual life - other than church on Sunday. He was beginning to feel flat, and uninspired... as if he was just going-through-the-motions. He realized he needed more than a golf weekend or a beach vacation. He remembered the boost he had gotten in the past from going on retreats organized by his school and parish and wondered where he could find one now.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

What are your memories of going on a spiritual retreat?

Paul thought about going on a one day retreat, a weekend retreat, or perhaps a week long retreat. He even considered a prayerful walking pilgrimage to a shrine. Paul had heard about Catholic family retreats but did not know much about them. He wondered if he should go on retreat alone, with a friend, or with a group. What are your thoughts?

Paul knew he would find retreat information on the websites of a) the Jesuit Retreat Center in Milford, OH, b) the Abbey of Gethsemani near Bardstown, KY, and c) St. Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, IN. d) He also learned that for those seeking a retreat with intense learning/many teachings, there is a place in Peebles, OH. <https://www.presentationministries.com/> e) The local Legionarie priests put on retreats. <https://rcohiiovalley.org/> f) There is a retreat center in Maria Stein, OH (North of Dayton). <http://spiritualcenter.net/> Are there other nearby opportunities?

Paul considered incorporation of the Spiritual Exercises in his daily life. He realized that the seasons of Advent and Lent could be structured for a retreat-like experience - without leaving home. Paul thought he would be more likely to be consistent with Spiritual Exercises if he felt accountable to a small group. He wondered if he should join or form a small prayer group. Your thoughts?

Action Plan:

Example: 1) Explore opportunities; 2) Make a commitment to go on a retreat within the next three months; 3) Get buy-in from the family.

- 1)

- 2)

- 3)

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