

Scotland's Third Order Franciscan Spiritual Journal



December 22nd 2007 - Newsletter 3

Dear Friends of St Francis in the Third Order,

In the last newsletter, I wrote about using the Gospel for the day as a basis for Contemplative Prayer. This, I appreciate is a huge subject and shelves can be filled with books that have been written on the subject. Before I move on to another approach to praying that might affect our lives as Tertiaries, I wondered whether you might help me to build up a kind of reading list which might help others to enter more deeply into praying with the Gospel, or indeed Scripture as a whole.



Below I have suggested four resources which I have found helpful on the subject with a brief explanation as to why. Now, if you have other books that you would recommend, would you be kind enough to email me or write to me with

your suggestions, including a short explanation as to why you found them helpful.

Rediscovering Lection Divina. Thelma Hall. Published by Paulist Press.

This little book gives a simple and accessible introduction to using scripture in the way which the Benedictine tradition has developed, called Lectio Divina. The author provides 500 Scrip-

ture texts for prayer! I have found this helpful not just for myself but to help others into the practice. If you haven't come across the term Lectio Divina before, all it means is taking a scripture passage, reading slowly, reading slowly again and then stopping at words or phrases which 'capture' you, not necessarily in terms of deep thoughts, but how YOU are responding from the heart. Notice and then be silent until you feel it's time to move on.

Take and Receive.

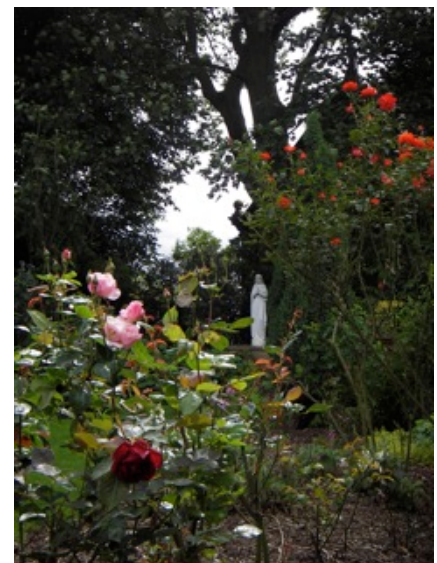
Jacqueline Bergan and Sr Marie Schwan. St Mary's Press.

There are five books in this series. Based extensively on the four 'weeks' of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, these books offer practical and step by step guid-

ance into praying deeply with Scripture, using the imagination and the feelings. It is important that if you are wanting to pursue this excellent series, that you have someone who is an experienced spiritual director (someone who will accompany you) to reflect with you what is happening in you.

God of Surprises. Gerard Hughes S J. DLT.

This, of course, has become a classic. Gerry Hughes bases his book also on a life-time's ex-



perience of giving the Exercises of St Ignatius to others. Each chapter finishes with a number of questions and suggested simple exercises - practical and deep.

Following Columba.

If you go into Google and type in 'Following Columba' it will come up with a 'Blog' that I am trying to keep. For over a year now, I have been 'on a cyber-pilgrimage' with St Columba with a copy of St Matthew's Gospel under the arm. I have included in each 'posting' a spiritual exercise related to the section of St Matthew's Gospel that I have reached.

I have had several responses to this little Newsletter which have been helpful in suggestions and enthusiasm for the project. Thank you.

I have received a few emails suggesting other resources for prayer.



Kristine McKale writes:

"If there are any Franciscans like myself who find it helpful to pray with and to contemplate Holy Icons, I can recommend a site

www.iconograms.org. There is a fine collection of Icons covering saints and feasts of the East, and with some lovely images of the Nativity complete with animals and midwives, as well as the deeply sweet Mother of God with Child. The website is Eastern Orthodox, and possibly not to all tastes, although there may be something there for the visual learners among us to



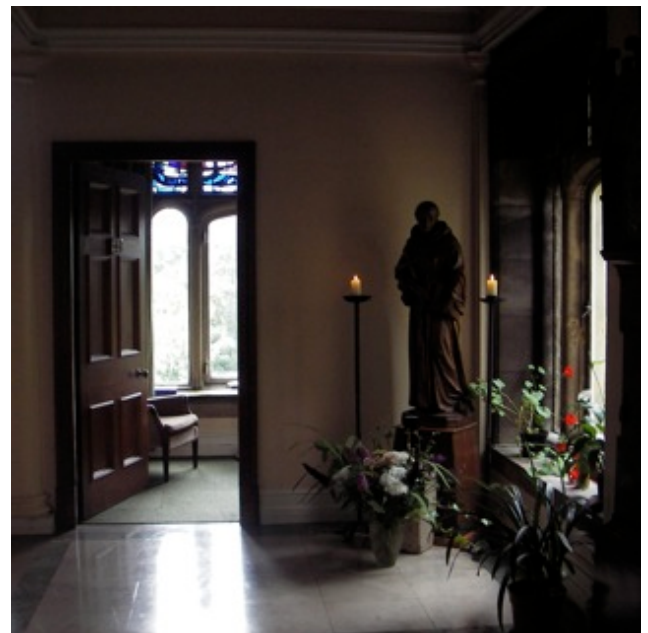
look at the Tangible leading to the Intangible!"

Judy Hirst writes:

I find the following a very helpful aid to prayer:

<http://www.pray-as-you-go.org>

"You need access to a computer and a MDP player is helpful, but you can do it straight off the computer each day. It is shorter than the time you suggest but I often repeat it. Most of the readings are from the Gospel set for the day, but occasionally the Old Testament or the Epistle is used."



May God bless you as the Christ-child spreads his arms to enfold you in the riches of his love.

+Martin
Bishop of Argyll and The Isles.