



INSTRUMENTS OF GOD'S PEACE

Contents of this workbook:

- ❖ Preparation Materials
 - Suggested Executive Schedule.....p. 2
For a full-weekend retreat
 - “Setting the Stage”.....p. 5
Guidelines for creating atmosphere, list of materials

- ❖ Session I: What Is God’s Peace?
 - Gathering questions for small groups.....p. 6
 - Prayer Service and Session Outline.....p. 7
 - Text of Aaron’s video reflection.....p. 10

- ❖ Session II: Who Is the God Who Uses Instruments?
 - Prayer Service and Session Outline.....p. 13
 - Response Activity.....p. 17
 - Text of Ann’s video reflection.....p. 18

- ❖ Session III: Who Am I as an Instrument?
 - Prayer Service and Session Outline.....p. 22
 - Response Activity.....p. 27
 - Text of Meghann’s video reflection.....p. 28

- ❖ Candlelit Prayer Service: A Meditation on the Peace Prayer.....p. 33

- ❖ Session IV: How Can the World Experience God’s Peace?
 - Prayer Service and Session Outline.....p. 47
 - Response Activity.....p. 51
 - Text of Chuck’s video reflection.....p. 52

- ❖ Mass Planning Materials
 - Guidelines for Mass Preparation.....p. 54
 - Planning Template for Retreat-Themed Mass.....p. 57
 - Planning Template for Saturday Vigil (Sunday) Mass.....p. 61



INSTRUMENTS OF GOD'S PEACE

FRIDAY EVENING

6:30 – 7:30 Arrival

In anticipation of participants' arrival, we have provided some guidelines in this workbook: a helpful checklist of some necessary items for the retreat, as well as some suggestions for setting up the desired ambiance and atmosphere.

7:30-7:35 Welcome and Logistics

During these five minutes the leader of the retreat should welcome all of the participants on behalf of the local Regional Fellowship or whomever is organizing the retreat. Take a few minutes to go over logistics that will make the retreat run smoothly – from bathroom locations to food allergies, this is a great time to oil all those squeaky wheels. If you plan to use any of the DVD reflections, you may want to bring up that topic, since the idea of listening to a DVD for reflections rather than having a live person is a bit wonky at first!

7:35 – 8:15 ACE Fellowship Welcome

At this point, transition from your own welcome to a welcome by the ACE Fellowship, namely Fr. Lou DeFra, C.S.C. Play Fr. Lou's welcome and brief reflection (5 minutes).

After the reflection is played, the group will move into its first activity. Begin by giving about 5 minutes for individuals to reflect on the following questions (a printable handout is included with "Session I" Materials):

I – What brought you to this retreat? What do you find most attractive about going on retreat?

II – When you hear the word peace what comes to mind? How would you define peace?

Then, depending on the size of your group, divide into small groups and invite participants to share their responses with each other as a way to get to know other retreatants. Be sure to affirm everyone's notion that at first awkward silence is an okay thing, and encourage the small groups to be as confidential as possible.

8:15 – 8:45 Opening Prayer Service and Session I:

What is God's peace?

The small groups come back together for a prayer service and reflection session to introduce the retreat theme. This opening session presents the "instrument-musician" metaphor for our relationship to God, and it invites participants to consider a new definition of peace – as the result of a perfect alignment between the musician and his instrument. A meditative opening prayer service focuses on the Prayer of St. Francis, and includes a reflection by Aaron Wall – see the Session I materials.

Be sure to have a member of the retreat team appointed as the presider for the prayer service, as well as a separate reader for the Peace Prayer, if you so choose.

9:00 – 9:45 Friday Night Mass

This evening's Mass will be celebrated with readings focused on the retreat theme, rather than the readings of the day. (See Retreat-Themed Mass Planning Template). Make sure that you spend a few minutes with the celebrant beforehand to ensure that all details for the Mass are squared away. Most importantly, you will want the celebrant to have the selected readings a good amount of time in advance so he is able to prepare his homily. Also, we hope you will consult the Mass Preparation Guidelines, which are included in this retreat package for questions about planning Mass.

9:45 Evening Social

After Mass is concluded, feel free to end your evening with some type of social gathering. Whether that is drinks and board games, bonfire and s'mores or something totally different, the key is to provide an opportunity for fellowship for those on retreat.

SATURDAY

8:00 – 9:00 Breakfast

Whether hot or cold, self-served or catered, be sure to have ample time for breakfast. Try not to start too late in the morning, or time seems to evaporate very quickly.

9:00 – 11:30 Morning Prayer and Session II:

Who is the God who uses instruments?

This session focuses on the characteristics of God revealed by the Peace Prayer. It invites us to meditate on our relationship with a God who not only *chooses* to work through instruments such as ourselves, but actually *longs* to do so, and who then equips us to respond to this call. Included in the Session II materials are a morning prayer service, a reflection by Ann Berends, and a series of questions for personal journaling followed by a return to small groups for discussion.

11:30 – 2:30 Lunch and Recreation

Even though at first blush this seems just “break time,” many people find this part of the retreat enjoyable and necessary. Have a good combination of structured activities for those whom enjoy that as well as affirm others' decisions to spend the recreation time in conversation or prayer. Those structured activities can be purely recreational in nature such as soccer or Uno, but can also be spiritual in nature such as having an opportunity to pray the rosary together or the chance to write an affirmation letter to a loved one. Also, don't worry about people taking a little nap; that may be just what they need!

2:30 – 5:00 Mid-Day Prayer and Session III:

Who am I as an instrument?

This session invites participants to consider their personal response to God's call to be his instrument – a response that may vary across aspects of life, from family to work to friendships to prayer to recreation. A mid-day prayer service and a reflection by Meghann Robinson focus on our sharing in the Father's role as Creator as well as in the Son's role as humble instrument, and poses questions about how we know where we are on the “alignment continuum” between instrument and

musician, and how we can bring ourselves into the strong alignment that brings peace. Individual reflection time leads to a paired walk with a member of a retreatant's small group. See the Session III materials.

5:15 – 5:45 Candlelit Prayer Service: A Meditation on the Peace Prayer

Following many opportunities to consider different aspects of this prayer, a candlelit prayer service now invites retreatants into a deeper meditation on the prayer. Scripture passages are used to illuminate each of the six opening petitions as well as the second half of the prayer.

6:00-6:45 Saturday Evening Vigil Mass

This evening's Vigil Mass will be celebrated with Sunday's readings. There is a blank Mass Planning Template for the Vigil Mass, because it will change from region to region, depending on the weekend of the retreat. Additionally, music suggestions are not given since they are specific to the readings. As with the Mass on Friday night, make sure to work with the celebrant ahead of time as well as use the Mass Preparation Guidelines as much as you need.

6:45 – Evening Dinner and Social

After Mass, have a plan for dinner as well as social time for the evening. As with Friday night, this social time can be planned a million different ways, but make sure there are some options for everyone on retreat.

SUNDAY

8:00-9:00 Breakfast

As on Saturday, try not to start too late in the morning or time seems to evaporate very quickly, and the retreat will not conclude in time.

9:00-10:30 Morning Prayer and Session IV:

How can the world experience God's peace?

This session extends Saturday's reflections to the engagement of the larger community, and invites participants to consider how our collective efforts at aligning ourselves with the will of God serve to build the kingdom – how can our community become a “symphony of God's peace?” The Session IV materials include a closing prayer service, which incorporates a reflection by Chuck Lamphier as well as personal reflection activity.

10:30 – 11:00 Conclusion and Departure

As the retreat concludes, wrap up all logistics before everyone heads off. It makes clean up a lot easier if participants chip in for 15 minutes rather than leaving the leader hours of work before leaving. Although the clean-up is important, this is an important time to give pastoral care by affirming the participants for coming on retreat this weekend.



IDEAS FOR SETTING THE STAGE

Familiarize yourself with the space in which you'll be spending your time.

1. How is the lighting? Can it be brightened or dimmed as needed?
 - ❖ Consider using candles to create atmosphere.
 - ❖ Light-weight fabric scarves draped over lamps are also helpful in setting the stage.
2. Is there audio/visual equipment? A DVD player? Are all the necessary cords available?
 - ❖ Prepare a mix CD or iPod playlist of reflective instrumental music for reflection time – and be sure to have a CD player or speakers available!
 - ❖ If you use the recorded reflections and have a large group, consider using a projector and screen for the DVD.
3. Can the room be made sufficiently quiet for times of reflection?
4. What about seating? A circle of chairs, couches, pillows can be most inviting for listening and discussions.

Put up signage

1. A welcome at the main door
2. Identifiers for the meeting room, restrooms, parking, etc.
3. A schedule of events

Decide where you will hold mass and place the supplies there.

Consider setting up a space or “centers” for prayer and reflection

1. One with devotional material such as icons, rosaries, prayer cards.
2. One with a few books of meditation related to the theme of the Peace Prayer.
3. One with art supplies for responding to the Peace Prayer.
4. One with stationary and stamps for affirming someone else's gifts as an instrument.

Set up a table with snacks and drinks.

Other supplies

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 1. Paper | 7. Kleenex | 13. Master retreat binder with two copies of every reading |
| 2. Pens or pencils | 8. First Aid | 14. Hymnals or liturgy programs (see Meghann) |
| 3. Scissors | 9. Name Tags | 15. Materials for individual retreat sessions |
| 4. Tape | 10. Pocket schedules | |
| 5. Markers | 11. Table cloths | |
| 6. Matches or lighters | 12. Bibles | |



WHAT IS GOD'S PEACE?

Supplies needed:

- ❖ Liturgy programs
- ❖ Instrumental music (live or recorded)
- ❖ Prayer cards for all participants, printed with the Prayer of St. Francis

Presider: Please stand.

(Sign of the Cross)

Opening Prayer

Presider: Heavenly Father, Exalted Son, Gracious Spirit:

We gather on this retreat to spend time reflecting
on how we are called to be instruments of Your peace.

We are thankful for this time
to step away from other parts of our lives
that leave us unsettled, anxious or fearful
and search for peace.

We ask that Your love continue to guide us in our time together,
renewing our spirit and making us deeper disciples of Your Gospel.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Presider: Please be seated.

As our prayer begins, I invite all of you to breathe deeply
and experience the peace that comes with the lack of words.

As the soft music plays,
focus on your breathing,
in and out,
and reach out for that peace of quiet.

(Very lyrical and soft piano music played either on piano or iPod. Suggested iTunes searches would be music by the O'Neill Brothers or Paul Tate, or any instrumental version of a traditional hymn. Play for 3-4 minutes while the rest of the group is silent. Then the presider or another designated reader offers the Peace Prayer.)

Reader: The Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Presider: This prayer, known as The Peace Prayer or The Prayer of St. Francis, will be the focal point of our retreat together. As we together spend time with this prayer and unpack it's meaning and implications, Aaron Wall, a member of the ACE Fellowship Staff, has recorded a reflection for our use. As part of our prayer today, let's reflect with Aaron and begin to engage this prayer.

Reflection

At this point, play Aaron's talk on the DVD – about 12 ½ minutes total. Should you choose to have a member of your retreat team offer his or her own talk instead right now, you'll obviously want to eliminate the introduction!

Presider: As a way to further our own reflection on The Peace Prayer we are handing out a prayer card to each of you with The Peace Prayer on it. For the next five minutes let us individually and quietly pray the Peace Prayer as we reflect on Aaron's words on what it means to be an instrument of God's peace.

*(Hand out prayer cards and play quiet instrumental music, either live or recorded.
Give participants five minutes for individual prayer and reflection.)*

Closing Prayer

Presider: Triune God, we humbly ask to become instruments of your peace.

Give us the courage

to bring love, pardon, faith, hope, light and joy to the world,

knowing that in order to accomplish this,

we must first ask for your peace –

that which the world cannot provide.

Give us hands and hearts

to reach out to those who hate, are injured, who doubt, who despair,

who are in darkness, whose sadness is paralyzing.

For only in doing this can we truly find Your peace.

We ask all of this through the Incarnated Christ Jesus.

All: Amen.

(Sign of the Cross)

Closing Song: “Make me a Channel of Your Peace”

This ends Retreat Session I. Give participants a short break while setting up for Mass.



WHAT IS GOD'S PEACE?

Lord, make me an instrument of Your Peace. There are a myriad of notions of what peace means. It can mean temporal peace, where the world experiences no violence, peace of reconciliation with an estranged friend or family member, it can connote enjoying God's creation or even just breathing deeply in a quiet coffee shop. It can mean being alone amid desert cacti or sunbathing with a margarita on a crowded Bahamian Beach. But when we pray for God to make us an instrument of His Peace what kind of peace are we talking about? What is God's Peace?

As a child, my mom would read a book to my brother BJ and I more often than any of the rest. Although not a well-known book from an award-winning author, I always loved it, and to this day cherish my beat up copy. *Five Minutes' Peace* is about four elephants: Mrs. Large, her eldest son Lester, middle child Laura and simply "Baby". (Show *Five Minute's Peace*.) The story goes like this, Mrs. Large just wants a few minutes away; away from the sippy cups, projectile oranges, grimy teddy bears and burnt toast, time away from the three whirlwinds that are her children, just five minutes' peace. So, Mrs. Large heads to the bathroom with her tea and coffee cake to enjoy the morning paper and a piping hot bubble bath. Before she heads up the stairs to the bathroom, she implores her children to leave her alone for five short minutes. As you can imagine, before two minutes are up, the children come bounding into the bathroom. Lester wants to play his recorder, Laura wants to read and Baby elephant, well, he just wants to make sure Mom has all of his toys so she can play in the tub; eventually all three kids wind up in the bathtub soaking and sloshing. In the end, Mrs. Large goes back to the kitchen where she finally enjoys 3 minutes and 45 second of uninterrupted peace.

To my three-year-old mind, Lester, Laura and Baby elephant were my compatriots, loving life and their mom at the same time. As a child I always thought my mom read *Five Minutes' Peace* to my brother and me because she wanted us to wrestle less often or make less of a mess. As is often the case, I have come to think about the book a little differently twenty-five years later. If my mom wanted me to "behave" wouldn't she have been stern when she read *Five Minutes' Peace*? Wouldn't a tough lecture about giving Mom time for herself follow the last page? Why in the world would I have enjoyed my Mom reading it to me if the purpose of the story was to make me behave and give Mom a break once in a while? In reality, my mother read the book to me with deep joy, warm smiles and watery eyes. She read it to me often – never with an ensuing lecture, but rather a long embrace and always ending with "I love you."

You see, I think I finally understand the book and why my mother always read it to my brother and me. It all hinges on the question we began with, "What is God's Peace?" As a child I thought peace was a quiet or tranquil thing. That alone in the woods with a book kind of peace or like Mrs. Large, the peace of a nice bubble bath with some cake and tea. But I have come to understand that God's Peace is something totally different. It is a kind of peace that often doesn't allow for as many quiet walks in the wood as I would like or as many bubble baths that I would love to enjoy. God's Peace is the gift of aligning our self, our commitments and our relationships, and ultimately, our entire being with God. In *Five Minutes' Peace* Mrs. Large discovers God's peace is not sitting in the bathtub with her tea and cake, free from the raucous behavior of her

children. It is in fact, the realization that being a mother, with all of its noise and clamor, is a relationship that gives God's peace. This is the reason my mother read this story to me so often as a child. This is why she gave me an arm-crushing hug even though Mrs. Large nor my mother ever got their five minutes' peace. Being my mother, with the hoopla, frustration, and weariness was a relationship in which she experiences God's peace.

While I am not a preeminent theological scholar, I have always been interested in the notion of God's Peace as revealed to us in Holy Scripture. Over and over again I find myself coming back to John's Gospel as I pray and think about God's Peace. In John 14: Verse 27, Christ tells us, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you," and again in John 16: Verse 33, "I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In this world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world." Jesus tells us straight up that if we accept His peace, that of righteous, servants to the world, it will not bring us temporal peace. Like Mrs. Large, living in Christ's Peace might often be noisy and inconvenient; we may not have time to enjoy a bubble bath every time we wish. Not only does accepting Christ's Peace cause a bit of inconvenience, but living in Christ's Peace might cause us to face scorn, indifference, hatred, and violence as we carry a cross of our own. As we engage the world, Christ's gift of peace does not mean that as Christians we will have wealth, a life of ease sitting on a beautiful coastline, or the tranquility of an Alpine hermitage. Now, we may be fortunate enough to have these things that give us temporal peace, but they are not Christ's peace. Christ's peace comes from a day of hard work, the gift of time and treasure to those in need, self-sacrifice to serve the world in whatever capacity you are called. Christ's peace comes when we align our lives with Christ and become servants of His will, whatever that may be. If we fully embrace Christ's peace we may often mourn with the world, break our backs and banks for a friend or stranger, or buy that generic pasta sauce once in a while. But if we live in Christ's Peace we too may laugh with the deepest joy, be filled with the Song of Songs and embrace one another in the most loving of arms.

Lord, Make me an instrument of Your Peace. This prayer presents us with perhaps the greatest example of how to live in God's Peace. It presents us with the notion that to be an instrument of God's peace we must engage the world as servants, welcoming those we encounter to live in Christ's peace as we strive to do the same. As this time of retreat begins, I want to present to you a metaphor that we will be exploring as a way to understand God's peace. The metaphor is this – We are God's instrument. And as an instrument, if we are not played or used, just lie dusty on a forgotten shelf, we accomplish nothing. For as an instrument, an object, we are not capable work simply by existing. If we are to truly become an instrument of God's Peace, we are only useful if someone is using or playing us. God is the Musician or Artist. God made us into instruments and it is God who makes us belt out a concerto or sculpt a Michelangelo. Realizing that the combination of Artist and instrument is capable of infinite melodies, harmonies, oil paintings or watercolor, I suggest to you this evening we enter into God's Peace when we as instruments allow God to play and use us in the manner for which we were created. This is a different tune or piece of art for every human being and encompasses all aspects of our lives – relationships, family, friends, worship, work, leisure, the list goes on and on. Furthermore, as instruments we have a variety of ways to be played or used. I think of a paintbrush that depending on how it is used creates styles and methods more than just a plain brush stroke. It can be used to make broad, messy sweeping strokes and the next moment be used to paint a crisp lamppost with perfectly straight lines.

The gift of Christ's peace is the knowledge that we are made uniquely and individually. It means that despite our nicks and scratches we live in Christ's peace when I as a trumpet let God play the march for which I was created. Or you as a paintbrush let God gently dip you in vibrant yellows and arresting blues and create a masterpiece on canvas. I do not mean to say that we were made for one singular purpose, but rather that, in all of our relationships, being God's instrument of Peace means that we allow God to play us the way He intended.

Now, we know too well that this is a lot easier said than done. At least in my experience God does not have a Holy Megaphone that He announces from in Heaven, saying Aaron, "this is what you were made for," or "why are you acting like a trumpet when I need you to be a flute right now!" Oh how nice that would be. But truthfully, I am glad that isn't the case, because the journey of self-discovery, working through this notion of Instrument and Musician is how we begin to live in God's Peace and for that I am thankful.

What I pray that you experience on this retreat is a way to think about being God's instrument; that if you allow yourself to be played or used as you were created, you will live in God's Peace. I hope you can begin to ponder questions like "Why does God need instruments at all, can't He just do it himself?" And "For which songs was I made to play, what masterpieces can I be used to create?"

As our time together begins, I hope that you have the opportunity to think about Mrs. Large and her example of what Christ's Peace is and what it is not. I hope that you will spend time individually and with one another, thinking about The Prayer of Saint Francis and what it means to be an instrument of God's Peace. And most importantly, I pray you live in the Peace of Christ today and always. God Bless.

Aaron Wall
Associate Director, ACE Fellowship

WHO IS THE GOD WHO USES INSTRUMENTS?



Supplies needed:

- ❖ *Liturgy programs or hymnals*
- ❖ *Listing of small groups, if people don't remember them from earlier.*
- ❖ *Handout with reflection questions for after talk*

Presider: “The heavens declare the glory of God,
the skies proclaim the work of His hands.
Day after day, they pour forth speech.
Night after night, they display knowledge.” (*Psalm 19:1-2*)

Brothers and sisters,
let us draw near and worship the God of creation,
the God of all things great and small.

Opening Song: “For the Beauty of the Earth” or “All Things Bright and Beautiful”

Opening Prayer

Presider: Please pray with me.

Creator God, you made all that is, seen and unseen.
You made us in your image, both male and female,
that we might reflect Your goodness, wisdom, and love.
As we gather today, may our faith be renewed that we may glorify You.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Presider: Let's spend some time today reflecting on God as our creator,
remembering that He loves the world He has made; He loves His children
as created in His image; and because of that love, God invites us to be
His glory: reflections of all He is and all He created us to be.

Scriptural Meditation

Reader 1: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them...God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” (*Genesis 1:1, 27, 31*)

Presider: God the artist formed the world with his hands not because he had to, but because he wanted to. Think of the longing and joy that must have filled God’s being—as that of Mendelssohn composing Songs without Words; as that of Wedgwood molding clay into fine porcelain; as that of Gepetto carving Pinocchio into life. We begin our day praising God, who for love and longing created the world.

Reader 2: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.” (*John 1:1-4*)

Presider: God the artist entered the world in human form not because he had to, but because he wanted to. Think of the longing and joy that must have filled God’s being—as that of Mary after the birth of her son; as that of John joining his Lord in the water for baptism; as that of Peter receiving the forgiveness of the Christ he had denied. We begin our day thanking God, who from love and longing entered the world.

Reader 3: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (*John 1:14*)

Presider: Glory is to God what style is to an artist...the style of artists brings you as close to the sound of their voices and the light in their eyes as it is possible to get this side of actually shaking hands with them. In the words of the 19th Psalm, “The heavens are telling the glory of God.” It is the same thing. To the connoisseur, not just sunsets and starry nights but dust storms, rain forests, garter snakes, the human face, are all unmistakably the work of a single hand. To behold God’s glory, to sense his style, is the closest you can get to him this side of Paradise, just as to read King Lear is the closest you can get to Shakespeare. (*Fredrick Buechner*)

Intercessory Prayer

Presider: We begin our day petitioning God,
who reveals his glory to us, in us, and through us.
Please respond, "Lord, hear our prayer."

God our Maker,
for love and longing you have created us in your image,
joined us in the experience of human life,
and invited us into your kingdom work.
For the eyes to see you and ears to hear you in this day,
we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Presider: For open minds to consider your call and the willingness to be your
instruments, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Presider: For strength to participate in your mandate of peace that we may glorify
you, we pray to the Lord

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Presider: We gather our prayers into one
and pray in the words our Savior taught us.
Our Father...

Presider: The peace of the Lord be with you. As God brings you peace, share now
that peace with one another.

(Sharing of a sign of peace.)

Reflection:**Talk followed by personal reflection time and small group discussions**

Invite participants to be seated. At this point, either introduce and play Ann's talk (about 16 minutes) on the DVD, or have a member of the retreat team offer his or her own reflection.

Reflection questions to follow Ann's talk are included with Session II materials. Distribute the handout and give retreatants about 30 minutes of individual quiet time to reflect. Then have them re-join their small groups from the retreat opening for discussion. We recommend assigning areas for these groups to meet, and designating a member of the retreat team to facilitate discussion in each. Give about 30-40 minutes for paired walks, and name a time, about 10-15 minutes prior to the ending time for this retreat session, when retreatants should return to the main meeting space.

If a member of your retreat team offers a talk at this time in lieu of using the DVD, another corresponding reflective activity should be substituted.

Large Group Reflection:

When all groups have returned, invite them to share thoughts that struck them during the session – during the initial talk, their individual reflection time, or their small group discussion. You may want to state something along the lines of “Agreeing that we’ll be okay with silence, I’d like to invite you to share thoughts that struck you...,” as sometimes it takes a while for the conversation to build momentum, and sometimes there just isn’t a lot that people feel moved to say aloud. That’s okay!

Close the session in prayer:

Presider: God has promised us his peace. As his children, created in his image, let us go out from here bringing God’s message of peace to each other and the world.

All: Amen

This ends Retreat Session II. At this time, announce any logistics for lunch and free time. Remember to have someone offer grace before lunch!

WHO IS THE GOD WHO USES INSTRUMENTS?



Spend some personal quiet time with the reflection questions below before gathering for discussion with your small group.

1. The Peace Prayer reveals God as relational, artistic, and loving. What other characteristics of God does it suggest? How do God's character, his longing to use us as his instruments, and the fact that he equips us with his Spirit change the way you typically think about him?

2. Consider this picture of Glen Hansard's guitar. What, if anything, does it suggest to you about God's choice to use us as his instruments? Is there another metaphor that better captures your understanding of this choice? If so, write or draw it.



3. Though he described running in a race as hard—it takes “concentration of will, energy of soul,” he said—Eric Liddell felt God's pleasure when he ran. In what area(s) of your life, no matter how great or small, do you feel God's pleasure? Describe your experience. Then describe how it requires “concentration of will, energy of soul.”



WHO IS THE GOD WHO USES INSTRUMENTS?

In the 1924 Olympics, a Scottish man named Eric Liddell won the gold medal in the 400 m track and field event. He was a young man raised on the mission field of China, just finishing his college years in Scotland and getting ready to return to China as a missionary. But first, he was pouring himself into his love of running. His story was captured in the 1981 award-winning film, *Chariots of Fire*. There's a scene in the film where his sister, herself a missionary and eager to get back to China, challenges his dedication to running. "Why do you go to all the trouble?" she asks him. Eric replies, "I believe God made me for a purpose in China. But he also made me fast. And when I run, I feel his pleasure."

Like the Peace Prayer of St. Francis, this story marvelously captures the essence of the Christian's call. Both suggest that God reaches out to his children and invites us to be his instruments—runners in the race, instruments of his peace, sowers of his love. Both suggest that he equips us to respond. And both illustrate that, when we do as the Peace Prayer asks, which is to align ourselves with God's deepest desire, we will experience what kingdom living looks like—in giving we receive, in pardoning we are pardoned, in dying we are born. We will bring God glory—the fullness of all he is and all he made us to be. And we will know his pleasure.

Let's take a closer look at the Peace Prayer today by focusing on these three questions: *What* does it tell us about God? *Why* does he invite us to be his instruments? And *how* does he equip us to respond so that we experience all he is and all he made us to be? We'll spend most of our time looking at this first question, since it sets the foundation for the other two.

The whole prayer suggests that God is relational. If you've never met me, and I come up to you and say, "Hey, make me an instrument of your deepest desire for the world," you'd probably back away slowly and wonder about my mental health. Aside from the fact that the request would be wildly inappropriate, it also simply wouldn't make sense because we don't know each other. The Peace Prayer is based on the assumption of relationship.

God's revelation of himself in the Bible and in nature backs this up. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Here—right out of the gate—we learn that God is relational. The Hebrew noun used for God in this verse is "Elohim"—which is a plural term that some scholars believe suggests Father, Son, and Spirit. Later in the chapter, we're given other clues of the Trinitarian relationship: God refers to himself in the plural—"Let us," God says, "make man in our image." And then he creates not just one human but two, "because it's not good for man to be alone." The point is, we learn early on that God himself is relational.

Nature reveals him as such, too. I recently read about an amazing scientific phenomenon called "quantum entanglement." The author writes, "If two particles of energy are kept in close proximity to each other for a long time, they form a relationship, a kind of bond that defies the imagination.

The connection between these two particles is so strong that if you take one particle to a laboratory in Los Angeles and remove the other one to a lab in New York City, whatever you do to the particle in L.A. will instantly happen to the one in New York, too. Einstein called it *spooky*. [My daughter called it *Voodoo, only good*.] Somehow, once particles form this kind of bond, it cannot be severed no matter how great the distance between them becomes.” This is the design of a relational creator! God didn’t have to create the world; he didn’t have to create humankind. He *wanted* to, because relationship is central to his character.

Creativity is also central to God’s character. In its use of the word *instrument*, the Peace Prayer may be said to imply that God is an artist. And again, the Bible and nature confirm it. The Hebrew word for *create* in Genesis 1:1 is *bara*, which literally means “to bring into tangible existence.” Like my friend Evie, who brings a canvas to life with her paintbrush; or Matt, who brings characters to life on the stage; or like Yo-Yo Ma bringing a concerto alive with his cello, God brought the earth to life with all the tools at his creative disposal. And he called it good, which as any artist knows was no cold pronouncement of a Wall Street Suit who has brokered a successful deal. No, it was the deep, satisfied sigh of the artist whose heart and soul have poured into each brushstroke on the canvas, each word on the page, each string on the instrument.

C.S. Lewis paints a beautiful picture of this artistic process in his book “The Magician’s Nephew.” He describes how the lion Aslan, the God-figure in the Chronicles of Narnia, sings the world into existence. Listen:

“The lion was pacing to and fro about that empty land and singing his new song... And as he walked and sang the valleys grew green...The higher slopes grew dark with heather...a line of dark firs sprang up on a ridge...Far overhead the stars sang...And the deepest, wildest voice they ever heard was saying, “Narnia, Narnia...awake. Love. Think. Speak.”

What a startling and awe-inspiring perspective on God’s creation of the world. Imagine him as the Lion, both wild and tender, caressing the world to life with his song. C.S. Lewis helps us remember what the biblical story in Genesis teaches: God is an artist who is deeply connected to his created world and creatures.

So the Peace Prayer points us to a relational, artistic God. It also points us to a loving God. As instruments of God’s peace in this suffering world, we are asking that God make us sowers of love, pardon, faith, hope, light, and joy. That God help us seek to console, understand, love. These words capture God’s deepest desire for the world. His Love is the fountain from which they flow.

There’s a story about a theologian famous for his prolific writings on the meaning of God and faith. One day a reporter asks him to summarize all he had ever written on these topics. The reporter waits in quiet anticipation for the theologian’s learned response. After a moment, the theologian says, “Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so.” Like that children’s song says, the Bible does tell us, over and over again. Here’s just one example. In the first letter of St. John, we read, “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God...because God is love.” (1 John 4:7-8) As God in the flesh, Jesus is the full manifestation of God *whose central message is love*. For love God made the world; for love God entered the world to save us; and for love God extends himself to heal the world.

This is the context within which we utter the Peace Prayer. The God we approach is relational, artistic, and loving. When we ask God to make us his instruments of peace, we are encountering a God who for relational, creative love calls us to be his extensions of life and light to the world.

Which brings us to the second question we're considering today: *Why* does God invite us to be his instruments? Certainly God can do without us. Certainly Jesus could have done his kingdom work without leaving his carpenter's bench. But because of who he is, he chose instead to do it with and through others—fishermen, tax collectors, prostitutes, and now, us. Consider this: Jesus was born into a human family. Spent time in community at the temple. Started his ministry by calling others to join him. He was no lone ranger. Not only did he teach his disciples the intimate practice of prayer; he taught them how to minister to others and gave them the power they needed to do it well. So often the disciples didn't get it. They stumbled and fell. How much easier it would have been for Jesus to say, "Never mind, just let me do it." Instead, he invited them, and now us, to be his instruments.

St. Teresa of Avila uses the language of his body:

*Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.*

Friends, this is powerful, this connection between God and us! In artist's terms, it's the connection of a painter with her media, or a writer with his words. It creates a *longing*. I took an informal poll of several of my friends, asking them how it would feel if they could no longer do their art, and the general consensus was, "Like a death." Take a look at this picture. This is the guitar of Glen Hansard, who sang and starred in the film *ONCE*. Talk about an extension of his body. It is part of him. I like to think this is what we look like as God's instruments: well worn, well used, well loved. God doesn't need us to be his instruments—but, like my mother, who can't walk past a piano without playing it, this relational, artistic, loving Being *longs* to use us as his instruments. And so eager is he to "play us," as it were, that he provides the help we need to respond.



Which brings us to the last question we're asking today. *How* does he equip us to respond so that we can, in the end, be his instruments? Very simply, by giving us his *Spirit*. The Peace Prayer implies this because every request—sowing love in the midst of hatred; pardon in the midst of injury; in dying to be born to eternal life—every request is impossible to perform without God's help. So.....far from leaving us to our own devices, he takes us by the hand, leading us to pray, kneading our hearts like dough to conform to his deepest desire, enabling us to experience and express all he is and all he made us to be. *In the power of the Holy Spirit* we pray the kingdom words of the Peace Prayer and commit ourselves to God's love.

As the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is perhaps the least talked-about by many in the church. But the Spirit is a powerful player in building up God's kingdom. In St. John's Gospel, we read what Jesus said to his disciples just before returning to heaven: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever...you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:16-17). Here St. John uses the Greek word "Paraclete," which means "called to one's side." The Bible tells us that the Spirit is our advocate, our comforter, our intercessor. The Spirit, in other words, is God With Us, God *Within* Us.

There's another scene in *Chariots of Fire* in which Eric Liddell is teaching about faith in terms of a race—"running the straight race" he calls it. He says, "I want to compare faith to running in a race. It's hard. It requires concentration of will, energy of soul...[There is] no formula for winning... Then where does the power come from to see the race to the end? From within...Jesus said *The kingdom of God is within you*... If you commit yourself to the love of Christ, then that is how you run the straight race."

I love my kids, and it's fair to say that I am fiercely, whole-heartedly committed to that love. My relationships with them bring me much joy. I wake up thinking about them; I go to sleep thinking about them. I spend much of my time pursuing them and I expend most of my energy raising them. It takes patience and practice. It brings happiness and laughter, weeping and teeth-gnashing, failure...and failure...and failure. It is a daily exercise of faith and trust.

So it is with committing to the love of God. In the Spirit's power we give ourselves over to him, leaning on him, resting in him, even wrestling with him sometimes. We go to sleep thinking about God and wake up thinking about him. We spend time pursuing him and expend energy connecting with him. We practice. Sometimes we laugh and celebrate. Sometimes we weep and gnash our teeth. Often we experience failure. And always, always, we ask for faith and trust.

This is the essence of Peace Prayer, and the essence of the Christian's call. God reaches out to us and *invites* us to be his instruments of peace. He *equips us to respond*. And when we do, when by the Spirit we align ourselves with God's deepest desire, we bring God glory—the fullness of all this relational, artistic, loving God is and all he made us to be. And like Eric Liddell, we feel his pleasure.

Ann Berends
Associate Director, ACE Fellowship



WHO AM I AS AN INSTRUMENT?

Supplies needed:

- ❖ *Liturgy programs or hymnals*
- ❖ *Instrumental music (live or recorded)*
- ❖ *Handout for post-talk individual reflection*
- ❖ *List of paired walk partners*

Opening Song: “I Have Loved You”

Opening Prayer

Presider: *(Sign of the Cross)*

Ever-loving God, You have called us and pulled us close to You.
In Your longing for creation, You loved us into being,
And, made in Your image, we too feel a longing in our hearts.
 We long to create, to bring something good to this world
 that wasn't there before.
 We long for relationships,
 for the closeness of family and friends.
 We long for peace in our hearts, minds, souls, and spirits.
These are our dreams, but mingled with them are our fears,
for so often we are fooled into believing
that our strength, imagination, love for others,
and even peace of mind and heart
must all come from within ourselves.

And so as we reflect and pray this afternoon,
teach us how to accept the call to be Your instruments.
Be our Master Musician,
and show us the deep, abiding peace
that comes when Musician and instrument
are united as one.

All: Amen

Scripture reflection and Intercessory prayer

(Instrumental music begins: If possible, a pianist or guitarist plays “God of All People,” to flow into the singing. If there is no live accompanist, use any quiet instrumental music on CD/iPod.)

Presider: God of all people, guided by Your holy Word, we bring to you our dreams, our anxieties, and our petitions. We pray together now, inviting You to come into our lives as Teacher, helping us learn to be instruments of Your peace.

Following each scripture passage and petition, please respond, “Teach us, O Lord.”

(Pause now and between each reading/petition set to let the music be heard between the spoken prayers. Also, there is no need to read the Scripture citation – those are there for your reference and will be printed in the program for the service.)

Reader 1: “This is the covenant I shall make with the House of Israel when those days have come, Yahweh declares. Within them I shall plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I shall be their God and they will be my people.” *(Jeremiah 31:33)*

Reader 2: God of all love, You have planted a longing for You deep within each of us. When we feel a sense of inner discord and discontent, teach us to recognize in this our restless desire to be more closely connected to You. We pray,

All: Teach us, O Lord.

Reader 1: “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.” *(Genesis 3:6)*

Reader 2: God of all wisdom, guide us when we feel tempted to rely on our own power, to place our desire for personal success above our relationship with You, and to make choices that divide us from You. We pray,

All: Teach us, O Lord.

Reader 1: “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”
(*John 15:5*)

Reader 2: God of all life, open our hearts and teach us to welcome Your abiding life within each of us. Through the gift of Your Holy Spirit, inspire and sanctify our daily efforts, so the world may know of Your love. We pray,

All: Teach us, O Lord.

Reader 1: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (*Philippians 4:13*)

Reader 2: God of all strength, help us to know the limitless expanse of Your power. When we are discouraged by difficulties, teach us how to discern Your will, that we may rely on Your mighty strength. We pray,

All: Teach us, O Lord.

Reader 1: “O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.” (*Psalms 34:8*)

Reader 2: God of all goodness, give us a taste of the deep peace that comes when we align ourselves with Your will. And in that small taste, give us also the desire and the intention to remain close to You in all ways. We pray,

All: Teach us, O Lord.

Song: “God of All People” (Gather Second Edition #255)

Gospel

Reader 3: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, "Peace be with you," and, after saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord, and he said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." After saying this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Presider: Lord Jesus, our brother and Teacher,
as the Father sent you, so you now send us.
Breathe your Spirit upon us,
and teach us how to find peace
in our sharing of your role
as God's instrument on earth.
In your name we pray,

All: Amen

Reflection: Talk followed by personal reflection time and paired walks

At this point, either introduce and play Meghann's talk on the DVD (about 18 min), or have a member of the retreat team offer his or her own reflection.

A response activity to Meghann's talk is included with Session III materials. Distribute the handout and give retreatants about 30 minutes of individual quiet time to reflect. Then have them meet a partner from their small group for a paired walk discussion. We recommend posting or distributing a list of partners prior to individual quiet time, so that they can plan when and where to meet for their walk. Give about 30-40

minutes for paired walks, and name a time, about 10-15 minutes prior to the ending time for this retreat session, when retreatants should return to the main meeting space.

If a member of your retreat team offers a talk at this time in lieu of using the DVD, another corresponding reflective activity should be substituted.

Large Group Reflection:

When all pairs have returned, invite them to share thoughts that struck them during the session – during the talk, their individual reflection time, or their paired walk discussion. As in Session II, you may want to prepare the group for possible silence during this time.

Closing Prayer:

Presider: Lord God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thank You for walking with us this afternoon,
for inspiring our reflections,
for blessing our conversations,
and for inviting us always into Your service.
In your name we pray,

All: Amen

(Sign of the Cross)

This ends Retreat Session III. At this point, give a 15-20 minute break prior to returning for the candlelit prayer service.



WHO AM I AS AN INSTRUMENT?

Consider the continuum below.

- ❖ On one side we find the “Eve” mindset – an overwhelming focus on ME, on how others see and treat me, on my own personal ambition, on the pervading feeling that I am (or should be) the musician rather than the instrument.
- ❖ On the other side is the “Mary” mindset – a focus on the needs of others and on aligning ourselves with God's will, an embrace of the role of God's instrument and a view of every triumph as a blessing rather than an accomplishment.



Questions for reflection:

- 1) Considering the different aspects of your life (work, family, friendships, leisure, prayer, any others), where do you currently find yourself on this continuum? Mark each of these on the line above.
- 2) What led you to put each mark where you did? Next to each mark, describe some of the signals in life – internal and external, sensory and emotional – that suggest to you this particular place on the continuum.
- 3) In what aspects of life do you see the most need to move closer to the “Mary” side? How might you do this? Use the back of the page, if you like, to write your thoughts.



WHO AM I AS AN INSTRUMENT?

When I was a little girl, I loved to make books. Not just write stories, but actually turn them into books, with illustrations and construction paper covers, and staples up the spine. I can't tell you how many times I wished that my parents would please just get one of those staplers with the long arm, so I could actually staple along the fold, and my books would look just *that* much more real.

Sadly, by the time we got one, my book-making phase had passed. But years later, I learned that my mom had actually saved a few of my little creations. She had them stored in a box in her closet, along with many other "priceless relics" from her children's earlier years. I also learned then, and had to laugh at what it was that my mom remembered most about all those books I used to make. Definitely not clever plots or expert drawings, but rather a feature common to all of my books that illustrates my quirky little personality a little too well: apparently, I never wrote a book that did not include an "About the Author" page. Sure enough, as I looked through my mom's collection, I found on every single back page either a copy of my current school picture or else a crayon "headshot" with red hair and freckles, along with a brief bio, full of the facts that would be most interesting to the reader of this particular book. My favorite was the About the Author page I added at the back of – I kid you not – the autobiography I wrote in third grade: "My Life," by Meghann Robinson. The About the Author begins with the words, "Meghann Robinson really is the oldest of five children." Gotta reassure the fans that this isn't a work of fiction!

By the time I got to college, I would like to say I had long since given up the "About the Author" habit, but if I'm honest, I'd have to say it just changed form. The About the Author page became the performer bio at the back of a playbill or concert program. I was a music major at a small liberal-arts college, and I became enamored with all of the opportunities to perform onstage that came with studying music in such a small college environment. My senior spring was the highlight. First, in early March, I presented my senior recital: at about 45 minutes in length, it was my first and only solo piano recital. Next came a visit from the Cavani String Quartet, a well-known chamber ensemble who took time to rehearse and perform chamber pieces with all of us music majors, and who even premiered a string quartet that I had written in my composition class. Finally, in mid-April, came the spring opera production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. I can't tell you how lucky I felt that as a piano major I still had a small singing role in my favorite opera. My recital, the quartet's visit, and the opera were three amazing performance opportunities, so exciting and memorable that I still have all three ad posters framed in my house. And of course, there were programs handed out at the doorways, all of which contained a brief bio in the back so the audience would know just who these onstage musicians were.

All of us experience, at least at some point, a longing to create. We want to bring something great to this world that wasn't there before us. And so some write, some perform, some make art. Some found businesses, nonprofit initiatives, foundations, or religious communities. Some start families. Even the way we build our friendships can reveal this strong inner urge we have to bring about something that we can look at and say, "This is good." It makes sense that we should feel this urge. After all, every one of us is created in the image and likeness of a God who so longed

for creation that he was able to love everything into being. There's a beautiful expression of this in my favorite musical, *Children of Eden*, when the lyricist, Stephen Schwartz, describes us as being "an echo of the eternal cry of 'Let there be!'"

This musical is an adaptation of the first nine chapters of Genesis, and that line about echoing the eternal cry of "Let there be" is sung by Eve. Of all the characters that Schwartz developed in this show, she's my favorite, probably because I've often felt that her story in Genesis is pretty sparse on details. In the Bible, the whole scene of the fall of man and the origin of all sin takes place in six verses. How can it be possible that all it takes for this woman to completely turn her back on God and all she's come to know and love is *three sentences* from a snake? Surely, there's more background to this story – something about Eve's personality, her past decisions, the thoughts and conversations with Adam and God that she had been having leading up to that point. So I like Stephen Schwartz's vision of Eve, because even though this version has its theological flaws, he made his good-faith attempt to fill in those blanks, to develop the character of Eve and add some background to her encounter with the serpent.

His characterization can provide a sort of springboard for thinking about *our* relationship with the Father who created us. In *Children of Eden*, Eve sees this amazing world all around her, and she wants so *badly* to know more about it. She wants to explore, to climb mountains, to sail down rivers. She's insatiably curious. She feels "an itching on the tips of [her] fingers," "a boiling in the back of [her] brain," a "hunger burning inside [her] that cannot be denied." This Eve wants to build, invent, discover something brand new. Before she's even laid eyes on the serpent, she says, "I've got a feeling that the Father who made us, while He was kindling the pulse in my veins, He left a tiny spark of that fire smoldering inside."

She recognized, then, that this desire she was feeling – this deep longing to create – came from God. It came from *His* identity as Creator and from her relationship to Him. But rather than see this as grace, as a deeper connection to the Father, rather than see this as a privilege and a way to grow closer to God and help Him bring good into the world, Eve instead fell prey to that serpent's tantalizing promise. If we go back to the words of Genesis, we hear that crucial line that the serpent used to tempt her: "The day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God." For this woman who wanted so badly to create something new, nothing could be more tempting than the promise of being an equal to God himself. So it was personal ambition that drove Eve to make one disastrous choice that separated her from the very source of all that creative potential she had inside.

Her sin wasn't her longing to create. That came from God. She didn't sin until she decided that she wanted to be the one in charge. If Eve was going to be bringing good to the world, she wanted to do so with an About the Author at the end. She wanted her name on what she made. She wanted equality with God.

Contrast her response with that of another woman, centuries later, who was called in a very special way to share in the creative action of God. In the Magnificat, we hear Mary say, "From this day all generations will call me blessed, because the Almighty has done great things for me." Not "all will call me great," but rather "blessed." God wanted to use Mary as his instrument, and she recognized that as a blessing.

Imagine, if you will, a continuum. On one end is an Eve-like ambition to do it all ourselves. On the other end is a humble Marian openness to God's work through us. I'd guess that we all move around a bit on this continuum, depending on circumstances from day to day, week to week, year to year. I'd also guess that at any one time, we may be closer to one end when we consider, say, our family life, and closer to the other in terms of work, or friendships, or the way we spend our free time, or our spiritual life. So two questions arise – first, how do we even know where we are on this continuum, and second, how do we pull ourselves closer to the Mary end?

Like both of these women, every one of us is “an echo of the eternal cry of ‘Let there be!’” We're made in the image of our Creator, and so we long to create. In all the varied aspects of life, from work to relationships to prayer, we ultimately want to bring love where there is hatred, pardon where there's injury, faith where there's doubt, hope where there's despair, light where there's darkness, and joy where there's sadness. But we have to remember that creation is not the whole picture. We were made in the image of a triune God, and so just as we share in the Father's role as creator, so too we share in Jesus's role as God's instrument on earth. Listen to how St. Paul expresses this challenge to the Philippians: “Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped. But he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are; and being in every way like a human being, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.”

It's a pretty powerful statement that Jesus himself didn't “count equality with God something to be grasped.” Jesus completely embraced the role of instrument. He responded to his Father's will in the same way that a well-tuned instrument responds in the hands of a master musician. He did so because it was the only way that we could know peace. We hear this in his words to the disciples following the Resurrection: “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” The way for us to find real peace in our hearts and minds and souls and spirits is to imitate his complete acceptance of his own “instrument-hood.”

Now, that's a role that I know I often struggle to admit, let alone accept or embrace, and I know I'm not alone in that. For me, I remember it being particularly difficult in the midst of those three big performances I described earlier, from the spring of my senior year in college. You see, it was around that same time that I signed on for two years with ACE. I'd be moving to Nashville, the land of *country* music, to teach 6th grade math and language arts. As my last chances to perform as a music student came and passed, I got this sinking feeling that I was giving up something huge. I knew that as a teacher I wouldn't have the time to practice much or take lessons. There certainly wouldn't be monthly recitals. It terrified me to realize just how radically my priorities would be changing in the next few months. I felt in the pit of my stomach that I was giving up not only something that I loved, but the thing that made me special – that made me stand apart from the crowd. There were actually days when I'd sit down at a practice room piano and start one of my recital pieces, and without being able to help it I'd just start crying – literally, there I was in a tiny room by myself, playing the piano with tears pouring down my face. I think my professors thought I was a little nuts.

Suffice it to say that I was not at peace. So I did everything in my power to get myself there. I figured peace would come if I could somehow reconcile my decision to go into teaching with this identity I had for myself as a classical musician. I asked my piano teacher for new repertoire, and

I carved out hours during the summer to spend in practice rooms. I took voice lessons all summer with my college instructor, and I searched for affordable music schools in Nashville. I planned a language arts unit around the text of an opera. I even briefly considered playing one of my recital pieces in the annual ACE summer talent show – in retrospect, my decision not to was probably for the best. But for all my effort, none of this brought me the feeling of peace that I wanted. Instead, I felt disjointed, like I was trying to tie together two separate lives and, as a result, I wasn't living either one particularly well. The pieces didn't fit together, and I just felt worse.

Throughout that summer, two signals showed me that I was clinging for dear life to the Eve side of the continuum. The first clue was that those pieces of my life didn't fit together. I felt completely disjointed – nowhere close to peaceful. Less obvious to me at the time was my hyperfocus on my own achievements. I was worried way too much about what set me apart, what made me special, how people would remember me. Luckily, as the school year started, I had to start to loosen my grip. I had to trust that, if music was really such an integral part of who I was as God's instrument, that he wouldn't let it all go to waste. And as time went on, that proved true. I still feel a little wistful whenever I listen to the CD of my senior recital, because the fact is that I can't play like I used to, but I no longer feel that urgent sense of loss about it. In fact, when I changed jobs and gained a little more free time, I actually tried to dedicate some of it to practicing the piano. I wanted to try to build up my technique again, but somehow I couldn't get into a good routine or gain any momentum. The fit wasn't there, and it didn't seem to be worth forcing.

How do we know where we are on this continuum, and how do we pull ourselves closer to the Mary end – to embracing our role as God's instrument? I think these questions are so much easier to answer in the past tense. My past experiences have showed me how my life responds when I try to avoid my role as God's instrument. Like my transition from college into teaching, these have been the times when my work and my relationship with my family and my free time and my friendships all seem at odds with one another. I'm easily distracted at work. I have long-overdue phone calls to three or four friends, my conversations with family members are tense and short, and I wonder why it's been so long since I've had an hour to read a book, or get together with friends to hang out and relax. Anything I do feels like it will be at the expense of something else – if I'm on the phone with a friend, I won't get to the grocery store. If I visit my family, I won't have the weekend to catch up on work. Nothing seems to fit together. Moreover, I'm overwhelmingly focused on myself, on being loved and comforted by others, on getting credit for my accomplishments.

By contrast, I recognize God's peace during workdays when I'm so into a project that I completely lose track of time, even if that means I have to rush later to finish something else. I know I'm at peace when my mind doesn't wander during Mass, or when I recognize great qualities in my friends that make me want to be more like them. I know I'm at peace when I'm arriving at the airport after visiting my sisters, and I'm tearing up because I know how much I'll miss them and how much I love them.

Blaise Pascal once wrote, "God says to us: You would not be searching for me, unless you had already found me." We've experienced little glimmers of this deep peace that God offers, glimmers of that perfect alignment between instrument and musician. And once we've felt it once, we keep restlessly searching and praying to find it again. This search brings us to prayers like the

Prayer of St. Francis, in which we actually ask God to make us his instruments. Throughout the first half of the prayer, we ask him to let us share with him the role of Creator, and then we ask him to help us do so with humility – with our priorities in order:

“O Master, grant that we may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”

Meghann Robinson
Associate Director, ACE Fellowship



Prayer Service

A MEDITATION ON THE PEACE PRAYER

Supplies needed:

- ❖ Candles:
 - Six identical – could be pillars, votives, tapers, etc., so long as they stand on their own.
 - One larger candle that can likewise stand alone
 - Taper candles for participants, plus one for the presider.
- ❖ Lighter or matches
- ❖ Liturgy programs

Preparation:

- ❖ During reflection time prior to this prayer service, set the prayer space so that the focus is on the readings and on one large candle (lit) surrounded by six smaller ones (unlit). If you like, a cross or crucifix could be placed near the large candle.
- ❖ Set an individual taper candle under each chair, or hand out before the service begins.
- ❖ As much as you can, set the lighting in the room so that the candlelight will stand out as the individual candles are lit. Be sure not to make things so dark that people cannot read their programs.
- ❖ Invite six retreat participants to read the Scripture passages, and be sure they know their cues to come to the ambo. All other prayers are read by the presider.

OPENING HYMN

Presider: (Sign of the Cross)

Mindful of God's abiding presence, let us enter into prayer by singing,
"Take, O Take Me As I Am" found on page ____ in your program.

(This hymn is a repeated mantra in the Taize style – repeat as many times as you like to settle into prayer.)

OPENING PRAYER

Presider: Lord God,

Take us as we are this day:

 blessed with many gifts from Your goodness,

 and yet still broken as we continue our journey toward You.

Look into our hearts and summon forth the courage and the willingness
to align ourselves with Your will.

Set Your seal upon our hearts. Live in us.

 And teach us always to be Your instruments of peace.

FIRST READING

Lector: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

Jesus said,
“A man fell victim to robbers
as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.
They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead.
A priest happened to be going down that road,
but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.
Likewise a Levite came to the place,
and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.
But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him
was moved with compassion at the sight.
He approached the victim,
poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them.
Then he lifted him up on his own animal,
took him to an inn, and cared for him.

The next day he took out two silver coins
and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction,
‘Take care of him.
If you spend more than what I have given you,
I shall repay you on my way back.’
Which of these three, in your opinion,
was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?”
He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.”
Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

(The Good Samaritan: Luke 10:30-37)

FIRST REFLECTION

Presider: Imagine the eyes of the robbers' victim in this parable:
bruised and swollen from a horrific beating,
squeezed shut as pain sears through his body,
stinging with the tears of utter humiliation.

In that moment, what emotions must have boiled behind those eyes?
Lying in the street, after being treated with such hateful brutality,
did he allow similar feelings of hate to consume him?
Among the hurt and embarrassment and physical pain,
was his heart also harboring vengeance and loathing
against his attackers?

In his agony, could those eyes even see those who chose to ignore him,
who crossed the street to avoid him,
who saw hatred and chose to let it remain?

Now,
imagine this man's eyes opening ever so slightly
to the sensation of soothing oil pouring over his wounds.
Imagine those eyes searching for the face of his caretaker.
When they rested on the face of the Good Samaritan,
surely he saw love there –
the kind of love that can triumph over hatred,
and the kind of love that we can only show
when we allow God to work through us.

(Instrumental music begins – “Take, O Take Me As I Am”)

Presider: Loving God, where there is hatred, help us bring Your love.

All: Loving God, make us instruments of Your peace.

(Presider lights the first of the six matching candles from the large candle as all sing one time through the refrain. Then allow time, either in silence or with quiet instrumental music continuing, for quiet reflection.)

SECOND READING

Lector: A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

There was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias,
and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias."
He answered, "Here I am, Lord."
The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight
and ask at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul.
He is there praying,
and in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias
come in and lay his hands on him,
that he may regain his sight."
But Ananias replied,
"Lord, I have heard from many sources about this man,
what evil things he has done to your holy ones in Jerusalem.
And here he has authority from the chief priests
to imprison all who call upon your name."
But the Lord said to him,
"Go, for this man is a chosen instrument of mine
to carry my name before Gentiles, kings, and children of Israel,
and I will show him what he will have to suffer for my name."
So Ananias went and entered the house;
laying his hands on him, he said,
"Saul, my brother, the Lord has sent me,
Jesus who appeared to you on the way by which you came,
that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."
Immediately things like scales fell from his eyes
and he regained his sight.
He got up and was baptized,
and when he had eaten, he recovered his strength.

(Ananias heals Saul's blindness: Acts 9:10-19)

SECOND REFLECTION

Presider: Imagine the amazement, the bewilderment, the fear, even the indignation that ran through Ananias's mind at the beginning of this scenario.

Jesus himself has appeared in a vision.

Jesus has spoken to him,

but He has called His faithful disciple to a frightening task.

Since the stoning of Stephen,

Saul of Tarsus had done everything in his power

to destroy the early Church,

dragging men and women from their homes

and handing them over for imprisonment.

He had traveled to Damascus carrying permission from the Chief Priests to bring any followers of Jesus back to Jerusalem in chains.

Now, Jesus was calling upon Ananias to bring healing to Saul of Tarsus,

a man who had brought tremendous injury to God's people,

a man whose name, in the minds of the early Christians,

must have become nearly synonymous with persecution.

Jesus wanted Ananias to seek out this man,

to present himself to him,

to bring him healing.

Imagine how impossible it must have sounded to Ananias

to hear the Lord describe Saul as "a chosen instrument of mine."

But in accepting the call of Christ,

Ananias himself became a chosen instrument,

bringing pardon and peace where no one would have expected it.

(Instrumental music begins – "Take, O Take Me As I Am")

Presider: Forgiving God, where there is injury, help us bring Your pardon.

All: Forgiving God, make us instruments of Your peace.

(Presider lights the next candle as all sing one time through the refrain. Then allow time, either in silence or with quiet instrumental music continuing, for quiet reflection.)

THIRD READING

Lector: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

It was the third hour when they crucified him.
The inscription giving the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews."
And they crucified two bandits with him,
 one on his right and one on his left.
The passers-by jeered at him;
 they shook their heads and said,
 "Aha! So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days!
 Then save yourself; come down from the cross!"

The chief priests and the scribes
 mocked him among themselves in the same way with the words,
 "He saved others, he cannot save himself.
Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now,
 for us to see it and believe."
Even those who were crucified with him taunted him.

When the sixth hour had come there was darkness over the whole land
 until the ninth hour.
And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice,
 "Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?"
 which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
When some of those who stood by heard this, they said,
 "Listen, he is calling on Elijah."
Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar
 and, putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink saying,
 "Wait! And see if Elijah will come to take him down."
But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.
 And the veil of the Sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom.
The centurion, who was standing in front of him,
 had seen how he had died, and he said,
 "In truth this man was Son of God."

(The Centurion at the Cross: Mark 15:25-39)

THIRD REFLECTION

Presider: Imagine a Centurion, faithful to his job, overhearing the taunts:

“He saved others, he cannot save himself.

Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now,
For us to see it and believe.”

To the Centurion, this Jesus was no different from any other crucified man,
but it probably seemed reasonable to him
that the people of Israel wanted a bit of proof.

For what Son of God would die such a humiliating death?

These logical people just want to see evidence that this is God’s Son,
and dying on a cross is not proof.

But what about the feeding of the 5,000?

The sight of a paralytic carrying his mat?

The raising of the dead, the healing of the blind, the cleansing of lepers?

These people had seen many signs, and nothing they saw convinced them.

But the Centurion saw only that Jesus gave them *no* such sign
on the day of his crucifixion.

Jesus did not come down from the cross,

and it was in this *absence* of a visible sign

that the Centurion felt the seed of faith planted within him:

“In truth, this man was Son of God.”

Our faith is not the result of a logical conclusion. Our faith is a gift.

And what we have freely received we must also freely share with others.

How did the Centurion become an instrument from that moment

when Christ gifted him with this newfound faith?

How can we become the same?

(Instrumental music begins – “Take, O Take Me As I Am”)

Presider: Faithful God, where there is doubt, help us bring faith in You.

All: Faithful God, make us instruments of Your peace.

(Presider lights the next candle as all sing one time through the refrain. Then allow time, either in silence or with quiet instrumental music continuing, for quiet reflection.)

FOURTH READING

Lector: A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness,"
is the One who has shone in our hearts
to give the Light of the knowledge
of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels,
so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God
and not from ourselves.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed;
perplexed, but not despairing;
persecuted, but not forsaken;
struck down, but not destroyed;

always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus,
so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

For we who live
are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake,
so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

(2 Corinthians 4:6-11)

FOURTH REFLECTION

Presider: Imagine traveling with Paul on his first missions
to spread the news that the Messiah has come,
to and preach with Gentiles and Jews the Love of Christ.

You travel with Paul to Antioch and are expelled from the city.
You are forced to flee from Iconium after preaching the Gospel.
You trek to Lystra, where you are stoned and left for dead.
You walk to Philippi, where you are beaten and imprisoned.

Imagine how easy it would have been to despair.
You believe that you were called to be an instrument
of evangelizing love,
but in every community you visit,
there are those who wish you harm,
those will impede your work.

Paul's dedication to the preaching of Jesus Christ as Messiah
doesn't stem from an optimism
that maybe next time someone will listen,
rather, this dedication and tenacity come from hope,
that people will be called to Christ through Paul's preaching.

This hope keeps Paul from despair,
for he knows that Christ's teachings will be a light for the world.

(Instrumental music begins – “Take, O Take Me As I Am”)

Presider: Lord, Hope for All, where there is despair, help us bring Your hope.

All: Lord, Hope for All, make us instruments of Your peace.

(Presider lights the next candle as all sing one time through the refrain. Then allow time, either in silence or with quiet instrumental music continuing, for quiet reflection.)

FIFTH READING

Lector: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came to be through him,
and without him nothing came to be.
What came to be through him was life,
and this life was the light of the human race;
the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.

There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.
He came as a witness, to testify about the Light,
so that all might believe through him.
He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.
He was in the world,
and the world came to be through him,
but the world did not know him.
He came to what was his own,
but his own people did not accept him.
But to those who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God,
to those who believe in his name,
who were born,
not of blood nor the will of the flesh nor the will of man,
but of God.

(John the Baptist Witnesses to the Light: John 1:1-13)

FIFTH REFLECTION

Presider: Imagine the constant questions.

“Are you the Messiah?”

“Are you the One who is to come?”

Imagine the patience of John the Baptist:

“No, I am not He. I am not Elijah. I am not the Prophet.”

Imagine the confidence he felt taking the role of instrument.

“I am the voice of one crying out in the desert,

‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’”

John was not the Light,

but John showed people the way to the Light.

John could not create the Light,

but through his example, he could point people toward it.

What did this require of him?

Humility, of course. Patience. Faith.

Acceptance of his role as instrument.

And John’s heart had to be open to the Light,

that when he saw it present in the world,

he would recognize the Light

and help others to do the same.

(Instrumental music begins – “Take, O Take Me As I Am”)

Presider: Light of the World, where there is darkness, help us bring Your light.

All: Light of the World, make us instruments of Your peace.

(Presider lights the next candle as all sing one time through the refrain. Then allow time, either in silence or with quiet instrumental music continuing, for quiet reflection.)

SIXTH READING

Lector: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Now his older son was in the field
and when he came and approached the house,
he heard music and dancing.
And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring
what these things could be.
And he said to him, "Your brother has come,
and your father has killed the fattened calf
because he has received him back safe and sound."
But he became angry and was not willing to go in;
and his father came out and began pleading with him.
But he answered and said to his father, "Look!
For so many years I have been serving you
and I have never neglected a command of yours;
and yet you have never given me a young goat,
so that I might celebrate with my friends;
but when this son of yours came,
who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes,
you killed the fattened calf for him."
And he said to him, "Son, you have always been with me,
and all that is mine is yours.
But we had to celebrate and rejoice,
for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live,
and was lost and has been found."

(The Prodigal Son: Luke 15:25-32)

SIXTH REFLECTION

Presider: Imagine the sadness

that the Prodigal Son's departure brought upon his family.

Certainly, this sadness was felt deeply by both his father and his brother:
the sadness of a loss that felt as final as a death.

How striking, then, are the differences
between these two men's emotional responses
to the return of their lost son and brother.

The father's jubilation is beautiful.

"But we *had* to celebrate and rejoice," he says,
"for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live,
and was lost and has been found."

The beauty of these lines goes beyond reassurance to us
that the heavenly Father is unconditionally forgiving,
for although the father in the parable is a symbol of God the Father,
he is also a human character.

His joyful words and actions bring more than pardon to the younger son.
They also invite the older son out of his sadness, out of his resentment,
and into his father's joy.

Our Father in Heaven

invites us also to share in His joy.

May we accept this loving invitation,
and may we have the strength and courage to extend it to others.

(Instrumental music begins – "Take, O Take Me As I Am")

Presider: Joyful Father, where there is sadness, help us bring Your joy.

All: Joyful Father, make us instruments of Your peace.

(Presider lights the next candle as all sing one time through the refrain. Then allow time, either in silence or with quiet instrumental music continuing, for quiet reflection.)

(Presider lights one individual taper candle from the large candle.)

Presider: God of Peace, take us as we are this day.
Take our brokenness, take our gifts,
and then turn our gaze outward from ourselves.
As we now share Your light with each other,
fill our hearts with an awareness of those around us,
and of the many opportunities we have each day
to understand others, console them, and love them.

(Presider uses his/her taper candle to light the candles of one or two participants, who in turn spread the light to others, until all candles are lit.)

Presider: I invite all of us to consider the flames dancing in front of us.
Consider them as a symbol of our capacity to share in God's work
as instruments of peace.
Like a flame, each of us has great potential, but also great vulnerability.
And so how comforting it is to see also in this symbol a tongue of fire,
for it is only by leaning into the Holy Spirit
that we can truly accept this call,
and that we can possibly become instruments of God.
Let us pray together the end of the Prayer of St. Francis.

All: **O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.**

Presider: Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our hearts.
Make us ready to do Your work, to be Your instruments,
to help You renew the face of the earth.

Closing Song: "Send Us Your Spirit"
(Sign of the Cross)

HOW CAN THE WORLD EXPERIENCE GOD'S PEACE?



Supplies needed:

- ❖ *Liturgy programs or hymnals*
- ❖ *DVD*
- ❖ *Individual response activity handout, with an index card attached to each*
- ❖ *Instrumental music*

Presider or Music Leader: Let us begin our prayer together this morning in song.
Please join in singing “As a Fire is Meant for Burning.”

Opening Song: “As a Fire is Meant for Burning”

Opening Prayer

Presider: *(Sign of the Cross)*

Heavenly Father, we gather today in praise and worship.

We are thankful for our time on retreat and the opportunity we have had
to consider what it means to be your instruments of Your Peace.

As we wrap up our time of reflection

and move back into the routines of our day-to-day lives,
we humbly ask to be continually inspired.

May we always strive to more fully become Your instruments.

And this morning,

as we explore how a community collectively responds to Your call,
we pray for wisdom and strength to work toward the Kingdom.

We pray all of this in Christ's name.

All: Amen

Scripture

Reader: A reading from The Acts of the Apostles

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles
and to the communal life,
to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone,
and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

All who believed were together and had all things in common;
they would sell their property and possessions
and divide them among all according to each one's need.

Every day they devoted themselves
to meeting together in the temple area
and to breaking bread in their homes.

They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart,
praising God and enjoying favor with all the people.

And every day the Lord added to their number
those who were being saved.

The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Reflection

(At this point, either give the introduction below and play Chuck's talk on the DVD, or have a member of the retreat team offer his or her own reflection.)

Introduction: As we unpack what being instrument's of God's peace implies for life in community, Chuck Lamphier, Director of The ACE Fellowship, will lead us in reflection.

Individual Reflection and Prayer

(If a retreat team member is offering a different talk during this session, you will want to tweak the included individual reflection activity.)

Presider: As Chuck shared with us, we are certainly called to be instruments of God's peace as individuals, but additionally, this is a collective call. Together we can aspire to become a symphony of God's peace. As a way to engage this a bit more deeply, we have a few questions for you to consider that use Chuck's image of building a cathedral. Over the next 20 minutes I invite you to use the questions and organizer to collect and organize your own reflections. For question #3 we ask that you write your prayer on the attached note card.

(Hand out organizers and note cards. As individuals are reflecting, play some instrumental music in the background. Allow about 20 minutes. If you invite retreatants to move around during this time or go to different rooms, be sure to give them a time to be back.)

Intercessions

Presider: We are called to be instruments of God's peace so that together we may become a symphony. If we are to set this as our goal we surely need God's grace to sustain and strengthen us along the way. I invite all of you to place your note card, which contains your prayer for your community, into the basket that is being passed around. Once collected, we will offer these prayers as one community seeking to bring God's peace to the world.

(Pass around basket and collect note card prayers. Once the cards are collected place them in a space of prominence in your prayer area).

Reader: Please respond to each intention with,
“Lord, make us instruments of your peace.”

For all of the prayers we have gathered in our basket. Hear every one of them, and make our communities heralds of your peace. We pray.

All: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Reader: For these and all communities in our world. May they bring about God’s peace through their witness of faith, hope and love.

All: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Reader: When we go forth from here, may our experience of retreat continue to nourish us and give us the grace to make God known, loved and served.

All: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Reader: For the many communities that we belong to: family, friends, co-workers, and others. May we work to share God’s peace with one another.

“Lord, Make us instruments of Your Peace.”

(Retreat leader: At this time, offer your own brief closing message to your retreat group. Include any thank yous and announcements you wish to make before everyone scatters.)

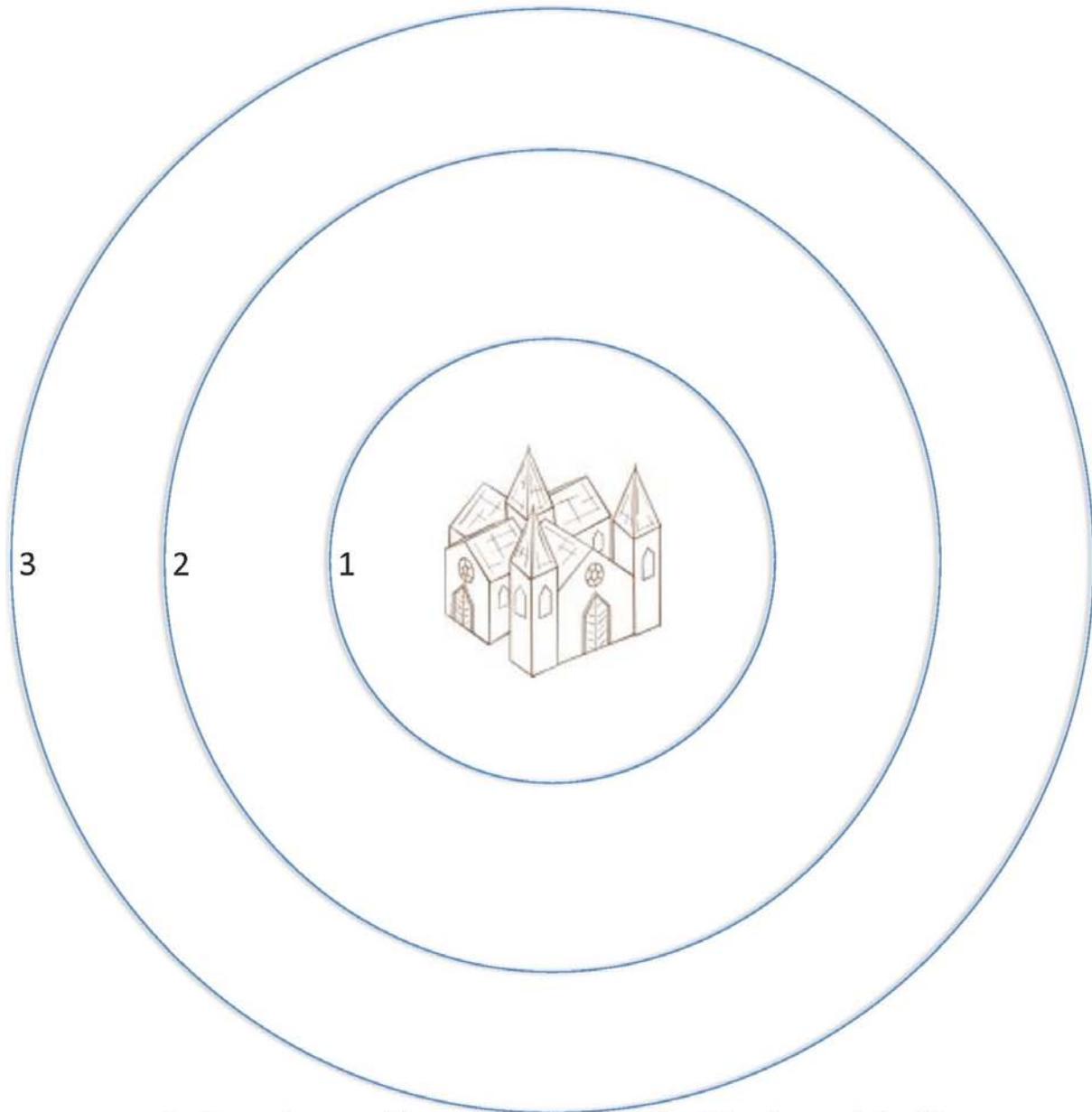
Presider: Let us close our time together in song. Join us, singing “City of God.”

Closing Song: “City of God”



HOW CAN THE WORLD EXPERIENCE GOD'S PEACE?

Building a Cathedral



1. How do your life and work build the Kingdom of God?
2. On whom do you most directly rely to build the Kingdom?
3. What is your prayer for how your community can more fully become a symphony of God's peace?



HOW CAN THE WORLD EXPERIENCE GOD'S PEACE?

There's a beautiful story of a visitor to a town in Europe where there was a large cathedral being built. Curious, the man decided to explore the unfinished structure, and to speak to some of the workers. There were three stonemasons inside the cathedral, so he walked up to them one by one.

"Sir, can I ask what you're doing?"

"Can't you see? I'm moving these stones from the back up to the front so they can be used tomorrow."

He walked up a little farther to another stonemason. "Sir, what are you doing?" he asked.

He replied, "I'm building this wall here."

The man walked to the back of the church to the third worker. "Sir, can I ask what you're doing?"

"Me? I'm building a cathedral to the glory of God."

I love this story. It always reminds me of a basic truth of the Christian life: Our work, our activities, our lives, even our responses to God's call are best understood as being a part of something much larger than simply ourselves. As teachers and administrators and business-people; as husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, our lives and our actions have ripple effects beyond what we can imagine, certainly to those around us, but also far beyond what we can comprehend. We all have the opportunity to "build a cathedral": To make a place for God to sit in this world, to create a space where people can gather to hear God's story, to be nourished at the table, to commune with each other, to encounter love and grace and peace. We can all create a Bethlehem where God can be borne in our own time, space, culture, and context.

To put all of this another way, whatever our state in life, or our set of daily activities, we all have the opportunity to renew the face of the earth and to build the Kingdom of God. We're instruments of the Kingdom, being gently – or sometimes not so gently! – guided by the Lord!

It might seem a little off that we're all called in a similar way, that despite evident diversity, we're all on a similar path. The individual in us may recoil at this idea. And even more jarring, it may seem ludicrous to think that we're called to link our lives with those around us to build a Kingdom of God, especially when it's hard to see how God's life and love are taking shape in our world at all. It seems that every time we turn around, we're faced with new examples of how the kingdom is being torn down, not built up. We're faced with violence and hurt and brokenness....and maybe even more importantly, we're faced with our own selfishness and pride, our unwillingness to say yes to peace or love or generosity in our own lives. Yet, it is to peace and love and generosity that we are all called. "That all may be one" was Jesus' prayer: That all people may live in love with God.

You see, all the world's brokenness indicates that sometimes "peace" isn't an appropriate personal end unto itself. Being serene or placid in our own lives surely is not our ultimate call. Sometimes, to face the pain and suffering of the world, the most peaceful thing to do is to shoulder the world's

anxiety and tumult: this is the sometimes unhappy life of a Christian; it's picking up our burden, and walking straight on into the fire of brokenness; to pick up our cross, and to lighten the load of another.

But it's in these moments of carrying our cross, of struggling against a world that is not yet the kingdom and not yet at peace, a world of isolation, when a real miracle can occur. It's at these moments when, as we walk along the tired road, that we can open our eyes to the reality of others doing the same. If we're attentive to the reality that we're not alone in our struggle for peace, we're given the opportunity to reach out and touch hands with others who share our same uphill walk. Our eyes meet, our spirits rejoice, we share the spark of knowing that comes from walking together on the same path. These are the moments of community where we are seen for who we are, and our heart is joined to another's; we are one.

And it's at this very moment, too, where if we let this community not be just about us – not just about two weary travelers on the road – but if we link our journey to that of the Lord, if we invite in He who literally took up his cross and walked right through death and out of the tomb, if we link it to our lived experience of God in the scriptures, if we have the courage to accept forgiveness for our misdeeds, and nourishment for our journey in the Eucharist, and we conform our lives to He who is present in the Sacrament, it's then that we have much more than a community which binds two people together: It's then when we have a Church, which binds us together in the unending company of instruments of God's Peace, citizens of the Kingdom, cathedral builders in this world and in heaven, who are led and shaped and molded by the One who loved us into being. It's in this moment that I can truly look to you and your work – as a teacher, or an administrator, or anything else, your life as a husband or wife, father or mother, sister or brother, man or woman, and see it as belonging to something much larger than you or me, but belonging to the movement of building this world into the Kingdom of God.

It's in this moment, and in these moments time and time again, when you and I, as simple instruments playing our assigned notes with freedom and vigor, join our melody to others just like us, in a beautiful harmony we never knew was possible. It's almost shocking when I rediscover that my music relates to yours when we both play it just as we should.... And then, almost miraculously, our harmony of peace and generosity and love can become linked to an even larger group of players, linked to the people from across space and time, linked to the angels and saints, in their unending hymn of praise: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth! Our small but meaningful notes fall into place in the magnificent enterprise that is God, and peace reigns.

Lord God, you call us to love, to holiness, and to peace. We are your instruments in this world, and we ask you to conduct us: lead us to follow you. When we sound a discordant note, correct us; when the world is reluctant to follow you, patiently lead us back into harmony. As you sanctify us, let us sanctify the world. Lord, make us all a symphony of your peace.

*Chuck Lamphier
Director, ACE Fellowship*



MASS PREPARATION GUIDELINES

The guidelines below will be helpful in preparing to celebrate Mass during your retreat. The “Mass Planning Worksheet,” included in these retreat resources, will help keep track of readings, song selections, and ministers. **If you would like to use a printed liturgy program instead of a hymnal**, contact Meghann Robinson at mrobinso@nd.edu for help with copyright/reprint licensing and general program preparation.

In preparing for any Mass, speak early with your celebrant. Your celebrant may have particular preferences regarding certain parts of the Mass, and may also be able to help with procuring needed materials.

READINGS AND MUSIC SELECTIONS

- 1) For your Sunday/Saturday Vigil Mass, you will need to determine the weekend’s readings. Readings can be found at www.usccb.org. Click on “Readings” at the top of the page, and selecting the Sunday corresponding to your retreat weekend.
- 2) Be sure your celebrant has the readings well ahead of time so he can prepare his homily. This is particularly important for the retreat-themed Mass, as he will have access to the Sunday readings.
- 3) We recommend adding your printouts to a binder that contains all readings for Masses and prayer services throughout the retreat. If you print two copies of each reading, then you can keep one in the binder and give one to the lector – this way the lector has a copy to read over, and it’s a signal to you that you’ve asked someone to read.
- 4) The Mass Planning Worksheet includes blanks for all song selections. Some thoughts on choosing hymns:
 - ❖ Choose hymns that will be familiar to your retreatants, and that evoke the themes expressed in the readings.
 - ❖ Borrow a hymnal from your parish or school to browse for ideas. Check the front and back for a thematic table of contents or index that organizes songs based on theme (“Peace,” “Mission/Sending Forth,” “Eucharist,” etc.)
 - ❖ The opening hymn sets the tone for the rest of the Mass. It can be upbeat or more reflective; it can focus on the act of gathering as a community or on the theme expressed in the readings.
 - ❖ It is appropriate to choose a Communion song that includes Eucharistic images.
 - ❖ Closing hymns often have a “missioning” or “sending-forth” feel to them.

GATHERING MATERIALS FOR MASS

- 1) If you are holding your retreat in a Catholic church or retreat center, check first to see whether they have these items available. Otherwise, talk with your celebrant for advice on where the necessary items may be procured – he may be able to bring much of what you need.

- 2) The list below is fairly exhaustive. Again, we recommend talking with your celebrant, as there are items that may be omitted, and he will likely have his preferences in this regard.
 - ❖ Hosts (include the large host for the priest) and wine
 - ❖ Candle and crucifix
 - ❖ Vessels
 - Ciborium and paten, chalice
 - Other vessels if needed for additional Eucharistic ministers (probably not necessary for a small retreat group)
 - Cruets of wine and water
 - Lavabo dish for priest to wash his hands
 - ❖ Linens
 - Pall (altar cloth)
 - Corporal
 - One purificator for each cup used
 - Finger towel if a lavabo dish is used
 - ❖ Vestments
 - Alb
 - Chasuble and stole – the color will depend on the current liturgical season or feast (talk to your celebrant if you have questions – and because he will probably be able to provide his own vestments)
 - ❖ Readings
 - Readings for the retreat-themed Mass are included with these resources.
 - For your Sunday/Saturday Vigil Mass, you can read from the regular Sunday Lectionary, or the readings can be printed off the internet (www.usccb.org) or found in the current monthly issue of “Magnificat” or “Living with Christ.”
 - We recommend printing the readings and keeping them in a binder with all other readings for the weekend – all prayer services and both Masses.
 - ❖ Prayers/Order of the Mass
 - Again, talk with your celebrant here. If a Sacramentary is not available, the prayers may be found in “Magnificat” or “Living with Christ,” or another standard missalette. Your celebrant will probably have something he can use.

- ❖ Music
 - You will need either a hymnal or a liturgy program with songs printed (again, talk to Meghann about creating a program for your retreat).
 - Talk to your musicians about their specific needs – accompaniment music, instruments, music stands, amplifiers, etc.

OTHER NOTES ON PREPARATION

- 1) Be attentive to the setup of the space you will use for Mass.
 - ❖ If you have a chapel, see if you can arrange seating to create an intimate feel. If you are using the same basic room for all parts of your retreat, experiment with the placement of a podium and table so Mass has a slightly different feel to it.
 - ❖ Though dim lighting can help create a prayerful atmosphere, be sure that the room is at least bright enough for the priest, lectors, and musicians to read (and for participants to read their programs/hymnals).

- 2) Notes for the Sacristan
 - ❖ If you are celebrating Mass in a space with a Tabernacle, be sure you know how to open it to place extra consecrated hosts (if needed).
 - ❖ Talk with your celebrant about whether gifts will be presented by retreatants or set on the credence table behind the altar. Discuss with him also whether he will set the altar for Communion, or whether you should do so as Sacristan.
 - ❖ Plan ahead, especially if you are not in a Catholic church or retreat center, for how to purify vessels. Have a place to hold used linens until they can be properly cleansed.



MASS PLANNING WORKSHEET

GENERAL INFORMATION

Date _____

Mass Celebrating the N/A Sunday of N/A
(Example: *the Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time, the Third Sunday of Lent, etc.*)

Theme(s) expressed in readings Retreat theme – Instruments of God's Peace

MINISTERS

Celebrant _____

Sacristan _____

Musicians _____

Lectors _____

Eucharistic Ministers _____

Gift Bearers (if used) _____

OPENING RITES

Opening Hymn: God of Day and God of Darkness, vs 1 and 5

Penitential Rite: _____ Sung (Musical setting: _____)

_____ Recited

(Often, the Penitential Rite is sung during Lent, though this is not required.)

Gloria: _____ Sung (Musical setting: _____)

_____ Recited

X Omitted (during Advent and Lent and on weekdays)

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Ephesians 2:12-22 Lector: _____

Psalm 27 : X Sung (Musical setting: David Haas – The Lord is My Light)

_____ Read

Lector or Cantor: _____

Second Reading: none (Weekday) Lector: N/A

Gospel Acclamation: _____

(Be sure to use a Lenten Gospel Acclamation during the season of Lent – no “Alleluia!”)

Gospel: John 14:27-31a

Intercessions: _____ Written by retreat team, read by _____

_____ Offered by celebrant (with an opportunity for retreatants to offer additional prayers, if desired)

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation Hymn: You Are Near

_____ Sung _____ Instrumental Only

Gifts presented by _____

(Can also be set on the credence table behind the altar, to be brought to the altar by the sacristan.)

Mass Setting _____

(Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen – Lamb of God may be the same or different. If your retreat falls during Lent, be sure your Great Amen does not include the word “Alleluia,” as some do.)

Lord’s Prayer _____ Sung (Musical Setting: _____)

_____ Recited

Communion Hymn: All Who Hunger

Meditation Hymn (if desired): Eat This Bread

Closing Hymn: Baptized in Water

Other Notes:



READINGS FOR MASS

First Reading

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

Brothers and sisters:

You were at one time without Christ,
alienated from the community of Israel
and strangers to the covenants of promise,
without hope and without God in the world,
But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off
have become near by the Blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, he made both one
and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his Flesh,
abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims,
that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two,
thus establishing peace,
and might reconcile both with God,
in one Body, through the cross,
putting that enmity to death by it.

He came and preached peace to you who were far off
and peace to those who were near,
for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners,
but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones
and members of the household of God,
built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets,
with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone.

Through him the whole structure is held together
and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord;
in him you also are being built together
into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you;
not as the world gives to I give to you.
Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.
You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’
If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father,
for the Father is greater than I.
Now, I have told you before it happens,
so that when it happens, you may believe.
I will not speak much more with you,
for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me,
but so that the world may know that I love the Father,
I do exactly as the Father commanded Me.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

MASS PLANNING WORKSHEET



GENERAL INFORMATION

Date _____

Mass Celebrating the _____ Sunday of _____
(Example: the Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time, the Third Sunday of Lent, etc.)

Theme(s) expressed in readings _____

MINISTERS

Celebrant _____

Sacristan _____

Musicians _____

Lectors _____

Eucharistic Ministers _____

Gift Bearers (if used) _____

OPENING RITES

Opening Hymn: _____

Penitential Rite: _____ Sung (Musical setting: _____)

_____ Recited

(Often, the Penitential Rite is sung during Lent, though this is not required.)

Gloria: _____ Sung (Musical setting: _____)

_____ Recited

_____ Omitted (during Advent and Lent and on weekdays)

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: _____ Lector: _____

Psalm _____: _____ Sung (Musical setting: _____)

_____ Read

Lector or Cantor: _____

Second Reading: _____ Lector: _____

Gospel Acclamation: _____

(Be sure to use a Lenten Gospel Acclamation during the season of Lent – no “Alleluia!”)

Gospel: _____

Intercessions: _____ Written by retreat team, read by _____

_____ Offered by celebrant (with an opportunity for retreatants to offer additional prayers, if desired)

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation Hymn: _____

_____ Sung _____ Instrumental Only

Gifts presented by _____

(Can also be set on the credence table behind the altar, to be brought to the altar by the sacristan.)

Mass Setting _____

(Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen – Lamb of God may be the same or different. If your retreat falls during Lent, be sure your Great Amen does not include the word “Alleluia,” as some do.)

Lord’s Prayer _____ Sung (Musical Setting: _____)

_____ Recited

Communion Hymn: _____

Meditation Hymn (if desired): _____

Closing Hymn: _____

Other Notes: