

The First Week

First Exercise

Preparation: The Examen, or a simplified version of gratitude, recollection and offering.

Grace: We are asking God for the gift of confusion or alienation (even shame) as I consider the effect of one sin.

Colloquy: I put myself before Jesus Christ our Lord, present before me on the cross. I talk to him about how he creates because he loves and then he is born one like us out of love, so emptying himself as to pass from eternal life to death here in time, even death on a cross. By his response of love for God his Father, he dies for my sins.

I look to myself and ask—just letting the questions penetrate my being:

In the past, what response have I made to Christ?

How do I respond to Christ now?

What response should I make to Christ? As I look upon Jesus as he hangs upon the cross, I ponder whatever God may bring to my attention.

The Setting: The sin of Adam and Eve

Adam and Eve show the simple but direct rejection of God's love. They seek to escape responsibility by shifting the blame to someone or something else. The effects of the story are catastrophic: the loss of God's special sharing of life, coupled with a continuing flow of evil. I consider the effect of this sin on them and all posterity. I let the destructiveness of evil become fully present. If one sin can wreak such havoc, what about my own sinfulness?

The First Human Sin

Genesis 3:1-19.

Focus: How devastating is one sin and its effects.

Rejection of God as Rejection of Life

Matthew 13:4-23

Focus: God's seed within us must be nourished or else death results.

Focus: God has authority over demons

Recognition of Sin

2 Samuel 12:1-15

Focus: How blind one can be in doing wrong.

Personal Responsibility for Sin

Ezekiel 18:1-32

Focus: I am responsible for my choices.

Finish the week with a colloquy

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The Setting: The person who goes to hell

The possibility of making a definitive "no" as a response to God's love, ratifying that no even in death. A person who chooses no forever closes off all love and life flowing from the one source of God. How can I measure the number of no's which I have spoken to God up to this time of my life? What can I say to God about myself?

Colloquy: I put myself before the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. I talk to him about how he creates because he loves and then is born from that love, so emptying himself as to pass from eternal life to death here in time, even death on a cross. By his response of love for the Father, he dies for sin. I look at myself and let these questions penetrate my being:

In the past, what response have I made to Christ?

How do I respond to Christ now?

What response should I make to Christ?

As I ponder Jesus on the Cross, I ponder whatever God brings to my attention. I close with the Lord's Prayer.