

# San Diego Retreat

## October 2010

### Settle Yourself Into Prayer-

Come to prayer gently. This is one of the great benefits of being on retreat, we can give up our haste for a few hours and bask in the spaciousness of time spent in the presence of God. So enter slowly and gently prepare to pray. After you have strolled around find a suitable place free from distraction. Assume a comfortable posture, breath deeply and adjust (in body, mind and heart) to the silence, the spaciousness and the stillness. Reflect where you have been, what you have been doing, and what you have felt and experienced in the past 60 days. Talk to God about your thoughts and feelings. Listen.



*The Widow at Zarephath, Watercolor by Steve Stuckey*

## OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, we come before you as a people too nearly conformed to this world and its values. We fail to develop our God-given abilities and then envy those who do. Too busy for the care of our bodies or the development of our minds and spirits, we neglect the nurture of our own best selves. We serve, but sometimes with resentment because we say "Yes" to the most

insistent caller more than to you. Expecting too much of ourselves, we resent others who seem not to do their share. We waffle between weakness which allows others to walk all over us, and defensiveness which ignores the rights of others. We spend our money on that which is not bread and turn our eyes away from images of those who have no bread. Yet we ignore our own hunger and thirst for you and your righteousness. Transform us by your spirit and renew our minds. May we find the joy and peace that comes from seeking your will, through Jesus, your faithful servant. Amen

Ruth C. Duck, Touch Holiness, adapted

**Scripture Reading-** **1 Kings 17:1-24** Read this passage three times. Read it first for Elijah, the ravens, and the widow. Put yourself in their sandals. Imagine the mission each was called to and their relationship to God. Second, read it for yourself. What in the passage speaks to you? Third, read it for someone else on your campus. Try reading it once in another version.

### Reading For Reflection

Take the old prophets as your mentors. They put up with anything, went through everything, and never once quit, all the time honoring God. What a gift life is to those who stay the course... Make this your common practice: Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed. The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with. Elijah, for instance, human just like us, prayed hard that it wouldn't rain, and it didn't –not a drop for three and a half years. Then he prayed that it would rain, and it did. The showers came and everything started growing again.

*James 5:10, 16-18 The Message*

Living a spiritual life is far from easy... The human spirit does not quickly conform to God's design. Being formed in God's likeness involves the struggle from *absurd living to obedient living*. The word *absurd* includes the word *sardus*, which means "deaf." Absurd living is a way of life in which we remain deaf to the voice that speaks to us in our silence. The many activities in which we are involved, the many concerns that keep us preoccupied, and the many sounds that surround us make it very hard to hear the *sheer silence* through which God's presence is made known (see 1 Kings 19:12) It seems that the noisy, busy world conspires against our hearing that voice and tries to make us absolutely deaf... The word *obedience* includes the word *audire* which means "listening." The obedient life is one in which we listen with great attention to God's Spirit within and among us.

*Spiritual Direction by Henri Nouwen Page 17-18*

Within healthy twelve-step groups, grace is played out among members. The recovery slogan—"I stay on my side of the street; you stay on yours"—indicates that the other person's sin isn't my business. I don't go on his side of the street to judge him. I understand that I can't see his heart. In fact, my side of the street is so cluttered that I need to stay there to get some help myself. Likewise, the central role of grace in spiritual formation cannot be underestimated. It's needed to have a vision of what life in the kingdom of God can be (I *can* change!) and how the possibility of grace allows us to use spiritual disciplines as experiments, not rules.

*Jan Johnson in Conversation 8.1 page 59*

"If we knew how to listen to God, we would hear him speaking to us. For God does speak. He speaks in his Gospels. He also speaks through life – that new gospel to which we ourselves add a page each day.... If we knew how to listen to God, if we knew how to look around us, our whole life would become prayer."

- *Michel Quoist, Prayers*

"Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer."

- *Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet*

The Bible does not say you are God's appliance; it says you are his masterpiece. Appliances get mass produced. Masterpieces get handcrafted. God did not make you exactly like anyone else. Therefore his plan for shaping you will not look like his plan for shaping anyone else. If you try to follow a generic plan for spiritual growth, it will frustrate you. Paul said, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

*From the Me I Want to Be, by John Ortberg, page 48*

## **BENEDICTION**

Let nothing trouble you; Let nothing frighten you; all things pass. God alone does not change. Patience can do all things. Whoever has God, has everything. God alone is sufficient.

*Prayer of Saint Teresa*