

Recall: The Three Kinds of Humility: In the third and highest kind of humility, a person so desires to be with Jesus that she desires to be poor, insulted, and humiliated with Jesus poor, insulted, and humiliated, and even considered worthless and a fool as Jesus was considered. Yet it is important to recognize that the focus of this meditation is not poverty, insults, humiliations, and the rest, but rather the desire simply to be with Jesus regardless of where this may lead. This is the attitude of a person who is deeply in love with Jesus. The Third Week, which the retreatant is about to enter, is a graced opportunity to foster and deepen this desire to be with Jesus. She has been with Jesus in his life and ministry; she is now invited to be with him in his suffering and death.

The Third Week is a unit: Unlike the manner in which the Second Week is presented, the Third Week flows seamlessly from event to event toward Jesus' death. Even the Last Supper follows this movement as the focus is increasingly on Jesus "emptying" himself. Jesus is now entering into his Passion.

There are two indications that the retreatant is ready to move into the Third Week:

- the election: she has arrived at a point of decision in her life, which will be confirmed during her contemplation of the Passion
- a deepening desire for union with Christ: she has been with Jesus in his ministry; she now desires to be with him regardless of where he may lead her

Some noteworthy shifts in the person of Jesus:

- Jesus moves from an active role to one that is passive: In the Second Week Jesus was depicted as always in control as he taught "with authority" and acted with "great power." But as he enters into his Passion, he is depicted as entirely subject to the control of others. The action is entirely from the outside and is being imposed on him.
- Jesus is abandoned: not only by his disciples but also by his felt-sense of his Father's presence: he thus experiences himself as being utterly alone in his sufferings.
- Jesus' divinity seems to hide itself [196]: Jesus is depicted as very human and is thus terrified at all that awaits him.
- Jesus becomes increasingly quiet: he is questioned, but says very little or nothing in response. It seems that Jesus has clearly foreseen, not by divine revelation, but simply by human intuition, the direction events are moving – that he will be arrested, tried, condemned, crucified, and killed – and, after a terrible struggle, perhaps in the garden, he has opened his arms and allowed it simply to happen. There is no longer any need for words.

Guidelines for direction:

- grace to ask for: compassion (to suffer with): to be with Jesus in his sufferings: to experience "sorrow with Jesus in sorrow, anguish with Jesus in anguish" [203]
 - This is a grace for which the retreatant must earnestly ask. Her desires, especially the deepest desires of her heart, are not under her control.
 - It is difficult to ask for this grace – this deep, personal union with Jesus in his sufferings – and it is even more difficult to receive it.
 - The grace of the Third Week draws the retreatant more and more out of herself and into the heart of Jesus, an experience which is profoundly transformative. It is important to point out, however, that even though the experience of the Third Week is profoundly transformative for the retreatant, her being with Jesus throughout his passion and death is profoundly painful as well.

- The retreatant should not try to understand Jesus' sufferings, but wish only to be with Jesus in his sufferings. In this regard, it is important that she be present in the mysteries she contemplates, not as an unimpassioned observer standing on the sidelines, but rather as one who willingly enters into the mysteries to be with Jesus and thus willing to suffer with Jesus.
- consolation: any feeling or affective movement that draws the retreatant toward God or makes her less centered upon herself and more open to others. Consolation...
 - in the Second Week: often pleasant, reassuring, and happy ("soft consolation")
 - in the Third Week: difficult, painful, filled with anguish and tears – yet it draws her toward Jesus ("hard consolation")
- In her prayer, it is important that the retreatant allow herself to encounter the human Jesus, the Jesus who reacts to all that is happening to him as she might react. In this regard, she should be careful to avoid theologizing (e.g., Jesus is doing this for me); such thoughts ultimately interfere with God's action in her prayer.
- The retreatant should seek to enter into the heart and soul of Jesus so as to see and feel and understand the mystery as Jesus saw and felt and understood it. In doing this, she should focus not so much on the physical horrors of his passion (which can be observed by any casual observer on the sidelines), but rather on the emotional horrors (experienced interiorly): the fear and anguish about all that awaits him, while he is utterly alone.

In this regard, in many of the Gospel passages which comprise the Third Week, particularly when Jesus is most alone – his agony in the garden, his arrest, his condemnation to death, the way of the cross, his crucifixion – it can be a very grace-filled experience for the retreatant to imaginatively "be" Jesus.

- St. Ignatius of Antioch, on his way to be martyred in Rome, wrote a series of seven letters. In his letter to the Christian community in Ephesus he spoke of Jesus' passion and death as a mystery which took place "in the silence of God." In this regard, it is important that the retreatant allow her prayer to become quieter, simpler, and more passive, avoiding as much as possible thinking and even imagining, while allowing herself simply to rest in the feelings evoked by the mystery: love, compassion, and sorrow. It may seem to her that "nothing" is happening in her prayer, but this is the very point: if, in her very effort to pray, she feels empty and tense, she is receiving the grace she seeks: she is with Jesus in his sufferings.
- The retreatant's experience often runs the spectrum from the powerfully emotional to the arid and negative – and neither is necessarily what it seems: there is need for discernment here.
- To evade Jesus' physical suffering would be false, but there is a need to discern how much is appropriate to the grace of the Third Week.

Second Day [208]: a suggested contemplation: After his arrest and interrogation by the Sanhedrin, Jesus is locked in a holding cell, an old cistern that has been converted into a prison cell with a steep staircase leading from the locked door at the top down the floor below. (It can be seen today near the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu – "cock-crow"). Jesus is utterly alone. The retreatant finds and enters the cell. She has come simply to be with Jesus. That is all. (This has no scriptural basis.) "For the retreatant truly desirous of following Jesus, this contemplation holds deep, deep graces." (Marian Cowan and John Futrell, *Companions in Grace: Directing the Spiritual Exercises*, p. 129)

Rules with Regard to Eating [210-217]: The principles stated here are applicable not only to eating, but also to one's use of time, recreation, TV, reading, etc.

- "consider carefully what would be helpful and therefore to be permitted, and what would be harmful, and to be avoided." [211]: a concrete application of the principle stated in the Principle and Foundation for the use of creation: "Hence, one is to make use of [penances] in as far as they help in the attainment of the end, and one must rid oneself of them in as far as they prove a hindrance."