

CONSECRATE

August/September 2022 Retreat of Silence



Henry Ossawa Tanner, *Miraculous Haul of Fishes*, 1914

Location: National Academy Museum and School (National Academy of Design), New York City, NY, US

Public Domain

*“Consecrate yourselves,
for tomorrow the Lord
will do amazing things among you.”
(Joshua 3:5, NIV)*

CONSECRATE YOURSELF BEFORE GOD

As you step into a new academic year of ministry, NSO, Urbana preparation, Strategic Plan development, Ministry Acceleration, and book launches, how is it with your soul? This retreat of silence is your invitation to press pause, step away from the endless needs and chaotic pace, and tend to your inner life. In the holy pause, Jesus invites you to be consecrated, sanctified, purified, and surrendered in preparation for what God desires to do in and through you for God’s name and your joy. Jesus has asked the Father for this very thing on your behalf.

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17)

So come away and listen...

**“Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it,
listen for what it intends to do with you.” – Parker Palmer.**

In his gem of a book, *Let Your Life Speak*, author, teacher, and activist Parker J. Palmer gives helpful guidance for listening to God through God’s whispers in our souls.

“The soul speaks its truth only under quiet, inviting, and trustworthy conditions. The soul is like a wild animal – tough, resilient, savvy, self-sufficient, and yet exceedingly shy. If we want to see a wild animal, the last thing we should do is go crashing through the woods, shouting for the creature to come out. But if we are willing to walk quietly into the woods and sit silently for an hour or two at the base of a tree, the

creature we are waiting for may well emerge, and out of the corner of an eye we will catch a glimpse of the precious wildness we seek.”¹

Whether in nature, a quiet room, a retreat center, or a silent sanctuary, find a place that can become a sacred space of silence and solitude for you. Let this be your soul’s space for emerging in the safety of God’s love. Take nothing except this guide and a pen or pencil for jotting down impressions and what you hear or notice that you want to remember. Be present to the holy by leaving all else behind.

Once you arrive, give your whole being ample time to settle in. Walk around and explore, sit and relax, draw in the dirt, wade your feet into water, close your eyes and listen to [peaceful music](#) - whatever brings you to inner stillness.

Your God is spacious. Enjoy the place to which he has brought you.

*“He brought me out into a spacious place...
because he delighted in me.”
(Ps. 18:19)*

PRAY

Breath prayer

Inhale: “Consecrate me in the truth.”

Pause and hold.

Exhale: “Your word is truth.”

Repeat 3-4 times.

¹ Palmer, Parker J., *Let Your Life Speak* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

In response to God's love, grace, and truth...we seek to be consecrated before the Lord for a new academic year. As you enter into retreat:

- What needs to be confessed before God? Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and lead you into a time of repentance.
- Receive Christ's absolution: "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luke 7:48b, 50b)
- What needs to be lamented before God? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your places of deep pain, abuse, loss, trauma, injustice, grief, etc. Cry out to God in a lament. As David did throughout the psalms, get honest with God and lay it all before him.
- Who needs to be forgiven? Ask the Holy Spirit to recall those from whom you may be withholding forgiveness. Be set free from the destructive chains of unforgiveness. Forgive, as you have been forgiven.
- What do you want to thank God for? Rejoice and give thanks for God's abundant gifts in your life and the lives of those you love. Delight in the One who knows you best and loves you most.

*"In you, Lord my God,
I put my trust.
I trust in you;
do not let me be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
No one who hopes in you
will ever be put to shame,
but shame will come on those
who are treacherous without cause.
Show me your ways, Lord,
teach me your paths.*

*Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.
Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.
Do not remember the sins of my youth
and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me,
for you, Lord, are good.” (Psalm 25:1-7, NIV)*

Now simply be.
Be with God.
Be still and know.

IMAGINATIVE PRAYER

Modeled after Ignatian Spiritual Exercises

Settle into a posture of listening to God by using your imagination to pray scripture. Read through the whole text two or three times. Use the journal portion of this guide to note what you hear, notice, sense, or feel in this time.

First, **observe the scene**. From a broad vantage point, observe the scene of this Gospel narrative, noticing the big picture overall, then focusing in to notice the details. Seek to gain insight into the heart and mind of God through what you observe.

Second, **enter the story**. Find yourself walking, talking, and bumping around within the narrative. Where are you in the story? What is going on between the various characters in the story? How does Jesus talk to and treat those he encounters? How do people react to Jesus’ words and actions? Use your imagination to be physically present within the narrative.

Third, **apply your senses**. What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you see? What do you feel? What do you taste? Engage all your senses in the story and notice what you are experiencing through these physical sensations. How do your senses “incarnate” the narrative for you? Enter more fully into the mystery of this story through your senses. Let your whole being worship and experience Jesus’ call upon your life, presence in your life, and invitations to you.

In this text, we enter into the final hours of Jesus’ earthly life. He and his disciples have been in the upper room sharing the Passover meal together – the Last Supper – and now they have left and are walking outside, presumably toward the garden of Gethsemane where he will soon be betrayed by Judas. Following this text, scripture notes that they went “across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden” (John 18:1, NRSV). Jesus is sharing final words of instruction, encouragement, and exhortation with his disciples in John 14-16. Then in John 17, he offers the “High Priestly Prayer” on behalf of himself, his disciples, and all who will believe in him through their witness and testimony. Listen, and enter into the story as Christ prays for you and for all of us in the body of Christ.



John 17:6-26, NIV

⁶ "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

¹³ "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

JOURNAL

- *What words, phrases, images, or impressions stand out to you?*
- *How is God present to you in this scene?*
- *What is Jesus' invitation to you in this encounter?*
- *How does your soul desire to respond to Jesus?*

Use the space below to journal what you are noticing if you are so led.

Jesus has interceded for you. Receive the gift of his prayer of consecration.

Go for a walk. Talk with God. Enjoy being in the company of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Rest. Enjoy some refreshing food and drink. Dance in the delight of Creator.

“But me he caught—reached all the way
from sky to sea; he pulled me out
Of that ocean of hate, that enemy chaos,
the void in which I was drowning.
They hit me when I was down,
but God stuck by me.
He stood me up on a wide-open field;
I stood there saved—surprised to be loved!”
(Psalm 18:16-19, The Message)

HYMN OF CONSECRATION

"Take My Life and Let It Be" by Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879), Public Domain

1. Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
2. Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee,
Swift and beautiful for Thee.
3. Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee,
Filled with messages from Thee.
4. Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose,
Every power as Thou shalt choose.
5. Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart; it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne,
It shall be Thy royal throne.
6. Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee,
Ever, only, all for Thee.

PRAY

Breath prayer

Inhale: "Consecrate me in the truth."

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CLOSING PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

From Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471)

I will presume to speak to you, my Lord, though I am mere dust and ashes. If I imagined myself to be anything more, you would confront me with my sins, which bear witness against me. But if I humble myself and acknowledge my nothingness, then your grace will come to me, and your light will enter my heart. So let the last trace of pride be swallowed up in the depths of my own nothingness and perish forever. Let me see myself for what I am and what I have been, as mere nothingness.

Now, Lord, look upon me. Your gaze can turn my nothingness into newness, my darkness into light, my misery into joy, my death into life. When I become nothing, I discover both myself and you. When I admit I deserve nothing, you shower me with blessings. You are my salvation, my power, my strength.

Amen.

Go in peace and with great joy. Amen!

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