When the first five American Jesuits arrived in Patna in 1921, their first priority was to care for the Christian communities established by the Capuchin Fathers before them. Bishop Louis Van Hoeck arrived just a few days before his fellow Jesuits, to manage the care of a vast diocese with far-flung parishes and few men: In those early days there were only five Jesuits, and that many diocesan priests, for the 15,000 Irish and Anglo-Indian Catholics living in the compact Catholic communities established by the Capuchins in and around Bettiah, clustered along the railway lines.

In the next ten years, as more American Jesuits arrived and Indian vocations increased (in those pre-independence days, Patna took the lead in recruiting Indians for the Society of Jesus), the spirit of spreading the Gospel and evangelizing the masses became a top priority. Recruiting believers was central to Jesuit mission work throughout the early 1930s, especially under the leadership of Fr. Peter Sontag as mission Superior. Bishop Van Hoeck also was a strong promoter of schools and education, and as the manpower increased over the years, Fr. Peter Sontag, the second Superior of the Patna mission, began to reach out to the depressed classes in the Indian caste system, today known as the Dalits.

With the able assistance of such Jesuit pioneers as Frs. Henry Westropp, Marion Batson, Frank Welzmiiller, Nick Pollard, Joe Mann and others, a whole network of new mission stations was established, each with its satellite village schools. In all these mission sites, the Jesuits’ main focus became the education of the Dalits as a gateway to a better life and equality in Indian society. This work flourished for the next 40 years. The Jesuits’ emphasis then, as now, was on living a simple life among the poor, learning the local languages, and bringing justice to the oppressed.

Fr. Drinan is Assistant to the Provincial of the Patna Province, where he has been working in a variety of capacities since 1954. The work of the Patna Jesuits is supported by the Chicago and Detroit Provinces.
With Literacy and Justice for All

After the landmark Decree 4 of GC 32, our emphasis in the Indian missions shifted to promoting literacy for the masses and an increased awareness of basic human rights. A pioneer in this new aspect of social justice was Fr. Gabriel Gonsalves, who started our first social action center (READ, Rural Education And Development). It was located in Bettiah, our oldest Catholic parish. Initially a dependent section of Khrist Raja High School, and later an independent unit, READ has become a respected and influential agent of change in the area, combatting violations of human rights against Dalits and women.

Similar educational centers have been established in Khagaul, Auran-gabad, Madhubani and Sasaram. Most of our Jesuit parishes have active literacy programs for the village residents, because we feel that education, along with the awareness of human rights, is the key to progress. We also have launched training programs for instructors, who are then sent out into outlying regions to teach the basics of reading, writing and social rights.

For quite some time, the Indian government supported our work by financing hundreds of local literacy centers and training programs for village leaders. Textbooks were published for these non-formal educational centers, to assist the literacy and social awareness drive. Sadly, much of this aid has been cut back in recent years. Despite the funding cutbacks, we continue to seek government recognition and aid for our schools. In the meantime, our educational work continues, often at our own expense.

The target groups in all these endeavors are the Dalits. A notable pioneer in this effort was Fr. Thomas Chakkalackal—who, for his work, suffered threats, was beaten, and even was kidnapped for a month in 1983. Undaunted, Fr. Chakkalackal remained firm in his commitment to the poor until his death from illness in 1994. His work in Ratanpurwa, north of Bettiah, continues to this day. In addition to the non-formal literacy and general education centers, we also provide more formal education through primary schools for the poor. These schools follow the pattern set up in the 1920s by India’s first Jesuit missionaries, whose vision was to provide education for the poor who lacked the funds for fees. We are also opening a unit of the National Open School for those who cannot complete a formal education. In all these efforts, the Sisters of various Catholic congregations in the area have been our faithful collaborators.

Raising Consciousness about the Rights of Humans—and the Earth

We promote awareness of human rights primarily through these and all our other schools. All our students take “moral science” classes, and also participate in processions and rallies on current justice issues. In addition, through our Media Center, Ravi Bharati, we produce posters, videos and street plays in the local languages about human rights, for circulation in various parts of Bihar State. We also offer training courses on how to prepare and present street plays. (It’s easy to draw a crowd for any of these!)

The principles of GC 32 gave new impetus to an apostolate that had existed from earlier days. To this day in India, the work inspired by GC 32 continues to grow in scope and creativity. One of our more innovative programs started at Phulwari Sharif near Patna, where we provide both affordable and ecologically sound energy via solar water heater/cookers. Based on a model first promoted in Gujarat State, the solar units come in various sizes: Some are large, for institutional use, such as in schools and boarding facilities; others are small enough to be used by a single family. The solar power program, now about five years old, has been very successful. Linked to this project is a program to train Dalit boys in mechanics. The young men learn welding, construction and other skills needed to assemble, service and repair the solar heater/cookers. We hope this training also will enable these boys to obtain well-paid jobs when they move on.

Another highly successful program is Tarumitra, which means “Friends of Trees.” An educational movement that began in 1988, it has spread to 100,000 students all
over India and teaches basic human rights, ecological awareness, and a respect for Nature. The Tarumitra Ashram, located in Patna, serves as the program's home base as well as a bio-diversity reserve. Students conduct studies about the natural flora of the Gangetic plains and grow rare species of native plants, using a water conserving drip irrigation system as well as equipment powered by solar electricity. Also on the ashram's campus is a library with a growing environmental database, and a prayer hut that serves as a temple for worshippers from all religious backgrounds.

The Challenge of Witness in Dangerous Times

Our Jesuit mission in modern times is evolving daily to adapt to a changing and potentially dangerous political environment in India. We have by no means lost sight of our enduring call to share the good news of God's love—and it is usually the poor who are most ready to hear it, especially in a caste-ridden society. However, as the Hindu nationalist movement gains power throughout India, hate crimes against Christians have become increasingly common—including rape and murder. In such an atmosphere, overt evangelism is at best irresponsible and at worst life-threatening.

For this reason, our Christian witness in India's missions has taken the form of living out our Ignatian values, promoting social justice, and engaging in inter-religious dialogue. Many of our former students are Hindus or Muslims, and remain staunch friends. Through them, we try to bring about social changes—which, it should be said, are clearly written in the Indian Constitution: that all people are equal, and the caste system must be abolished.

The Indian Constitution actually embodies most of the U.S. Constitution's principles of social justice. (It is perhaps remarkable to note that a Jesuit, Rev. Jerome D’Souza, S.J., was a member of India's Constituent Assembly back in 1948-50.) There are many opportunities and advantages on the Indian law books which are not being put into practice. We try to bring these to the attention of both the Indian people and the government.

To that end, another feature of our struggle for justice in India has been the establishment of legal aid centers for the poor in Patna and Bettiah. Two of our Jesuits, who are accredited lawyers in the Patna High Court, work full time for the legal aid centers. Several more Jesuits with law degrees are available to help on an as-needed basis. Many of our cases involve poor people who have been unjustly imprisoned and held “under trial” for years. Through our advocacy, many of these prisoners have been released at last.

This brief history of the involvement of Patna Jesuits in social action cannot include all the individual lives of love, commitment, and sacrifice that have made up the Jesuit story in Patna for the past 80 years. Nor can it include all the dedicated lay people who have worked with us, encouraged us, and shared our lives. That is known only to the Lord, and the future is in His hands.

Reflection Questions:

1. Would you agree that the key issue in Jesuit social action is justice for the oppressed, especially in a caste-ridden society?
2. How would you see the ecological and legal aid apostolates as part of the work of social justice?
3. How can social action be linked with gospel values and evangelization in the present context of India?
When and with whom did you first go to India?

In October, 1947, I was one of a group of six Maryland Province Jesuits who were commissioned by Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia to serve in a brand new mission in Jamshedpur, India. None of us had any idea where Jamshedpur even was before going over—although our Mission Office Director, Fr. John Baker, told us it was called “the Pittsburgh of the East,” because the town had been built (in 1905) around a steel factory known as TISCO, which stood for the Tata Iron and Steel Company, of India.

We sailed out of New Orleans on November 24, 1947 for a long voyage aboard the Aram J. Pothier, a cargo ship that belonged to the Isthmian Line, which was under contract to TISCO. Six weeks later, we arrived in India. When we arrived, we found we weren’t alone: The great Ranchi and Bengal missions were already well-established, with four parishes. These missions were run by six Jesuits and two diocesan priests, who also ran an inchoate school that doubled as a social gathering-place at night. The work of these fellow Jesuits was an inspiration to us in Jamshedpur.

What spurred the establishment of the Jamshedpur mission?

Over a year prior to our arrival, the Apostolic Carmel (AC) sisters (an all-Indian congregation) had opened a school for girls in Jamshedpur. After they’d been there six months, they let TISCO know that they would not remain “if the Fathers were not available” for their spiritual needs. A delegation of Catholic officers of the company met with the Archbishop of Calcutta, and wheels were set in motion to bring over the US Jesuits.

What do you mean by labor schools?

In the 1930s and ‘40s, there were a fair number of labor schools in the U.S. They were usually night schools and taught Parliamentary procedure and labor law. The schools were for people who wanted to become leaders of labor unions, which in many areas were fighting to hold the line against Communist takeovers. The Mine, Mill, and Smelters Union was a good example of that situation, and faced one of the toughest battles for control in the 1940s. Many of the labor schools were organized by Jesuits, and the Maryland Province ran some of the most well-known labor schools in the U.S.

How long did you serve in India?

I stayed from 1947 until May of 1992, during which time I had six home visits to the U.S.
returning to Maryland nine years ago, I have been back to India twice: Once in 1994 to finish some business, and again in 1998 to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Jamshedpur mission. During that 50 years, Jamshedpur went from being a far-flung “station,” to an independent mission, to a Vice Province, to a Province.

Q Are any of the other original Jesuit missionaries still in Jamshedpur?

A A number of my compatriots from the early days are still there. Eight Jesuits who began in the ‘40s and ‘50s (and one who arrived in the ‘60s) still live and work in the Jamshedpur Province. They range in age from their mid-70s to mid-80s. They are great men.

Another one of the greats is surely Fr. Joseph M. Kennedy, who, after serving in India for 20 years returned to Baltimore to become Mission Director for the next 22 years—preaching, begging for the mission, and serving in so many ways. He continues to give retreats and carry on spiritual ministry from Loyola College, Baltimore.

Q When you were in India, was preaching or converting an important part of your work?

A Not of mine. But for those in the dehat (out in the villages), which was most of the other men, it was. It was especially important for Frs John Bingham, John Deeney, John Guidera, and Frank McGauley. At times, evangelism was an uphill battle, primarily because many Indians did not want to relinquish their ancient tribal traditions and identity. Conversions really did not take off until the mid- to late-1950s, when the Jesuits began holding meetings to discuss how converts could retain their ethnic identity and still be strong Catholics. These monthly meetings continue to this day.

Q What did you and the other Jesuit missionaries in India do to help the conditions of the so-called “Untouchables” or Dalits?

A We did a great deal, particularly in the field of education—a service that continues today, the most recent project being a school for more than 170 children in the village in Jilling, outside the town of Jamshedpur. It is remarkable to note that, of the 137 boys and 35 girls studying at this school, only nine are Catholic; the other 163 are from various backgrounds. As you can imagine, this poses quite a challenge for the school’s pastor. Out of 1.01 billion people in India, there are some 25 million Christians, of whom 16 million are Catholics.

India’s ethnic diversity is a real challenge, in general. With more than a billion people from 14 major cultures, speaking 265 languages, the country is like a United States of Europe. And, of course, people are India’s greatest treasure—and trou-

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**A Thriving Endeavor: Facts and Stats about the Jesuits in Jamshedpur**

Today, the province of Jamshedpur is deeply-rooted and dynamic. At last count (December, 2000), there are 223 Jesuits in the Jamshedpur Province (including 85 scholastics in formation and 18 regents), of whom all but eight are “Sons of the Soil.” Jamshedpur Jesuits, who speak one (or more) of nine different languages, work in:

- 3 dioceses
- 8 to 10 parishes
- 2 Indian states
- 2 management institutes
- 2 Human Life Centres (teaching everything from tailoring to computers)
- 1 Applied Rural Research Center
- 2 minor seminaries
- 1 Tribal Research and Training Centre
- 3 English-speaking high schools
- 5 Hindi-speaking high schools
- 3 inchoate middle schools
- 1 Bachelor of Education college (Telco, in Jamshedpur)
- 1 novitiate/retreat house
ble. With that many different people, any problem has the potential to become a national crisis.

Q Speaking of problems, what did you as Jesuit missionaries do to advocate for social change in India?

A Did we “advocate,” per se? I think not. But mucking in with the people and helping them out: Yes. We still do. One of our best projects was the Damien Social Welfare Centre in the ’60s and ’70s. It served some 60,000 leprosy sufferers in the Dhanbad District. We ran mobile clinics that circulated (under a different tree every day) to register new patients, give the regulars their medicine, and see that they were taking their medicine according to instructions. (Not a whole handful of pills in one day!)

But in general, it is hard to beat education as a tool for change. From the beginning, education (formal education, and non-formal, as well) has been our primary contribution to improving life in India. I think it says a great deal, that most of the men and women who achieved India’s independence were educated in Christian schools.

Q So education continues to be the primary vehicle for the Jesuits in Jamshedpur?

A Yes. The Jamshedpur Province is quite large today (see sidebar: A Thriving Endeavor). It is divided into four areas, and in each area, we run schools. In the 1980s, we underwent an educational revitalization called, “The Blueprint for the ’80s.” We reaffirmed that our major focus would be to offer the best possible education at all levels, starting with elementary school. “Give them a solid foundation, and they will go onwards on their own,” was the theory.

Q How many Jesuits are available to help run these schools?

A There are 3,877 Jesuits in India, in 17 provinces and three regions. The overwhelming majority of these Jesuits are natives of India. In fact, India (along with Sri Lanka) comprises the entire South Asian Assistancy of the Society of Jesus. Jamshedpur Province has 223 Jesuits, including 85 scholastics in formation and 18 in regency. Of these, all but eight (who are among the original, non-native missionaries, mentioned above) are Indian.

Q How does having so many Indian Jesuits affect the Society’s missionary endeavors in India?

A It makes India’s Jesuit community extremely robust and vibrant. During the past 13 years especially, the Jesuit ranks in India have burgeoned with “Sons of the Soil.” These are Indian Jesuits dedicated to promoting justice and helping fellow Indians who are most in need. As native sons, they are in a better position than foreign missionaries are, to proactively “advocate” for social change. The national magazine of the Indian Jesuits, called Jivan (“Gee-Vun”), is filled with articles about India’s most pressing social problems, and what the Jesuits are doing to deal with them. (See sidebar on page 7: “Serving Christ in a Dangerous World.”)
Serving Christ In a Dangerous World

A number of Jesuits, including native Indian Jesuits, are making great sacrifices and put themselves in danger daily, in order to help those who are less fortunate. A number of India’s provinces and villages are run by rabidly anti-Christian factions, some of which are not averse to using, condoning, or at best overlooking violence.

Several years ago, Rev. A.T. Thomas, S.J., who worked in the dangerous region of Sirka in Bihar, was murdered by Maoist extremists. Elsewhere in India, fundamentalist Hindu groups persecute Christian missionaries of all kinds, including Jesuits. Just last year in Ahmedabad, Hindu militants assaulted two Jesuits at St. Xavier’s School, including the principal, whom they accused of being “unpatriotic.”

While violence continues to be episodic, the frequency and ferocity of such incidents have increased significantly. The attacks are aimed not just at Christians, but at religious, ethnic, and cultural minorities of all kinds. The increase of intolerance and violence throughout the country prompted the alumni of India’s Jesuit schools to draw up a resolution denouncing the violence:

We the representatives of Jesuit alumni from all over India, gathered at St. Xavier’s College, Calcutta, on 22,23 July 2000, are deeply disturbed over the incidents of violence in this country. We strongly condemn any activities that disturb the peace and harmony in the country and create rifts between people. We pledge to continue our service activities to the poor, notwithstanding the many hurdles we may face. We urge the Jesuit Alumni of all Jesuit institutions to join hands with us in solidarity with other persons of good will to work towards creating a United India.
Seven Years in Zimbabwe

Rev. Stephen C. Rowntree, S.J.

The following is derived from an interview of Fr. Rowntree published recently in the publication of the New Orleans Province, The Jesuit.

In 1994, I went to Zimbabwe to do a specific job that, at the time, African Jesuits were not available to do: teach philosophy to African scholastics. I wanted to go because the African Jesuit community needed Jesuits with experience in university teaching and formation, in order to establish a new Jesuit institution of higher education. I had 17 years' experience teaching philosophy to young Jesuits, so I felt well qualified.

Because our goal was to establish an academic program leading to a university degree, we located Arrupe College close to the University of Zimbabwe, outside the capital city of Harare. We began in 1994 with nothing but a corn field and a dream. Over the next seven years, Arrupe College took shape and became a thriving institution. Today, the campus includes a modern library and and a beautiful college chapel.

Arrupe College's four-year, liberal arts program culminates in a BA Honors Degree in Philosophy, and is designed specifically for young African Jesuits. Students come from throughout the continent: Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania, and Uganda.

In addition to educating Jesuit scholastics, the college recently began offering a three-year diploma program for students of other religious orders. Last year, 20 Carmelites and Redemptorists joined the class of 75 young Jesuits. In addition to an international faculty comprised of Jesuits from the U.S., Europe, India, and Africa, Arrupe College has several adjunct professors from Zimbabwe University.

When I came back from Zimbabwe earlier this year, I felt that my personal mission had been accomplished. I had done what I could do. I strongly feel that, from now on, the formation of African scholastics should be done by the African Jesuits themselves.
Thoughts on Community Life

The following reflections summarize points made by REV. PETER-HANS KOLVENBACH, S.J. (the Superior General of the Society of Jesus) on the topic of Community Living (May 1998). While some aspects of community may vary between a permanent religious order and an intentional Jesuit Volunteers community, much of the underlying motivation is the same and likewise the challenges and rewards of community.

The ambiguities of individualism:

Individualism is at the very core of American culture. As Robert Bellah observes: “Anything that would violate our right to think for ourselves, judge for ourselves, make our own decisions, live our lives as we see fit, is not only morally wrong, it is sacrilegious... (Historically) modern individualism emerged out of the struggle against monarchical and aristocratic authority that seemed arbitrary and oppressive to citizens prepared to assert the right to govern themselves.”

From this foundation, individualism has been further reinforced through our basic social and economic institutions which reward a kind of rugged individualism and market a have-it-your-way attitude. Fr. Kolvenbach observes that individualism has also invaded Ignatian communities, manifesting itself in this kind of “Lone Ranger” stance that damages common life and common work. This individualism helps explain the lack of availability; why we can allow ourselves to speak and act in our own names or pour our efforts into our own personal projects (which in themselves may be justified) over and against the demands of our mission (which for Jesuit Volunteers would be expressed in the Four Components: live simply; keep faith; do justice; and build community).

While individualism can carry with it a destructive force that negates the sense of the other, the Ignatian tradition also validates some positive aspects of individualism. The primary theme of the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises is to recognize that, although we are wounded by our own personal sin history, we are also loved individually by God.

Historically, individualism is what distinguished Jesuit communities from monastic communities. Similarly, in the lives of Jesuit Volunteers, we see a value in the variety of placements (apostolates) and what that diversity can bring to community.

One of the most moving Gospel accounts describes how the post-resurrection Jesus calls Mary Magdalene by her name. In fact, he remained unknown to her until she heard how he said her name. This call, the awareness of her uniqueness, this recognition of her limits and capacities, affirms that no one in community is reduced to merely being one among many.

A witness to communion and solidarity:

In a world hungry for unity yet characterized by division and discord, community may seem a distant and humanly unattainable dream. As Fr. Kolvenbach observes, community is integral to our mission because it can serve as a witness to communion of persons otherwise not destined to live together, and show that the commandment of love need not remain just something nice that Jesus said, but can be realized in human life.

Community life in a Jesuit Volunteers context is much more than sharing the same facilities. Without a sharing of our faith, our struggles and our joys, and our reasons for desiring to work as companions of Jesus, we will be giving no witness.

Drawing on his own prior experience, Ignatius understood and wrote about community in military terms. A companion for him was one on whom he could rely, in his own words, “he would expect help from him when he was hungry; if he fell down, the man would help him get up.” (Autobiography 35) While the military metaphor may sound strange to our ears, it is worth noting that Ignatius did not understand community as a substitute for the
intimacy of a family or even a collection of friends. Fr. Kolvenbach says of community: “If community life has its profound spiritual source in the Spirit of Christ who gathers, it is nonetheless bound together by acts, concrete and even banal: a word of encouragement, a sign of understanding, a welcoming smile, time given to listening to what another has to say, a helping hand in the work required by every community, some time given to relaxation. It is bound together, too, by deliberately trusting ourselves to conversation that goes to the heart of things spiritually; to sharing our interior experiences and our failures; and to sharing above all our reasons for living as companions of Jesus.”

While the life of a JV is generally modest, JVs have become increasingly sensitive to solidarity with the poor. Often they express some regret for not living at the level of the poor in their host country.

During retreats and Re-Orientation or Dis-Orientation experiences, it is appropriate to let ourselves be challenged about our lifestyles and our consumption along with our access to technologies and tools — even those which are used in our work. By becoming friends with those who are poor, we are taught by them about faith in the Christ who was himself poor and whose message was particularly attractive to those who are poor.

We accept one another as we are:

Jesuit Volunteers agree that community life is difficult. The Book of Genesis realizes that we are not meant to live alone, but the same book asks: “What have you done to your brother?” As soon as we enter into community, we realize our inability to love everyone without exception. However, we also believe that in spite of our weaknesses, and just as we are, God has sustained us and indeed called us to be Jesuit Volunteers. In this spirit, we ought to accept who we are individually and be that self for the community. In turn, the community accepts each of us as we are. This acceptance keeps community from being fragmented and barren.

It is tempting to say that our mission comes first (“my students need me for one more study session” is a common refrain). From this perspective, every minute spent on community is a minute wasted. If we act even unconsciously as though we were the owners of our apostolic works or if we protect our work as though it were the last safe preserve for our self-fulfilment, we are mission the point of our JV commitment. We belong to community, both the JV community and the larger community. It is through community spirit, personal growth, formation, recreation and community prayer that one is able to contribute more fully to the mission of being a Jesuit Volunteer.

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Re-Orientation/Dis-Orientation Reflections

Guided Imagery

Opening:

Close your eyes. Take a restful posture and a deep breath. Let go of any tension which you may be feeling. It is important that your mind be quiet, rested and peaceful...allow images and feelings to come freely...

During this meditation we will look back on some of the important feelings and themes from the past year.

St. Ignatius found that God was especially present in feelings or what he called “movements”—the movements themselves are not God, but they can point a direction—and also confirm or question a previous action or stance. Reflecting on such movements is praying over the scripture of our lives—in particular, consider the past year which we will be examining during these days together.

Empathy:

Can you recall an experience when your heart went out to another person? a child rejected by his peers...a lonely old woman...a disabled beggar...a desperate addict...a scene of de-humanizing poverty? What did you feel at that moment? Have you prayed about it? Has it remained in your memory? Was God present or absent in this experience?

Peace:

When did you feel peace? In the outdoors...at the end of a full week... during prayer...with another person...alone? Think of a time when you experienced consolation—a feeling that: “YES, this is the right place for me to be right now.”

Loneliness:

When did you feel lonely? Did you miss your family? Was there a friend you longed for? Were there holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, celebrations, or deaths which accentuated your distance from what you know as “home?” Were there times when even God felt distant or was God especially present during your loneliness?

Anxiety:

When did you feel stress? How did it manifest itself? Physical tension...restlessness...obsessing...preoccupations during prayer? Was this resolved or does it remain unresolved? What could this anxiety teach you about yourself?

Anger:

What made you angry? An absurd situation...an argument which escalated...a strained relationship...a rude stranger? Perhaps you perceived an injustice—was it an injustice to you or to another person? Do you tend to keep your anger interior or do you express it? When did you lash out at an innocent bystander or talk viciously about another person? Were you aware of this violence?

Challenge:

What is one experience which challenged you? Was it an experience in community...at work...a personal encounter? How were you being pushed? Did you grow or resist growth as a result of this challenge? What did you learn about yourself?

future? Did you share these fears with another person, with you community, or with God?
Joy:

Remember a time when you felt joy? What were the circumstances? Did you feel gratitude? How frequently do you feel content to this degree? Most days...occasionally...rarely? In general, have you chosen to see the light in your situations or the darkness? Was God present your joy?

Sorrow:

Was there an occasion when you felt sorrow? Perhaps you hurt someone or were hurt by someone...Perhaps someone you know was treated cruelly? How did you respond to sadness? By journaling...walking alone ... thinking ...praying? Was God present your sorrow?

Friendship:

Is there a person here you can call your friend? How has the friendship developed? What qualities do you find appealing about that person? Have you become a closer friend with God? With yourself?

Courage:

Can you remember a time when you acted courageously? When you stood up for another person or an important value? Perhaps, there was a courageous position to take but you realized that it wasn’t your stand to make? Were you able to step back?

Humor:

What memory of the past year has brought you a good laugh? Were you able to laugh at yourself? Remember an occasion when you laughed heartily with others. Be grateful for laughter and the bonds which come through sharing the gift of humor.

Adventure:

What types of adventure attracted you this past year? As days became more routine did you still find “newness” or did you resign yourself to the tediousness of work? Did you wait for weekend excursions or holidays to find adventure or were you able to find excitement in your everyday experience?

Love:

Have you experienced a deepening love and appreciation for another person...for a group of people...for God...for yourself...for life itself? How have others shown their love for you? Give thanks for this great gift of love?

Closing:

Take a moment to sit with these memories...Now open your eyes...with your imagination fresh and with a spirit of gratitude...Spend half an hour in quiet considering these questions. Feel free to journal, or, if you prefer, to sit or walk quietly. Continue to reflect on the questions at any time during or after the retreat.
Day of Quiet Reflection

Note: These themes are from the 1st Week of the Spiritual Exercises:

I. God’s Unconditional Love

What I seek:

That I may find God in all things and always. That God may give me a more profound experience of his love, a deeper awareness of how I can respond to it, and a joyous freedom which comes from seeking God’s will for me.

Theme:

We are created to love the Lord our God with our whole hearts, with our whole souls, with our whole minds, and with all our strengths, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. God created the entire universe as a good place for us to exercise this love creatively. [Spiritual Exercises 23, part i]

Related Texts:

- Psalm 104 All creatures depend on you
- Psalm 105 Recall God’s wondrous deeds
- Wisdom 11:21-27 You love all that exists
- Psalm 139 Lord, you search me and know me

To close the prayer period:

God be in my head,
And in my understanding;
God be in my eyes,
and in my looking;
God be in my mouth,
and in my speaking;
God be in my heart,
and in my thinking;
God be in my end and in my departing.
—Anonymous