

THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL INTO GOD

Term: Lent 2003

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ORAL EXAM

- (1) If you were to teach the Journey of the Soul into God to one of the groups below
 - novices and postulants
 - an assembly of friars or sisters or both
 - secular franciscans
 - a parish group
 - a university class
- (2) How would you do this?
What structure would you use?
How would you make it relevant to your audience?
- (3) Outline a plan for achieving such a goal.

FOR NOVICES AND POSTULANTS

Introduction

- I choose to teach the "Journey of the Soul" to a group of novices and postulants.
- I choose this group because I am at this stage in my formation and therefore it is the group I am closest to and the group I can more easily relate to.
- The main advantage with a group of novices and postulants is that time is on your side. The novices and postulants are with you for a full year, whereas other groups may have external commitments which will restrict their time availability.
- Of course I wouldn't spend the whole year teaching postulants and novices nothing but the "Journey".
- Instead I would take a **SEVEN** week block in their program and, rather than teaching them the "Journey", we will try to make the "Journey" together.

Daily Prayer and Mass

Prayer during the 7 week program

- Sunday Mass will be a morning Mass in the friary Church
- Weekday Mass will be private and will usually take place at 12.15pm each day (except when on a daytrip)
- Daily community prayer will be at 7.00am, 12.00noon and 6.00pm in the Oratory except for the following:
 - Weeks 1 and 2 - Evening prayer outside (at Dusk to watch the sunset and the light fading)
 - Weeks 3 and 4 - Morning prayer outside (at Dawn to watch the sunrise and the light increasing)
 - Weeks 5 and 6 - Midday prayer outside (at Midday to watch the sun at its height)

The Use of the Charts

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|-----------------|--|
| Preparation | - The empty chart will be on display. Reflection on the "Journey" ahead. |
| Week 1 - Sunday | - First step will be filled out. |
| | - During the next two weeks novices may add words, thoughts, reflections to chart. |
| Week 3 - Sunday | - Second step will be filled out. |
| | - During the next two weeks novices may add words, thoughts, reflections to chart. |
| Week 5 - Sunday | - Third step will be filled out. |

- During the next two weeks novices may add words, thoughts, reflections to chart.

THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL INTO GOD

PREPARATION IN THE WEEK(S) BEFORE BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

During the week(s) before the journey

- A brief history of Bonaventure
- Reading and discussion on the Prologue
- Discussion and reflection on desire, mirror, eyes, contemplation and peace
- Preparation for the beginning of the journey
- The Canticle of the Creatures (a starting point)

Only one chapter will be given to the novices and postulants at a time to prevent reading ahead.

THE SEVEN WEEK JOURNEY

<u>Week</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Program</u>
1	Chapter One:	The steps of the ascent into God and the reflection on God through the vestiges in the universe
	Sun	READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
	Mon	Contemplating a flower
	Tue	Reflection and discussion on the contemplation of a flower (opaque or transparent)
	Wed	Daytrip to a place of natural beauty - preferably a mountainous region
	Thu	Reflection and discussion on the daytrip (opaque or transparent)
	Fri	Daytrip to a zoo
	Sat	Reflection and discussion on variety of animals and wildlife (opaque or transparent)
2	Chapter Two:	The reflection on God in the vestiges in this sensible world
	Sun	READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
	Mon	Sight -Draw / paint a picture of the place of natural beauty visited last week -This may be compared to photographs to show how memory is flawed
	Tue	Sound -Listen to music in the morning. Hum it back in the evening -This will demonstrate how imperfect memories are formed through imperfect senses
	Wed	Smell -Smelling and reflection on various fragrances
	Thu	Taste -Eat quickly / eat slowly, whilst using / not using sense of smell -For Smell and Taste - We take delight or not, then we make a judgement
	Fri	Touch -Feeling different objects with / without use of other senses -Reflection on interdependency of senses. -Need to use all 5 senses to gain a more complete picture (though still imperfect)
	Sat	DAY OF REST
3	Chapter Three:	The Reflection on God through the image imprinted on our natural powers
	Sun	READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
	Mon	Memory to Eternity (Father) - Visit to a home for the elderly (listen to childhood memories)
	Tue	Reflection and discussion on previous days experience
	Wed	Intellect to Truth (Word / Son) - Lectures and presentations from adults
	Thu	Reflection and discussion on previous days experience

Fri Will to Highest Good (Holy Spirit) - Entertain group of primary school children (free spirits)
 Sat Reflection and discussion on previous days experience

THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL INTO GOD

Week Day Program

4 Chapter Four: The reflection on God in the image reformed by the gifts of grace

Sun READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
 Mon A reminder of our Baptismal Vows and the Graces we receive
 Tue Faith - Reflection and discussion (doubts and struggles)
 - Sight and hearing leading to beauty and harmony
 Wed Hope - Reflection and discussion (patience and suffering)
 - Smell leading to fragrance
 Thu Love - Reflection and discussion (A romantic movie)
 - The importance of touch and taste. The movie could be a story of unrequited love,
 and damage from lack of touch such as "The Phantom of the Opera"
 Fri A presentation on Mary who is Full of Grace
 - What God would be in all of us, enabling us to completely focus on God,
 allowing God to be All in all
 Sat DAY OF REST

5 Chapter Five: The reflection on the divine unity through God's primary name, which is Being

Sun READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
 Mon "Who am I Lord?" -We must know ourselves before we can know others and know God
 -Reflection on who I am as a person, not on what I do
 Tue "Who are you Lord?" -Being "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14)
 Wed " " -Good "No one is Good but God alone" (Luke 18:19)
 Thu " " -Truth "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6)
 Fri " " -Unity "In the name of the Father and of the Son
 and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19)
 The unity of the Holy Trinity
 Sat " " -Beauty "A man can have no greater love than to lay down
 his life for his friends" (John 15:13)
 The beauty of Jesus' love for us. The beauty of the Cross
 in contrast to its bitterness and ugliness

6 Chapter Six: The reflection on the Most Blessed Trinity in its name, which is the Good

Sun READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
 Mon The God of Love -The Lover, the Beloved and Love itself - the Holy Trinity
 St. Augustines image of God as Love, and how perfect
 love is unselfish and therefore shared freely
 Tue God the Father -The Fountain fullness
 Wed God The Son -The divine exemplar
 Thu God the Holy Spirit -The breath of God
 Fri Jesus Christ -The Word made flesh returns all goodness back to God
 Sat DAY OF REST

THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL INTO GOD

<u>Week</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Program</u>
7		Chapter Seven: The mental and mystical transport in which rest is given to our understanding and through ecstasy our affection passes over totally into God
	Sun	READING CHAPTER, REFLECTION ON CHAPTER, DISCUSSION ON CHAPTER
	Mon	Daytrip to climb a mountain (beginning with desire, using our senses to contemplate. At the top we rest before we surrender ourselves to God *)
	Tue	Visit a swimming pool with three diving boards (reflection as we climb, before taking the plunge *)
	Wed	SURRENDER - SILENCE LEADING TO SOLITUDE
	Thu	SURRENDER - SILENCE LEADING TO SOLITUDE
	Fri	SURRENDER - SILENCE LEADING TO SOLITUDE
	Sat	Final discussion on the Journey

* No one will be forced or pressurised in any way into climbing the mountain or jumping off a diving board

A FINAL NOTE ON THE JOURNEY

So each 2 week block will have a different feel and a different approach to it.

This will be reflected in the events in each two week block. For example:

Weeks 1 and 2 - OUTSIDE - Nature mysticism reflected in the daytrips and use of the senses (external)

Weeks 3 and 4 - WITHIN - Soul mysticism dealing more with people and graces (inside / internal)

Weeks 5 and 6 - BEYOND - God mysticism therefore more meditation and contemplation during these weeks

Week 7 - SURRENDER - Silence and Solitude