

May 2020

We offer you a few guidelines and suggestions *before you begin*:

- We encourage you to receive this gift of set apart time and space to simply be with God, as a means of soul care not only for yourself, but also for the sake of those with whom you may live with, work among, and serve.
- Plan to spend a minimum of two hours in your JM Community retreat and solitude time. If you live with others, we suggest that you communicate your intention and desire to be left alone and in silence. We've included suggested morning times for each program element. Adjust accordingly based on the time you begin.
- As you take some time to physically prepare, you may want to play some instrumental, soul-settling music. The album [So Loved by Stanton Lanier](#) may be a good choice.
- Before you begin, choose a quiet, comfortable space within your home or outside if the weather permits. Have with you your Bible, pen and journal. You may also want to have a hot beverage and a glass of water available, a few prepared snacks or a meal in case you get hungry, a blanket for warmth, and any other items that will help you settle in place for the program portion of this retreat.
- We *highly* recommend that you print the materials you will need for the retreat. If you do not have access to a printer and want to use an electronic device, we encourage you to have your retreat materials downloaded and easily accessible. After you have downloaded your retreat materials, we suggest that you also turn off wifi access, so you won't be interrupted.
- ***Please listen to each of the retreat program elements in MP3 format on your favorite listening device. Find the recording here: [JourneyMates.org/Resources](https://www.journeymates.org/Resources)*** as well as the complete JM Community Guide for May and PDF of "Promised Day". We encourage you to push pause between the recordings of each retreat program element (Welcome/Guided Silence, Reflection, Lectio Divina - between each reading, Closing Reflection and Blessing) and to follow or add to the Recommended Time Frame for each Retreat element.
- As a JM Community participant, we encourage you to pray for the other members of your small group, giving thanks for them and praying for their time with the Lord.
- Lastly, as you settle into your quiet space with God, allow yourself to unhook from all that you brought with you physically, emotionally, and relationally. Open up to God's presence and invitation to you. Resist performing or producing. As best you can, simply enjoy being present to God and to your own soul.

JourneyMates

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Come again to the place within you where you can simply rest in God's presence. As you settle into the silence, notice what distracts you and disturbs the soul-peace you long for. As those things arise turn away from them with this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus, come."

*"How lovely is your dwelling place,
O Lord of hosts!
My soul longs, yes, faints
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and flesh sing for joy
to the living God." Psalm 84:1-2*

Agenda for May 2020 Morning Community

8:45-9:00	Silent Preparation
9:00-9:15	Guided Community Silence
9:15-9:30	Teaching Reflection: "Living with the Unfinished"
9:30-9:45	Lectio: Romans 8:18-24
9:45-10:35	Individual Silence

Embrace these moments alone as a gift of unhurried time with God. One of the questions below may help to guide your reflection and journaling.

- ~ Take a few lingering moments to settle into this time alone with the Lord. Breathe. Notice. Become aware of your thoughts, feelings, sensations, and bring all that you are before the Lord at this time.
- ~ Open up to the Holy Spirit and reflect on your life as you have experienced it these past nine months, perhaps pondering your word/phrase of desire from the beginning of the year. What do you notice? Has your desire remained the same? Does another word or phrase better capture where you are currently? How have you seen or not seen God at work? Have you noticed any shifts in your soul ... your thinking, emotions, responses to him, others, life?
- ~ How do you typically respond to the unfinished things in your life? What about the unfinished is hard for you? What in this season of your life is life-giving? What is difficult, challenging, "soul stunning"? Sit with what comes to you for a few minutes. What prayer arises within you as you let the unfinished thing(s) simply be there? Hidden in the midst of unfinished things, we often find invitations from God: to trust, to rejoice, to love. What is God's invitation to you?
- ~ Do you sense the Holy Spirit prompting you to sit with the lectio passage, today's spoken reflection, artwork or another element of your time with God? What themes, images, or stories resonate with your life right now? Journal what you notice. Wait patiently for God to minister to you.

10:35-11:35	Small Group Companionship
11:35-11:50	Small Group Reflection
11:50-12:00	Large Group Reflection
12:00	Closing Blessing

Lectio Passage
Romans 8:18-24

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. **19** For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. **23** And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. **24** For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. NRSV

18-21 That's why I don't think there's any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times. The created world itself can hardly wait for what's coming next. Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens.

22-25 All around us we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. But it's not only around us; it's *within* us. The Spirit of God is arousing us within. We're also feeling the birth pangs. These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy. MSG



Find a full page PDF of this image at JourneyMates.org/resources

Visio Divina Guide

You're invited to use the following prompts as you reflect further on "Promised Day":

Gently gaze on the image and immerse yourself in the scene within the painting. Listen with your imagination and with your senses as you consider the questions below. Take time with each question, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide you in your prayer:

- What do you see.... darkness, light, expressions, images within the image, etc?
- What do you hear?
- What do you smell?
- What do you taste?

What meaning might today's lectio passage have in the scene within this painting?

Rest your gaze on the image. Open your awareness to any detail of the image that may bring lightness to your soul or in some way disturb you. Notice what seems to stand out to you, inspire you, draw you in, or challenge you. Close your eyes and bring those responses to God. Allow the Holy Spirit to interact with you with it. Slow down and stay with what you notice.

When it feels right look again at the image Listen. Continue to simply be with God as he draws you deeper into the scene.

- Where do you find yourself in the scene? Who do you identify with, if at all?
- What stands out to you?
- Pray: 'What are you inviting me to Lord?'

Open yourself to what you notice emotionally or what physical responses you might become aware of in this time. Notice and name whatever you are experiencing. Offer those responses to God and listen for an invitation. Rest in the Lord's embrace.

You may continue to nurture that which you received at JourneyMates this month by:

Reflecting on your experience with God
Journaling within the first 24 hours
Praying for each member of your group.

Soul Care Practices for Summer

As we bring our JourneyMates year to a close, take time to reflect on your year and your journey with God. A helpful resource is in your JourneyMates notebook, page 81, entitled "Personal Year-End Reflection". We encourage you to set aside time to reflect upon these questions, journaling your responses and prayers.

Then, take some time to sit with God in anticipation of the coming few months. Consider these ideas as ways to open up time and space to nurture your soul's longing for God and your own longing to be made whole:

- Look back over the year's monthly spiritual disciplines prayerfully, asking the Lord to draw you towards one or two to practice during this time. Consider areas that were particularly challenging this year...or perhaps something entirely new that now speaks to you where you are.
- What do you most long for in this time ahead with God? Is there a life-giving activity or creative endeavor that you engage in only during the warm months that you might intentionally "do with God"? Consider the meals you make, the exercise you engage in, the people you will interact with, even the outdoor chores or hobbies you take on. How might you carve out time and space each day, week or month to draw deeper into your desire for God in some new way? Write out your desire as a prayer and offering to God. Then commit that practice to the rhythm of your with-God life.
- Enrich the season ahead by feeding your soul with words, poetry, literature, images or other forms of arts or crafts that are life-giving! You may want to practice thoughtful, contemplative reading of a book that helps you to seek God's presence. When we read contemplatively, we are not attempting to absorb or conquer a lot of new information. Instead we are reading small portions that help shape our awareness, prayers, and longings to know God more deeply. Your JourneyMates Community Guide has a list of suggested reading, "Books to Encourage your Life in Christ" on page 89. You can find some additional suggestions on our JourneyMates website: <https://www.journeymates.org/resources/>

*"When we open up to that which is not categorical,
but fluid, not containable,
but expansive. We open a door to mystery,
and it beckons us to something,
Someone, stirring deeper waters in our souls."
~ Gayle Haislip, Silencio, 'Art and Soul'.*

JM Community Blessing

Trust in the Slow Work of God

*Above all, trust in the slow work of God
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
to reach the end without delay
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to something
unknown, something new.
And yet it is the law of all progress
that it is made by passing through
some stages of instability-
and that it may take a very long time.
And so I think it is with you.
your ideas mature gradually – let them grow,
let them shape themselves,
without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on,
as though you could be today what time
(that is to say, grace and circumstances
acting on your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.
Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be.
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.*

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. (1881-1955)