

A Retreat for Young Adults



November 21 - 23, 2003



You are on a journey.

A journey toward the centre of the labyrinth... and out again.

A journey toward God... and out again.

Walk with expectancy.

As you journey, reflect on what you see, hear, think.

Expect to discover the wonderful, the fantastic.

Open your eyes wide, use your senses.

Breathe deeply. Relax. Don't rush. Savour the moment.

And focus on moving Godward.



As you move toward the centre of the labyrinth, confess and let go of things that hinder your relationship with God.

Unmask yourself, peel away the layers, grow by subtraction.

Be aware of others - We are travelling together.

Who are your travelling companions?

How much do you value them?

What are you like to travel with?

Have you stopped to see how far you have come, recently?

Have you encouraged each other to press on?

And remember the beautiful, strange paradox of our faith:

We search after God, we travel toward God, as pilgrims.

And yet God, too, is with us. As a guide. And as a traveller.

God is faithful, God will not desert you.

Journey well!

If one thing could happen right now that would most effectively boost your confidence, what would it be?



If you were to describe the moment of your life when you felt the proudest of yourself, what would you say?



If you could have one person to understand you better, who would you pick?



If you were to name the one thing in life to which you are most faithful, what would it be?



If you were to rejoice for one particular thing in your life right now, what would it be?

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean
that I am actually doing so.



But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire
in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this,
you will lead me by the right road
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always
though I may seem to be lost
and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me
to face my perils alone.

~ Thomas Merton

Questions for Your Soul...

If you were to identify from where the majority of your fears in life come, what would you say?



If you were to name the person who has given you true emotional strength, who would it be?



If you had to name one thing about yourself that would be the most difficult to change, what would it be?



If you had to pick the most important value you hold, what would it be?



If you were to name your least developed emotion, what would it be?

If you were to describe the time or activity that makes you feel most spiritual, what would you say it was?



If there was a time when, despite your resistance, a change in your life turned out to be for the better, when would you say it was?



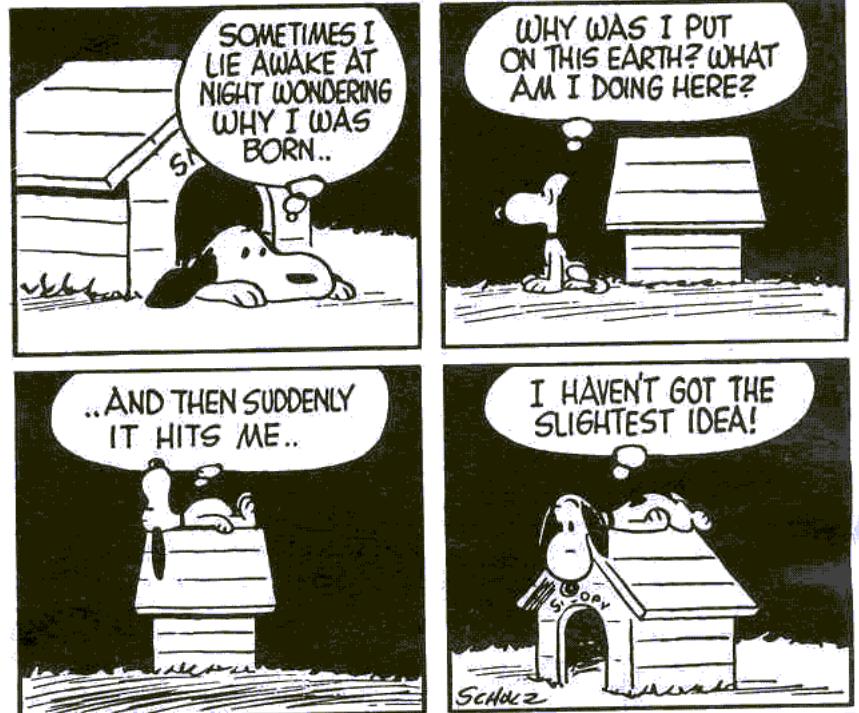
If you were asked where and how you learned to love, what would you say?



If you were in personal crisis, to whom among your friends would you first turn for moral support?



If you were to name your least developed emotion, what would it be?





You are so young, so before all beginning,
and I want to beg you, as much as I can,
to be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart
and to try to love the questions themselves like locked rooms
and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue.

Do not now seek the answers,
which cannot be given you because you would not be able to
live them.

And the point is, to live everything.
Live the questions now.
Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it,
live along some distant day into the answer. . . .

~Ranier Maria Rilke
Letters to a Young Poet

You must be
the change
you wish to see in the world.

~Mahatma Gandhi





*How should we be able to forget those ancient myths
that are at the beginning of all peoples,
the myths about dragons that at the last moment
turn into princesses;*

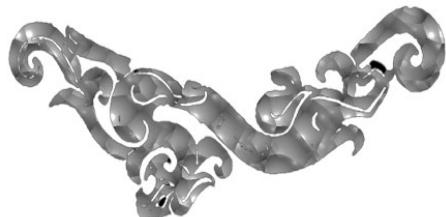
*Perhaps all the dragons of our lives are princesses
who are only waiting to see us once so beautiful and brave.*

*Perhaps everything terrible is in its deepest being
something helpless that wants help from us.*

*So you must not be frightened;
if a sadness rises up before you larger than you have ever seen;
if a restiveness, like light and cloud shadows,
passes over your hands and over all you do.*

*You must think that something is happening with you,
that life has not forgotten you,
that it holds you in its hand;
it will not let you fall....*

~ Ranier Maria Rilke
Letters to a Young Poet



O God, help me to believe in beginnings
and in my beginning again,
no matter how often I've failed before.

Help me to make beginnings:

to begin going out of my weary mind
into fresh dreams,
daring to make my own bold tracks
in the land of now;

to begin forgiving
that I may experience mercy;

to begin questioning the unquestionable
that I may know truth;

to begin disciplining
that I may create beauty;

to begin sacrificing
that I may make peace;

to begin loving
that I may realize joy.

Help me to be a beginning for others,
to be a singer to the songless,
a storyteller to the aimless,
a befriender to the friendless;

to become a beginning of hope for the despairing,
of assurance for the doubting,
of reconciliation for the divided;

to become a beginning of beauty to the forlorn,
of sweetness for the soured,
of gentleness for the angry,
of wholeness for the broken,
of peace for the frightened and violent of the earth.

Help me to believe in beginnings,
to make a beginning,
to be a beginning,
so that I may not just grow old, but grow new
each day of this wild, amazing life
you call me to live with the passion of Jesus Christ.

Amen.



The Butterfly

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could, and it could go no further.

So the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shrivelled wings.

The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time.

Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shrivelled wings. It never was able to fly.

What the man, in his kindness and haste, did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our lives. If God allowed us to go through our lives without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. We could never fly!

I don't know what your destiny will be
but the one thing I know;
the only ones among you who will really
be happy
are those who will have sought and found
a way to serve.

~ Albert Schweitzer



Help Me to Believe in Beginnings

by Ted Loder

God of history and of my heart,
so much has happened to me
during these whirlwind days:

I've known death and birth;
I've been brave and scared;

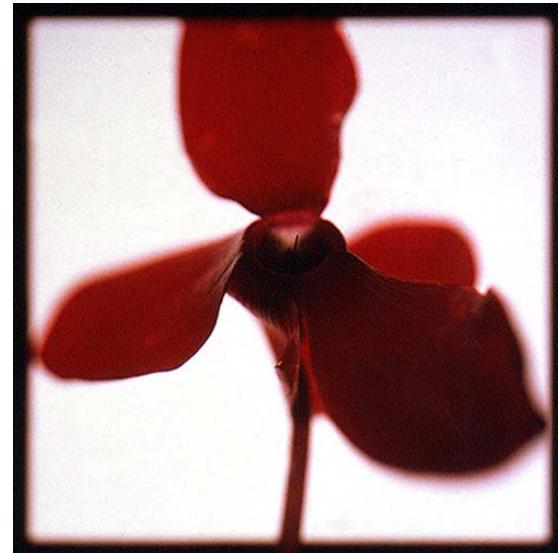
I've hurt, I've helped;
I've been honest; I've lied;

I've destroyed, I've created;
I've been with people; I've been lonely;

I've been loyal, I've betrayed;
I've decided, I've waffled;

I've laughed and I've cried.

You know my frail heart and my frayed history
and now another day begins.

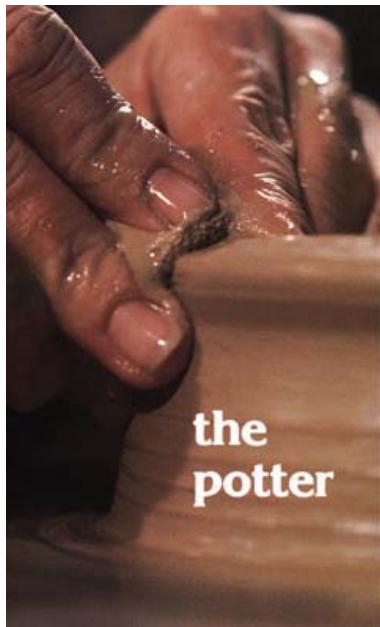


To be what we are,
and to become what
we are capable of becoming,
is the only end of life.

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

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 is made by passing through some stages of instability --
and probably taking 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,
circumstances acting on your own good will)
will make you tomorrow.



Only God could say what
this new spirit
gradually forming in you
will be.

Give our Lord the benefit
of believing that
God's hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety
of feeling yourself
in suspense
and incomplete.

~ Teilhard de Chardin

Serenity isn't Freedom
from the Storm;
it is Peace
from within the Storm.



Paradox Ave.

Risks

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.

To weep is to risk appearing the sentimental.

To reach out for another is to risk involvement.

To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self.

To place your ideas, your dreams before the crowd is to risk their loss.

To love is to risk not being loved in return.

To live is to risk dying.

To hope is to risk despair.

To try is to risk failure.

But risks must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.

The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing and is nothing.

He may avoid suffering and sorrow, but he simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love—or live.

Chained by his certitudes, he is a slave, he has forfeited freedom.

Only a person who risks is free.



Psalm of the Razor's Edge

The path we walk to you, O God, is narrow,
as narrow as a razor's edge.

The Way is only as wide as a human hair,
and many are those who lose their balance
on such a thin and uncertain edge.

Each day, like a circus aerialist, I walk the tightrope of the command,
"Come, follow me."

Who can stride safely on such a narrow bridge which swings between
heaven and earth?

Downward is the pull of self; it tugs at me: "for me, for me...me."
Heavy the gravity of the urge: "I want, I want, I want."

The Way is narrow and high:
holy and brave are those who climb upon the razor's edge,
swaying from left to right or right to left, straining too hard
or relaxing too much.

Holy are those who fall but rise again
and climb back upon the narrow edge and begin again
and again.

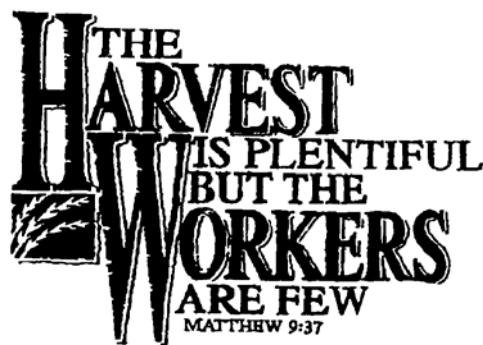
The Way is narrow and high,
and high are those who walk it, one small step at a time,
intoxicated by the risk, joyous at the fine balancing line
of the razor's edge.

~ Edward Hays, *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim*

A Prayer of Wholehearted Commitment

Teach us Lord, to serve you
as you deserve to be served;
To give and not to count the cost;
To fight and not worry
about the wounds;
To work and not to look for rest
and not to ask for any other reward
except that of knowing
that we do your will,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

~ St Ignatius of Loyola



*Lord,
You have the biblical reputation
Of taking people places
They never wanted to go.
Witness Jonah,
delivered by whale to Nineveh*



*And what was this unpleasantrness
with your Son shortly before
his appointment at the Right Hand?
So it is that to You
my most resounding "yes"
is a "maybe"
and it is with one eye on the door
that I say
"Behold, Lord, your servant waiteth!"*



*and Habakkuk
flown by angel to Babylon.
Also I have heard
You do not consult.
Abraham is suddenly ordered from Haran
and Moses called out of retirement
for the Egypt assignment.
Furthermore
Paul says You take a chiropodist's delight
in Achilles heels,
spurn eloquence for the stutter,
and reveal yourself
in the thorns of the flesh.*

- John Shea

Charism

The disciple was a Jew. "What good work shall I do to be acceptable to God?"

"How should I know?" said the Master. ""Your Bible says that Abraham practiced hospitality and God was with him. Elias loved to pray and God was with him. David ruled a kingdom and God was with him too."

"Is there some way I can find my own allotted work?"

"Yes. Search for the deepest inclination of your heart and follow it."

~ Anthony de Mello, SJ



**HOW CAN YOU
KNOW FOR SURE?**

Jesus, you said,

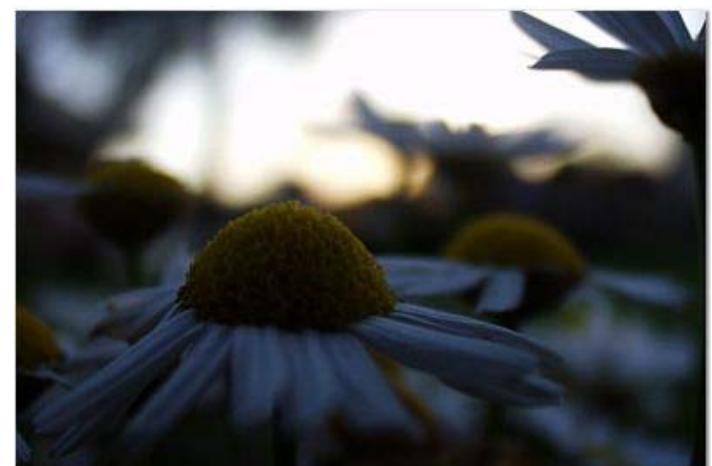
"Come to me all who are weary
and are heavy laden
and I will give you rest"

I come, Lord, tired and dejected.

But I come
knowing you will refresh me;
knowing you will give my strength for another
day;
knowing you will surround me with your love.

I come,

and leave my burdens at your feet.



The Fourth Talent

This story is based on Matthew 25:14-30.

Once there was a businessman who entrusted his property to his employees. To one servant he gave \$5,000, to a second \$2,000, and a third \$1,000. The first two invested the money and returned 100 cents on the dollar, while the third employee buried the money in the earth. On the day of accounting he returned the original money to the master and was soundly chastised for failing to invest wisely.

A fourth employee was given \$3,000 to invest. He returned several days after the accounting took place and approached the master cautiously. "I invested the money that you left with me," he confessed, "but the investment turned sour. Not only has your money gained no interest, I have lost nearly \$1,000 of the amount you entrusted to me."

The master smiled at his worried servant. "Well done, good and faithful servant. You invested as you were commanded. You have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much."

~ William R. White



Day by day,
day by day,
O dear Lord,
Three things I pray:
To see thee more clearly.
To love thee more dearly.
To follow thee more nearly.
Day by day.

~ St. Richard Chichester



Christ has no body now on earth
 but yours;
 Yours are the only hands with which
 he can do his work,
 Yours are the only feet with which
 he can go about the world,
 Yours are the only eyes
 through which his compassion
 can shine forth upon a troubled world.
 Christ has no body now on earth
 but yours.

~ St. Teresa of Avila



A Pilgrim's Companion Psalm

The road home, O God, seems long
 and at times is difficult and painful.
 Grant me a holy communion, a companionship with others,
 as I journey homeward to you.

I live in times of great trial: an age of change sits at my door.
 Without a community of others I can so easily lose the way,
 can be led astray by illusions of holiness,
 misguided by my ego's desires.

Open my eyes to your precious gift of the Church's Communion of Saints.
 "Saint" is a name I would never call myself,
 but the treasury of my faith
 teaches me about my holy birthright,
 that I am part of the web of sacred communion,
 uniting me with all other home-bound pilgrims
 and with all who now rejoice
 at their homecoming in you.

May I feel this day upon the food
 of this mystic, holy communion
 with those friends and fellow pilgrims
 with whom I share this planet earth,
 as well as those saints now fully one with you.

May this awareness of my companion journey
 with all the saints
 deepen my life of prayer
 and fertilize my faith in you, my Beloved.

By this communion of holy ones
 may I be daily challenged
 to greater compassion and charity
 as I walk the way of the pilgrim.

~ Edward Hays, *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim*