**Fr. Don Driscoll, S.J. gave this retreat at the Jesuit Retreat House, Barrington, Illinois, September, 2000.**

**All eight, 35 to 40 minute talks are here.**

This retreat may be made in a variety of ways, by individuals or a group:

* over a 3 day weekend
* over 8 days, one conference a day
* over 8 weeks, one conference a week.

**INTRODUCTORY CONFERENCE**

To you, as your sons, and He gave us you as our mother. Luke begins his Gospel with your word “Fiat” which means “let it be” and he ends his Gospel with your sons use of that same word, “let it be”. For all that is about to happen on this weekend, for new birth within us, for new life within us, for new hopes, we say “Fiat”. And for all those people who are praying, and interceding for us, we ask you to bless them, and we pray for each other as we pray your prayer. “Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with the. Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

Welcome. I’m delighted to be with you again. As father said, I’m Don Driscoll, a Jesuit, and let me tell you at the beginning, when you’ve met one Jesuit, you’ve met one Jesuit. So the surprises that he spoke of could be many. We have had so many Jesuit jokes, the most recent one I heard, this man came to a Franciscan and said, “Father would you make a Novena for me”, he said “I wanna get a Lexus”, and the Franciscan said “What’s a Lexus?” He said that’s okay Father don’t worry about it, went to a Carmelite. He said “Father, would you say a Novena for me? I wanna get a Lexus”. The Carmelite said, “What’s a Lexus?” He said, “Don’t worry about it.” Came to a Jesuit and he said, “Father, would you make a Novena for me? I wanna get a Lexus.” And the Jesuit said, “What’s a Novena?” (Laughter).

I was born and raised in Chicago, and three years ago at Creighton at one of the retreats, the break, one of our brilliant, we’re ranked number one again in the Midwest by U.S. News and World Report but our students aren’t all that, give evidence of that. This young girl came over and she said, “Father, where are you from?” I said, “I was born and raised in Chicago.” Intelligent question she said, “Why were you born in Chicago?” I said, “Well I wanted to be near my mother.” I taught twenty one year’s at Marquette High and then I went to Rome the Holy Land and studied and I’ve been at Creighton thirteen years. The last time I was here, I couldn’t fly into Chicago this time because every airline seat had been sold out since June, for the big game tomorrow. The last time I flew United into Chicago and we had one of the bumpiest landings I’ve ever been on. And as we were deplaning the pilot was saying, “I apologize for that rough rough landing” and an elderly woman in front of me said, “Did we land or were we shot down?” But this time Midwest Express was wonderful. I do have to single out Bob Gozman, who called me a little over a year ago and he said uh “ we really want you for this retreat”, he said “September 8th, 9th, and 10th of the year 2000”. So I ruffled a few pages so that he could hear over the phone and I said, “Oh gosh Bob I’m sorry, I’ve got a funeral that Saturday.” He said, “Aw darn-it!” I said, “Did you hear what I said?” He said, “Yeah you’ve got a... ughhh”. You better choose a new leader. I congratulate you because; the evil one does not want you here. And you know from just the days prior to this, and the weeks prior to this, a thousand and one other things would come up saying, “ I don’t want to face myself, I gotta clean out the garage, I wanna watch the game, I wanna go to the game” whatever. Whatever fears, whatever other distractions entered into this, you have said “yes” to God. And there’s a reason that God has brought you here. I’ve lived long enough to know two things, there is a God, and it’s not me. But when I get the call, whatever it is, to respond to it brings unlimited graces.

I always wanted to give retreats because they had meant so much to me, and I was a scholastic at Marquette High. Some of you may remember the old “mission bend” and Charlie Clark who changed his name to Dismus, Father Dismus Clark. Famous Jesuit who worked with prison rehabilitation, um, he was visiting Marquette High and I had him talk to some of my sodality groups, and I served his masses. And I remember saying to him one day, “Ya know, when I get older I really want to give retreats. How do you go about getting into that?” And he said, “Well you guys will be studying Greek, have you studied Demosthenes?” I said, “No...” He said, “Well Demosthenes, as a young man, wanted to speak, proclaim oratory, but he stuttered so terribly, so they sent him to a great Greek speech teacher. And he filled his mouth with pebbles and he sent him down to the ocean, to enunciate and articulate and proclaim the great speeches of the Greek Masters. And each week they remove a pebble or a rock from his mouth, until he became the greatest orator in Greek history. Now as Jesuits, he said, “when you get to theology, they will put marbles in your mouth and you are to proclaim the great sermons of the Greek fathers, and each week they’ll remove a marble and when you bust all your marbles, then you can go give retreats.” So here I am.

I learned very early, probably the third retreat I gave, up in the twin cities, that I have very little to do with this. The Holy Spirit is your director. You have to trust that. There was a doctor that came in and he sat down and went to confession and he had been out of the church almost twenty years and he went back and he kept saying, after we were talking, “Father that thing that you said, it just opened flood gates. Father when you said that everything (?? 7:05) and there was a burning desire in me to come back fully to the (??7:10).So before he left my office I said, “Which one of my clever stories or insights, impacted so deep, I wanna use it again.” Truthfully he said, “Father when you said ‘do good and avoid the evil’” and he laughed. I never said it. I learned very early that it is what you hear from above in your heart that’s gonna make the difference on this retreat. It is not what Driscoll says to you, it’s what God says to you and what you say to God. For Saint Ignatius that’s the fundamental premise of the spiritual exercises. God can and will speak to you, on this retreat. The secret is, will you let him. Can you give up your control, your independence? That’s the secret. To have that humility, the posture of just being open, to allow that to happen. God has called you here for some reason. But I don’t know, and more than likely you don’t know. And whatever hidden agenda’s you’ve got.. For years I went on retreats and I brought all the journals and all the articles and things I wanted to get caught up on. And missed the meeting with the Lord. You might have this agenda, “I want this resolved in my life.” And the Lord is saying, “I’ll take care of that next year. Here’s what I want to gift you with and grace you with tonight and tomorrow.”

To be open to that is so important, the secret is to let go and let God be God. Stop trying to control. In my work around the globe with people, that’s the biggest obstacle to develop mundane spirituality. I want to be in control, and this is very normal, especially for men. We don’t want to hold Mommy or Daddy’s hands, we want to walk on our own and do things on our own through adolescence. I don’t want anyone to tell me with whom I should pal around, what time I should get up, go to bed. I want to independent, and God as a faithful lover, parents us. “I’ll wait”. And he waits, and he waits. In the course of the time we have together, I’ll hopeful share some insights or some of the things that have had meaning in my life. Some of the experiences that have brought me closer to God, only to show you that God works through the ordinary. We’re not going to see burning bushes or exploding constellations in the heavens. But there will be something that we’re called to pay attention to, happening internally. And the secret is to be open to that. Why did God bring you here?

His affection for you is so intense, so real, that something is going to happen. You know, through the past month since Bob did call me, I asked so many many times in prayer, “Lord, what do you want them to know?” And I swear to you, the same message came again and again and again, “Tell them for me, that I love them. They don’t believe it. They mouth it, intellectualize it, but they won’t let me into their hearts. They simply won’t believe that they are as good as I proclaim them to be.” Jesus in scripture says, “You are my saints.” How do you react when you hear that? Pause for a moment and try to answer in your own heart, what do you want to leave here with on Sunday? What do you want to take with you or hope happens to you by Sunday? Pay attention to that.

There is a phrase of Saint Ignatius, (I don’t know if you can see this) IQV. Id Quad Volo, three Latin words, “that which I desire”. Each time that you pray, you’ll be able to pray more deeply, and achieve more from the Lord, if you focus. That which I seek, that which I desire is this. When you go to a scripture passage, those passages that I have for you on that page, don’t read the whole thing. That’s running from the Lord, take one passage tonight. One passage or one word, wherever you feel something excite or move within you, stay there. Saint Ignatius says and all the other Mystics and Saints, professors of aesthetical theology, the psychology of spirituality say; “stay where you feel called”. Stay and dwell where you feel something is happening, and repeat it, and repeat it, and repeat it. We’re creatures of accomplishment. (12:50??)

One thought or idea from scripture perfectly realized, can bring you all you are searching for in a hundred other directions. Dwell, where you feel called. That’s so important, don’t race on, don’t rush on. Um, so in choosing whatever passage you want, um try to stay with that as you go to sleep. Again, Saint Ignatius says, “The last thoughts that you think at night, are going to condition your sleep, and they’re gonna be the first thoughts that you awaken to in the morning”. If I fall asleep and I think “Oh my god, I gotta get over to the office tomorrow, and I gotta see this, and I gotta give that talk, and I have to do this and I gotta” (I teach two courses in theology and I’m a chaplain in pharmacy occupational therapy and physical therapy) so I gotta a jungle of things to handle each day. If I went to bed every night saying, “What am I gonna ado, I better, I gotta make that phone call at 9 in the morning, better get up for that meeting at 8 o’clock”. My whole sleep is gonna be agitated, and I’m gonna awaken in the morning tense and anxious.

Saint Ignatius says, “Dwell on the thoughts that will give you peace”. Some of these scripture passages or the words, “I have loved you with an everlasting love”, “you’re not alone”, “I understand everything you’re going through”, “shalom”. Jesus knew the anxiety and propensity to worry, of the human heart, the most frequently used word in the New Testament scripture is the words Shalom, the word peace, don’t be afraid, 365 that occurs, once for every day of the year. Shalom. What are you anxious about? What are you worried about? Doctor Klanecky, when I was in Milwaukee I was chaplain with the catholic physicians gill and Bernie used to say, “You have a father that happens to be God”.

Claim your inheritance. I think that God must weep, certainly at the tragedies we find in the human family. But at how much he desires us to be awakened to our goodness, to our lovable-ness, and we allow the evil one to come in and say, “you phony, you sham, you promise so much, look how much has been given to you, look at how rotten you are.” See and every time that you give time to the evil one, it takes us away from the true message of God, which is all positive. That’s the discernment of spirit that Saint Ignatius speaks of. I believe that every morning when we awaken, perched on one shoulder is a demon of discouragement, and on the other shoulder is an angel of affirmation. Which one are you gonna spend the day with? So you’re call tonight is to let go and let God lead you, let the spirit lead you. It’s not what I say to you, it’s what God is saying, maybe through something I’m saying or the beauty of this place, or a passage that’s come to you from the past, or the intercession of those men who have been on this retreat from fifty years back who are now with the communion of saints, our special intercessors. Somehow someway, the channels of grace are flooding forth to you. I never begin a retreat, in the last fifteen twenty years, without calling upon my reserves. Do you remember in scripture the story of the paralytic? Where the friends of the paralytic brought him to the house where Jesus was staying and they couldn’t get in, the house was packed, so creatively they went up to the top and they lifted off the tiles from the roof and they lowered the palate with their friend on it to the feet of Jesus. This is what I have done, and let me tell you, my Creighton University community, seventy six Jesuits are praying for you this weekend because I had to cancel to classes yesterday, the assignment for my students was to pray for you this weekend. There’s a fairly new community of religious men and women in Omaha called The Intercessors of the Lamb. Now whenever I call them for a need, and they take this very seriously, praying and fasting. Each one of those intercessors was from