

SAINT ALOYSIUS GONZAGA PARISH

Book Discussion: *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything* by James Martin, SJ

Chapter 3: "What Do You Want? – Desire and the Spiritual Life", pages 57 to 85

Thursday – November 20, 2014 – 7PM

REFLECTIVE AND DISCUSSABLE QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

1. We are 3 chapters into Father Martin's book, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*. In Chapter 1, Father Martin writes: "A spirituality is a way of living in relationship with God." (page 2) He goes on to write: "A spirituality is like a bridge. Every bridge does pretty much the same thing – gets you from one place to another...But they do so in different ways." (page 3) "Every spirituality offers you a distinctive "passage" to God." What is "distinctive" – in your mind, in your heart – about the spirituality of Saint Ignatius of Loyola? Does Ignatian Spirituality make sense to you? Has it changed you in any way – even after only 3 chapters?

2. Martin insists that "everyone has an innate desire for God." (page 63) This "innate desire" can be found in the ordinary experiences of our daily lives. Among these experiences (pages 64 thru 81) are:-

- Incompletion:
- Common Longings:
- Desires to follow:
- Desires for Holiness:
- Vulnerability:

What does Father Martin mean by these "ordinary experiences" – how would you explain them? Is or has one of these been more operative than the others on your spiritual journey? Which one? More than one – which ones?

3. "Desire is a key part of Ignatian Spirituality because desire is a key way that God's voice is heard in our lives. And ultimately, our deepest desire, planted within us, is our desire for God. (page 63) In your own relationship with God – your own spirituality – what is one of your deepest desires – one of the goals you hope to achieve on your spiritual journey?

4. There are a lot of "WOW!" lines in Chapter 3. Some of the lines that resonated with Father Peter are:

- "God can meet us anywhere." (page 82)
- "God *already* loves you." (page 81)
- "Your spiritual house does not have to be tidy for God to enter." (page 85)
- "Fear is a common experience in the spiritual life." (page 68)
- "the 'God-shaped hole'" (page 65)
- "Holiness always makes its home in humanity." (page 77)

Do any of these lines evoke in you a "wow"? Which one? Why? Did you find other "wow" lines in Chapter 3? Do you want to tell us about them and why?

5. Father Martin describes some moments when we realize "*This is what I've always wanted...*" (page 76). What have you always wanted in your relationship with God? Do you think the spirituality of Saint Ignatius will help you achieve this goal?

6. Chapter 3 ends with the simple statement: "Because God is ready now." (page 85) What is God ready for? In your life? In your heart? In your relationship with Him? On your spiritual journey?

7. Are there any other insights into the spiritual journey that you wish to share with our Discussion Group after having read Chapter 3?