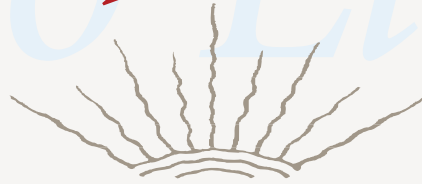


Words to Live By



The following passage from *With Open Hands* by Henri Nouwen resonated with me as I participated with other members of St. Ignatius Parish and surrounding communities in the 19th Annotation of St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises:

"Praying is no easy matter. It demands a relationship in which you allow someone other than yourself to enter into the very center of your person, to see there what you would rather leave in darkness, and to touch there what you would rather leave untouched. . . . The resistance to praying is like the resistance of tightly clenched fists. . . . When you are invited to pray, you are asked to open your tightly clenched fists. . . ."

Several months after starting the Spiritual Exercises, my spiritual director said he had noticed a change in my body language – I no



longer held my hands in front of me in a protective gesture when talking about the presence of God in my life. Once I recovered from the realization that my inner

life was so transparent, I began to reflect on what the journey through the Spiritual Exercises had meant to me.

Initially, developing a personal relationship with God, the very goal of the Exercises, frightened me. I knew that if I came to hear Jesus call *me* by name as Ignatius encourages us to do and if I responded with the "yes" of Mary at the Annunciation, my life would change.

As we moved through the weeks of the Exercises, our spiritual directors guided us in the many varieties of Ignatian prayer: reading scripture, the examen, discernment, meditation,

colloquy with the three persons of the Trinity and Mary, the use of imagination and of composition of place, journaling and the Eucharist. Perhaps most important for me was the sharing of the high and low points of my journey with my spiritual director and the other retreatants.

As a result of the Exercises, I find that my life



is changing. But instead of the loss of control which I feared, I am discovering freedom in surrendering to God's love. With

an enriched prayer life and the support of fellow retreatants and directors, I now find myself more able to open my hands and my heart to God. ✕

Mary Tracy is a member of St. Ignatius Parish in Chestnut Hill, MA. The 19th Annotation was led by Fr. Bob VerEecke, SJ, pastor of St. Ignatius parish and Sr. Clare Walsh, MSHS, associate director of the Jesuit Collaborative.

In Memoriam

Please remember in your prayers these special friends of the Society of Jesus who have gone to God.

- James Michael Casey, father of Pat Casey
- John J. O'Neil, father of Sean and Cathy O'Neil, grandfather of Kelly O'Neil
- Joan Delaney O'Neill, mother of Michael O'Neill
- Eugene Mahoney, father of Frank and Mary Mahoney
- John "Duke" Mahoney, Sr. father of John and Rose Mahoney, Jr. and grandfather of Michael Mahoney
- William E. Reed, III, husband of Deborah Reed