

# White House Retreat

## A PRAYER PERIOD DURING COVID

*How ordinary is the life of Christ?*

### Presence

I find myself in God's presence and I pray: come, Holy Spirit.

### The grace that I seek

That I might be aware of God's invitation to join him in the work of the Kingdom in the ordinary moments of life.

### Scripture to pray with

Isaiah 43: 1-7	I have called you by name
Psalms 139	You have searched me, Lord, and you know me
Luke 2:51-52	Then he went down to Nazareth with them

### Points I might keep in mind

- ⇒ God how has willed to appear in common things, the hidden God who has always shared our ordinary life
- ⇒ the 'God close by' to us in our own lives which do not attract attention and do not make history
- ⇒ Nazareth shows God with us, in our work, in our boredom, in our family life

### Conversation

Jesus speaks to me through the words of scripture and the experiences of my life. I converse with him, sharing life as close friends do.

### Conclusion

The time of prayer ends with an Our Father.

## **What does the hidden life of Jesus mean for me?**

*But Jesus did more in his hidden life than leave us a good example. His life in that village reveals how God is and how God acts. Nazareth signifies that the Son of God has manifested himself to us through the ordinary life of humankind. Out of the life that we lead, from the hunter of pre-history to the city-dweller and countryman of today, the bread-winner, the school-boy, the housewife; life in the family and group, with the burden and the joy of work; life that seemingly has no history—out of such life the Son of God makes himself manifest. This helps us once more to know God better. He is the God how has willed to appear in common things, the hidden God who has always shared the ordinary life of man, the ‘God close by’ to us in our own lives which do not attract attention and do not make history. Nazareth shows God with us, in our work, in our family life.*

Catechism the Dutch Bishops (1965)

## **Application of the senses**

*The Lord may even invite you to make a spiritual visit to Nazareth. Go first to the workshop of St. Joseph, whom you find alone, and converse with him. When his work is done, he will take you inside the home. There you may find that Jesus has not yet returned from an errand on which he has been dispatched to take some piece of carpentry and bring back the price. Joseph introduces you to Mary, and you speak to her as though you had been acquaintances over a lifetime. She tells you many things about her son, Jesus. At last his footsteps are heard. You fall to your knees and say, “My Lord and my God.” He raises you, and softly says, “We are not grand people here; this is a poor family, and you belong to it.”*

Joseph Rickaby, S.J., *Waters That Go Softly* (1934)

## **My Hidden Life in the Cathedral of My Home**

*How far must one travel to pray in some of the beautiful cathedrals? How many of us are confined temporarily or permanently, to our own little corner of this world and cannot travel? Well, look around, look around, and dream and pray.*

*Recently a long illness prevented me from going to church. Feeling poorly and incapable of being about my usual busy-ness, depression took over—and then self-pity, worse than the disease itself, crept in! I was alone in a house that was usually filled with love and living. The quiet was overpowering. Tearfully, I stood in my kitchen when out of the depths came spiritual help.*

*I thought: “This is not an empty house. This can be my very own cathedral. Lord, come into my home and bring your Mother and all the angels and saints who are not too busy with other people’s problems.”*

*My cathedral is well equipped. Here in my kitchen there are three altars: the sink, the stove, and the ironing board. How many sacrifices can be offered standing there talking to my heavenly guests! Walking to the bedroom, I find a Chapel where, even on busy days, the quiet and solitude lends itself to prayer and meditation and rest. The bathroom is the baptismal room where flowing waters cleanse the body as well as the soul.*

*At 9:30am a flick of the switch...there is the TV Mass in my living room. In this, the main part of my Cathedral, there are no stained-glass windows, jut stained windows from lack of recent housework, but the sunshine found its way in, hit a prism on a lamp and danced in pretty colors on the rug. From outside I could hear a heavenly choir. The birds were in full voice!*

*At noontime, chimes rang out from the clock on the steeple of my mantelpiece and announced it was time for the Angelus. I was not alone for lunch; didn’t talk count of how many spiritual guests were there; maybe twelve, even thirteen, but I lit the candles and we broke bread together.*

*Suddenly the silence was broken and in bounced a grand-daughter for an unexpected visit. “Do you got some ice cream, Nana?” My Cathedral even has a social hall.*

Marion G. Horne